2018

Shaping The Image Builders: The Birth And Rise Of The American Association Of College News Bureaus And A New Rhetorical Arena In Higher Education

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SHAPING THE IMAGE BUILDERS: THE BIRTH AND RISE OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE NEWS BUREAUS AND A NEW RHETORICAL ARENA IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Dissertation

Presented to

The College of Graduate and Professional Studies

Department of Educational Leadership

Indiana State University

Terre Haute, Indiana

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

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December 2018

Keywords: public relations, communications, higher education history, rhetoric, CASE

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on a qualitative review of historical artifacts, the author explores the birth and rise of the American Association of College News Bureaus and its successive organizations. The author performs a historical study, interlacing an interpretive biographical lens and rhetorical theory. The study seeks to determine what formative events and narratives shaped the Association's progression from 1915 until 1950 and to what extent, if any, the Association and its successor organizations established a new rhetorical arena in America's higher education landscape. The expansive horizontal network launched by the group better served colleges and universities with more robust dialogue and public relations vision. The pioneering work of Association leaders through the decades spawned the influential College Sports Information Directors of America, or CoSIDA, and later helped to launch CASE, the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, which remains an integral part of contemporary higher education both in the United States and internationally.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the wonderful support of my wife, Jennifer, and our three children, Spencer, Caroline, and Brody. Jenny, your positive spirit and reassurance have truly been remarkable. And kids, thanks so much for all of your flexibility with dad's busy schedule, especially all of those Saturday writing days! Without my family's encouragement, understanding, and sacrifices, this dissertation would not be possible, and you have definitely been an integral part of this journey. I also want to thank my committee chair, Dr. Kandace Hinton, whose patience and valuable guidance will forever be appreciated. Her direction helped to launch this project in a History of Higher Education course and her subsequent insight has been amazing. I also want to thank my additional committee members, Dr. Joshua Powers and Dr. Catherine A. Dobris. Your observations not only strengthened my writing but also inspired me to always ask the right questions and craft a product that I hope will serve as the foundation for additional scholarship and study. Additionally, I want to thank my parents, Charles and Patsy Cook, who worked so very hard so that I could earn a college degree, build on it, and find my way to this achievement. I am very blessed and will always remember!

I would also like to extend a sincere thanks to my Cohort 17 classmates at Indiana State University. What a dynamic, reassuring group. A special thanks to Jim Hintz and Kelly Cozart, who were always available to offer a kind word.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the wonderful archives experts at IUPUI's Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives and Ohio State University Archives. You are true professionals in every sense of the word. Thank you for all of your guidance and patience as I sought out documents and archives that were so very important to this study and of wonderful significance, shedding light on the history of the Association and on the remarkable narratives surrounding higher education. This is but one segment of a fascinating story.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Publicity is pyramidal. Publicity keeps gathering results. Publicity we do today will live long after we are gone. If it is constructive, it will never die.

Frank Elliott, Indiana University
1931 Vice President, American College Publicity Association

When a group of higher education professionals from America's Midwest gathered in a Columbus, Ohio, Chamber of Commerce committee room in 1915, they sought to engage in the noteworthy issues affecting their daily tasks. The group, kindred spirits in the early days of image making, looked to participate in the first chapter of what would become a rich and meaningful journey for collegiate public relations (Pauly, 1942; Reck, 1967). This small but motivated core assembly aimed to carve out a new role in an emerging communications profession, a prospective rhetorical space that could have an expansive long-term impact throughout institutions of higher learning. This study will explore the development and progression of higher education public relations as demonstrated through the growth and development of the American Association of College News Bureaus and its subsequent brands (referred to as the Association, which includes the American College Publicity Association and the American College Public Relations Association) and subsequent branch organizations. The Association served as the foundation for contemporary public relations networks within the college and university sphere and functioned as a genesis for two prominent modern-day institutions that impact higher education nationally and internationally, the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), and the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA).

Once establishing its footing in the early decades of the 20th century, the Association flourished nationwide and served as a conduit and systems resource with institutions large and small. However, scholarly literature exploring the group’s origins, organization, evolution, and growth remains somewhat limited, especially in-depth scholarly analysis of the organization’s expansive influence. Because of a dearth of deep, academic literature on the organization’s important story and its progression, this study will examine the group’s advancement and its impact on creating a new network for meaningful public relations rhetoric.

Problem Statement

The Association and its related organizations may have created a new rhetorical arena in American higher education and, more specifically, established the everyday, professional practice of public affairs in contemporary colleges and universities. As the higher education landscape evolved in the early decades of the 20th century, a group of professionals sensed an opportunity to enhance their standing and sought to strengthen their promising trade by creating a new rhetorical community that served as a foundation for contemporary public relations practices, strategies, and organizational structures within the higher education sphere (Reck, 1967). But there could be a longer term influence of the network.

The following study will review the Association’s development and evolution, explore its transformation as leaders of the organization navigated the ever-changing higher education and public relations industries, and examine colorful narratives that shaped the group’s legacy and impact on present-day brethren. The study will seek to explore the story of the Association as it originated and traversed the American higher education landscape. The following section will offer additional thoughts and context on the study's purpose, which focuses largely on the organization's formative decades.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the this study will be to explore the roots and context of higher education public relations through the formation of the Association and, by extension, the foundation for the modern day organizations of CASE. Today, CASE serves more than 3,600 colleges and universities throughout the world ("About CASE," 2018). Another branch organization stemming from the Association's national profile is CoSIDA, a contemporary horizontal network formed in the 1950s that currently represents some 3,000 college and university athletic office personnel ("Our Organization," n.d.). This study will focus primarily on the origins of the Association, the narratives surrounding it, and the group's subsequent growth and influence, from its birth in 1915 until the formation of the organization's national office in 1950. T.T. Frankenberg, a former journalist who worked at the Western College for Women in Ohio, sought to enhance the burgeoning practice of professional communication and media relations when organizing the group's first ever meeting. Arising from the meeting was an organization advocating stronger communication practices and wielding influence at many institutions of higher learning across the nation (Schoch, 1983; Warner, 1996).

This study will investigate how the group developed, discuss the life of its founder, Frankenberg, and examine how rich narratives fashioned its evolution and to what extent it may have impacted public relations practices and structural configurations within higher education through the mid-20th century. The following section will review the significance of such an inquiry.

Significance of the Study

A study exploring the development of the Association offers insight into the significant storylines that shaped higher education communication messages and strategies spanning the decades. It is also important to illuminate the origins of advocacy and resource organizations in contemporary institutions of learning, particularly those that may have influence in the public realm. Communication strategy may influence institutional image and, by extension, the broader perception of colleges and universities as a conventional entity in present-day American culture. In addition, the study of such advocacy and resource organizations may shed light on organizational configurations and branding considerations. For instance, the Association changed names on two occasions during its existence and helped to spawn a pair of spinoff organizations that remain impactful nationally and internationally in contemporary higher education purviews ("About CASE: History," 2018; Schoch, 1983; Warner, 1996). In addition, the analysis will consider how rhetoric and rhetorical situations within the organization influenced the public relations functions and structures of singular institutions across the country. This is an important consideration because the group's network expanded through the decades, including the establishment of a national office in Washington, D.C. by 1950 and an eventual merger with the American Alumni Council to form CASE in 1974. This study will largely focus on the 1915-1950 timeline, probing the organization's foundation and noteworthy individuals and events surrounding its development.

The study will seek to fortify the literature and add scholarly exploration in a number of ways. First, it will offer an analysis of narratives that shaped the rhetoric, ideas, and communication strategies of leadership professionals at many of the nation's colleges and universities during a transformational era in higher education. Next, the study will provide constructive insight into the evolution and growth of a group that served as an advocacy and professional resource for institutions in the postsecondary landscape. Third, this study will seek to address gaps in scholarly literature because it will explore the rich storylines about a broad swath of leaders who collaborated through the Association to build images and strengthen the impact of America's higher learning academies. By extension, the analysis will scrutinize salient events that helped to shape the Association as it grew into an impactful entity that affected numerous sectors in higher education. A deep exploration of such an organization leads to several vital research questions. These inquiries took on various layers as the study progressed.

Research Questions

Within the construct of this study, the following questions stand out as the foundation of the research:

1. What were the formative events and narratives that allowed the Association to evolve from 1915-1950, generating succeeding organizations?
2. To what extent, if any, did the Association create a new rhetorical arena for higher education?

Anticipated Outcomes

I anticipate this dissertation will contribute to the literature by offering insight into the rhetoric and associated events that enabled the Association to expand its presence in the higher education landscape from a seemingly ordinary assembly just before the first World War into a sizable, dynamic organization serving higher education at its highest levels. It is my objective that a greater understanding of the rhetoric, situational context, and vision behind the Association's achievements will provide a worthy footprint for additional scholarly analysis within the Academy. A historical study, utilizing archives and original source documents, provides ample opportunity to scrutinize the leaders and narratives that fashioned the Association and spurred the group to expand its outreach from the Midwest to universities in each region of the nation. While one study reviewing the group's formative decades will not address every research gap, a comprehensive assessment could serve as a foundation for additional scholarship on the narratives woven in and around higher education public relations strategies and structures.

Interest in Topic

My interest in the Association and its successive, related organizations stems from an avid love of history, current professional responsibilities as a higher education administrator, and years of service as a public relations practitioner in the public arena. History in a variety of contexts always piqued my curiosity. The important, substantive events that molded the past but impact the present remain fascinating to me, from the American colonial period, to the upheaval of the Civil War, to the industrial revolution, and through the multitude of social issues of the 1960s and 1970s. Higher education impacted my life from the outset. My mother taught at a community college on a part-time basis and a trip to Duke University during a church youth group tour bolstered my curiosity about higher learning. It helped that athletics always fascinated me, chiefly the atmosphere surrounding events in the realm of college athletics. These events were and are theatre, a drama on the court or gridiron wrapped with an athletic twist. An interest in writing and how ideas are created, designed, and communicated sparked a fervent interest in public relations, a field in which I practiced as a paid professional for more than a decade. Currently, I serve as a community college administrator, and the challenges I encounter on a frequent basis often include frameworks linked in some fashion with the history and elements of public relations and rhetoric.

Summary

This chapter provided insight into the background of focusing on the Association and the group’s growth and development as a foundational resource and networking organization within the higher education landscape. It introduced the reader to the significance of the Association as it served as a springboard for several subsequent organizations, including two groups influential in contemporary higher education, CASE and CoSIDA. The Association and its visionary leadership created new rhetorical ground, helping to weave public relations into the mainstream of college and university strategy and structure.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reflecting upon modern public relations culture in higher education, it is essential to understand how the craft began and evolved into a profession often utilized at the highest levels of institutions, organizations, and businesses. And in order to gain a greater understanding of public relations in colleges and universities, a review of the literature offers valuable contextual perspective. Founded at the dawn of World War I as the American Association of College News Bureaus (Reck, 1967; Schoch, 1983), the Association latched onto the coattails of a profession in its relative infancy and formed a significant chapter in the evolution of American higher education and public relations (Cook, 2014).

The following literature review will provide a summary of scholarly works and associated evidence applicable to the organization's influence in higher education and public relations. First, the section will offer a synopsis of the historical context and the intersection of the business, industry, and education sectors within a fast changing America at the dawn of a new century. Next, the review will investigate the emerging vocation of public relations, including the importance of the term, its connotations, and its professional significance. The ensuing section will touch on the integration of marketing within colleges and universities, examining how marketing applications are linked with broader communication strategies within institutions. An analysis touching on the effectiveness of public relations will follow. The review will then include an exploration of previous research on the organization and related branches, offering historical perspective as to the association's growth and development. The next section of the review incorporates an appraisal of theories relevant to the organization's evolution, addressing rhetorical and organizational perspectives and the link of these perspectives to the Association and its progress through the decades. Finally, the review will offer a summation of key developments stemming from the group's progression and influence, including the founding of a national office in 1950. Additional analysis after this study may also focus on the formation of CoSIDA and the Association's link and eventual merger and with CASE.

Writing about public relations in the mid-20th century, Bernays (1952) stressed that higher education needed the public to grasp its varied problems, a challenging task in an ever-changing nation facing complexities on social, political, and economic fronts. The message Bernays conveyed in his 1952 analysis could also be wholly appropriate in contemporary higher education environments or a fast-changing America at the turn of the 20th century.

A New Century

The Association's formative years in the first decades of the 1900s paralleled a shifting American infrastructure, where vast elements of the nation's cultural and business institutions experienced significant transformation. As industry rose to new heights at the commencement of the 20th century, America's universities sought new growth as well, supported by determined institution presidents and the deep wealth of industry leaders. These powerful affiliations were labeled, fittingly, as the university builders (Thelin, 2011). During this period, innovation touched many corners of American life, and the communications revolution quickly impacted the masses. Telephone utilization, for instance, surged from 17 phones per 1,000 people in 1900 to 82 per 1,000 people in 1910 (Goldman, 1978). Business and industry flourished; colleges and universities expanded and necessitated a new professional vocation, known in contemporary terms as that of public relations.

Institutional image rose to the surface as a priority at the outset of the new era. What is known in contemporary times as public relations became closely linked with American business and industry. The practice "emerged as a defense of one particular part of society – business -- against the assault of the muckrakers" (Goldman, 1978, p. 61). The concept of a college education began to be associated with the attributes necessary to achieve success in business and industry (Geiger, 2015). Still an emerging slice of American culture, the college ideal, had slowly progressed to become a loftier share of the mainstream conscience. An 1899 edition of the popular *Saturday Evening Post* served as an illustration, depicting two college students on the cover of one if its editions. One of the students wore a football uniform and another appeared in traditional academic attire, complete with books (Geiger, 2015). Traditional academic imagery blending with the extracurricular perhaps signaled that higher education had become a prospective pathway for a larger segment of the populace. "College was now perceived as the appropriate training ground for business, something that had scarcely been true before the end of the nineteenth century" (Geiger, 2015, pp. 379-380). Rudolph (1990) described this era as a period of "flowering" (p. 356). Rudolph (1990) summarized, "for the universities in the United States achieved significant popular status" (p. 356). Institutions began to launch promotional efforts in order to attract students and gain notoriety, including the formation of publicity offices (Bok, 2003). Athletic enterprises also began to capture the imagination and bolster the pride of college and university alumni, helping graduates remain connected to their respective collegiate institutions (Geiger, 1986). The game of football, in particular, quickly ascended to popularity among institutions, surging to prominence with the help of students, alumni, administrators, and media (Rudolph, 1990). The rise of collegiate football's popularity among a broad audience helped to enhance the image of many higher education institutions. "For the first time, the American college was the source of popular news, and this fact significantly increased administrative encouragement of football" (Rudolph, 1990, p. 384). In fact, athletics became a fixture at many colleges and universities and served as an auxiliary public relations tool. Athletics in many instances strengthened outreach and networking efforts across institutions. Whereas dialogue among universities about curriculum had not previously occurred, athletic competitions among schools prompted consultation (Rudolph, 1990). The environment that impacted life in the early years of the 20th century was at once dynamic and transformational, a period of change and opportunity. And it was this era that gave rise to the American Association of College News Bureaus.

Public Relations Overview

In order to effectively offer an overview and successfully scrutinize the formation and resulting expansion of the Association, it is imperative to examine the terms, *publicity* and *public relations*. This is particularly important because of the way the organization branded itself through the years, changing its name on two occasions as the concept of public relations evolved and became more of an institutional function across the nation's business and educational communities. In many ways, the Association's development corresponded with the professional public relations trade. Historically, those studying public relations have struggled for a precise *public relations* definition. Hutton (1999) offered, "From its modern beginnings …public relations has suffered from an identity crisis-largely of its own making. In terms of both theory and practice, public relations has failed to arrive at a broadly accepted definition" (p. 199). Cutlip (1995) wrote that the term *public relations* did not find its way into everyday American terminology until the latter part of the 19th century. The expression encompassed the notions of *propaganda, publicity,* and *public information*. Another work by Cutlip (1994), which delved into a deeper history of the term and the practice, maintained that propaganda originated with the Catholic Church in the 17th century, with the simple aim of "propagating the faith" (p. xiv).

The term *public relations* did not develop into somewhat of a negative connotation until the World War I years. Cutlip (1994) also observed that public relations and propaganda were often viewed as the same in the minds of many, even in contemporary society. This double-entendre only served as a symbol as to some of the challenges public relations faced in its formative years, both in terms of a concrete definition to offer stakeholders and in relation to how the craft would be applied and practiced within institutions of higher learning. With more of a scholarly approach, Bernays (1952) defined public relations as comprising three areas. These were "(a) information given to the public, (b) persuasion directed at the public to modify attitudes and actions, and (c) efforts to integrate attitudes and actions of an institution with its publics and publics with that institution" (Bernays, 1952, p. 3). Importantly, Bernays offered a distinction between publicity and public relations. Publicity, Bernays (1952) wrote, is a "one-way street; public relations, a two-way street" (p. 5). Publicity, characteristic of the one-way street metaphor according to Bernays (1952), is a model in which organizations or leaders present information to the public via a singular prism. It can even be deemed as manipulation (Bernays, 1952). Public relations, which represents the two-way street descriptor, is essentially an integration of both the organization's objectives and the public's best interests. Bernays (1976) later argued that organizations advocating for public relations should endorse state licensing of public relations practitioners. Credibility is essential, and government oversight offered a means to ensure integrity. Bernays (1976) noted that public relations includes providing information to the public and is recognized as such, but "sound action must precede it" (p. 16).

Harlow (1939), writing for *The Journal of Higher Education*, described public relations within a higher education context, noting that public relations is the "body of thought and practice, built up through the years, which has to do with the development and maintenance by colleges and universities of sound contact with the public, that public they serve and which serves them" (p. 264). W. Emerson Reck (1948), an influential figure throughout several decades with the Association and its branch groups, wrote that publicity is simply one facet of the broader and more calculated public relations field. Public relations is more calculated and focused in nature, he argued. Reck (1948) noted, "Public relations seeks to determine the policies and provide the activities which will make constructive publicity possible, while publicity endeavors to give the college's publics the information necessary to maintain opinion which is intelligent, informed, and favorable" (p. 3).

The *practice* of public relations within institutions of higher learning could perhaps be traced to Harvard University. In 1641, representatives of America's first university traveled to England with the objective of raising funds, stressing efforts to educate Native Americans (Lamme, Russell, & Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, 2010). Subsequently, the 1758 King's College commencement ceremony in New York could also be viewed as a public relations tactic, as it helped to attract interest in the institution, enriching the college's standing and, potentially, drawing donor interest (Lamme et al., 2010). Cutlip (1995), as will be reflected later, also noted this.

Vos (2011) looked at the emergence of public relations as a social entity and determined the practice is typically viewed as an embedded profession whereas the notion of publicity is generally not. Oftentimes, the practice of publicity stood diametrically opposed to the concept of public relations. For instance, publicists, sometimes referred to as press agents, would stage events simply to generate attention, to spark public discussion about an event or organization. This stood in contrast to the more refined ideal of strategic public relations.

A legal definition of public relations emerged with court cases centering on First Amendment protections and commercial speech regulation. Within a legal construct, if public relations falls under a commercial speech category, then it would presumably be subject to government regulation. If not, then public relations would generally be afforded free speech protections (Myers, 2016). In particular, a case involving Nike (*Nike v. Kasky*, 2002, 2003) serves as a valuable case to review when considering an overarching public relations definition and function. Nike appealed its case to the U.S. Supreme Court after the California Supreme Court held that public relations strategies utilized by the company were indeed commercial speech. The case stemmed from a lawsuit brought against Nike by consumer advocate Marc Kasky, who alleged that overseas employees assembling Nike products were working in the equivalent of sweatshop facilities. A large part of Kasky's claim targeted how Nike framed the sweatshop allegations. Kasky argued that Nike mispresented the facts, that workers were indeed victims of sweatshops, while Nike argued its response was fitting, that it was simply implementing a public relations campaign in response (Myers, 2016). In sum, Nike maintained its approach was a public relations strategy, not commercial speech. The U.S. Supreme Court denied Nike's appeal, largely due to the case not being resolved at the trial court level. The case then remained fundamentally unresolved, leaving the legal interpretation of public relations open to debate on a case by case basis, certainly as it applied in California. Thus, the legal definition of public relations often hinges on content. Cases since the *Kasky v. California* case seem to indicate a reluctance to categorize public relations as exclusive commercial speech. Myers (2016) noted that "public relations plays many functions within an organization" (p. 829). The practice has elements of "establishing public trust, maintaining relationships, and fostering dialogue" (Myers, 2016, p. 830). But Myers added that many court rulings reveal that public relations is not necessarily afforded the highest levels of free speech protections. In many respects, the legal definition of public relations is "as complex as the field itself" (Myers, 2016, p. 830).

Grunig and Grunig (1992) examined public relations models through a systems model. One, typically viewed as the oldest traditional model, is described as a press agentry approach. This approach describes businesses or organizations seeking favorable publicity, and practitioners utilizing this approach would employ almost any means to do so. It should be noted that some scholars have recently argued that another term for press agents emerged during the early days of public relations practice in the early 20th century. The term, *publicity agents*, seemed to be coined and utilized by practitioners to avoid the more negative connotation of press agents (Myers, 2015). "The tactics and strategies used by publicity agents, their relationships with newspapers, and the fact that it was commonplace for publicity agents to be former newspaper reporters are all similarities between publicity agents and press agents" (Myers, 2015, p. 432). In essence, Myers concluded that publicity agents and press agents represented the same specialized professional category.

Another model, the public information model, is often implemented by organizations frequently responding to criticism from external publics. The public information model represents public relations professionals who work for government agencies, including colleges and universities. Both of these fit within the one-way frame discussed by Bernays (1952). In sum, press agentry and public information form a continuum of craft public relations, focusing on executing tasks from one end of the asymmetrical scale, such as publicity, to practicing tasks more closely linked to journalistic methods, the notion of public information, which resides at the opposite end of the asymmetrical scale.

A third model, labeled as the two-way asymmetrical model, applies to professionals who execute strategies to produce attitudes and behaviors the organization or business they represent desires. Practitioners utilizing this model craft messages strategically to influence stakeholders. The fourth and final model as outlined by Grunig and Grunig (1992) discusses the utilization of research by expediting communication between an organization and its stakeholders. This two-way symmetrical model essentially involves a collaborative process between organizations and their publics. Organizations or institutions practicing asymmetrical public relations assume the organization serves as the superior entity with regard to knowledge (Grunig, 1989). The perspective is the public “would benefit by cooperating with the organization” (Grunig, 1989, p. 32). A two-way symmetrical public relations lens focuses on the facilitation of understanding between an organization and its target publics. With this as a framework for the model, less emphasis is placed on persuasion (Grunig, 1989).

Turk (2000) studied public relations models and roles within a higher education configuration and found that no one public relations prototype emerged as a prevailing one, although familiarity with two-way models seemed to be less among higher education public relations practitioners. Turk (2000) recommended that college and university professionals focus on implementing a two-way public relations structure in order to create a “resolution of issues between their institutions and the publics” (p. 109). Turk found that implementation of two-way public relations models increased when practitioner knowledge grew as well.

Some scholars have argued that a two-way symmetrical model is a form of dialogue between parties and is perhaps the most ethical form of public relations, an interpersonal process rather than a set of guiding principles and practices that fit into a distinct model (Grunig, 1989; Grunig & Grunig, 1992). “The two-way symmetrical model is a moral and ethical approach to public relations than the other models” and is a “more effective model in practice” (Grunig, 1989, p. 40). Other schools of thought point to the concept of dialogue as contradictory to the objective of most public relations practitioners, who typically seek to persuade target publics with specific objectives in mind. “While it is feasible for organizations to engage in dialogue with various stakeholders, it is important to remember that dialogue is an abstract and complex concept; not a simple two-way conversation” (Theunissen & Wan Noordin, 2012, p. 12).

Yaxley (2012) examined the origins and periods of public relations careers, offering that five defined eras defined the bulk of the profession’s development through the decades. These were “the public be fooled (from mid-century), the public be damned (late 19th century), public information (early 20th century), propaganda and persuasion (mid-20th century), and public understanding (late 20th century)” (Yaxley, 2012, p. 402). Meanwhile, Hutton (1999) contended that public relations may be seen in six distinct alignments. These are persuasion, advocacy, public information, cause-related public relations, image/reputation management, and relationship management. Hutton (1999), seeking a contemporary portrayal of public relations, presented an optimal definition as “managing strategic relationships” (p. 211). Hutton argued this suggested definition sets aside communication as the traditional, core attribute of the profession, and other disciplines would be just as meaningful. Additional disciplines would include the fields of social sciences, social psychology, business management, and technology. In sum, the countless perspectives on public relations, its role and definition, demonstrate the fluid nature of the practice and reveal the evolving nature of the field. These perspectives seemed to mirror the Association, its progression and challenges, as a resource body for higher education professionals through much of the century.

Marketing Ties

This study focused on the Association and its subsequent public relations groups, not on institutional marketing and its alignment with collegiate governing structures. However, it is important to offer a brief synopsis of marketing because of its relationship to public relations and the impact marketing efforts may have on broader communication and outreach strategies of promoting and managing the image of higher education. Newman (2002) conducted a study among higher education institutions and found that colleges and universities at all levels implement marketing campaigns of some variety and thus noted no substantial effect by the differentiated structures within the higher education realm.

Litten (1980) investigated the higher education marketplace and assessed the benefits and risks of marketing. Marketing "seeks to provide services or sell products to people who need them" (Litten, 1980, p. 43). Taken further, responsible marketing, within a higher education context, would essentially be to blend student interests with academic curriculum requirements. Educational considerations are meshed with "characteristics, attitudes and behavior of the intended clients" (Litten, 1980, p. 43). Krachenberg (1972) argued that institutions of higher learning have multiple markets, including students, alumni, various branches of government, and the public at-large. Krachenberg noted that the marketing operation within college administrations should be located where it is most efficient for the institution. Krachenberg added, "Marketing is at once an operational force and a social phenomenon. It brings with it both the opportunity for achieving greater levels of administrative efficiency and, as well, the challenge associated with demonstrating higher levels of moral behavior" (p. 380).

Maguad (2007) explored the definition of *customer* and noted that higher education culture often rebuffs the idea of a customer-centric culture, one in which the customer, which includes the student population, serves as a collaborative partner. Maguad noted that a higher education customer is "the recipient or beneficiary of the outputs of work efforts or the purchaser of products and services. It can be a person, a unit, a department, or an entire organization" (p. 334). Maguad added that higher education customers, however, reside in a different environment than customers in a standard business setting. Students are the primary internal customers of higher education institutions while a wide range of customers exist in other capacities. Maguad (2007) concluded, "To be effective, therefore, colleges and universities must be fully committed to satisfying and anticipating the needs of these various customers" (p. 342). Kossak (1989) suggested marketing efforts within higher education include continuous outreach and innovative measures. Kossak (1989) stressed, "Entrepreneurship should not be called upon as a reaction to threats of survival; it is a legitimate marketing function, bold and imaginative" (p. 208). While marketing institutions of higher learning offers opportunities for growth, he also urged caution. "There are inherent characteristics of higher education products and services that will and must defy the tendency for immediate gratification" (Kossak, 1989, p. 223). Translating successful marketing applications from a business environment to a collegiate model may not necessarily yield similar results.

Sands and Smith (2000) suggested that in contemporary college and university environments, merging communications with marketing and the strategic goals of an institution is imperative. Goals must be interlaced as objectives for the broader institution and not operate in organizational silos, with communication and marketing efforts as separate units. They argued that communications and marketing functions within higher education be integrated and not placed in the more traditional areas of enrollment or development (Sands & Smith, 2000).

Slaughter and Rhoades (2011) examined an assortment of markets within institutions of higher learning and described the growing influence of commercialization as an “academic capitalist knowledge-learning regime” (p. 433). The authors argued that institutions routinely implement marketing practices into their student recruitment strategies. Early admissions policies, optional standardized test submissions, and “snap” applications are all interwoven within the marketing and enrollment recruiting strategies of many higher education institutions, and intertwining federal and state policies prompt colleges and universities to treat students as consumers (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2011).

The Effectiveness of Institutional Public Relations

Grunig, Grunig, and Ehling (1992) asserted that public relations adds value to organizational effectiveness and its impact “cannot be overstated” (p. 70). Public relations helps to align an organization’s goals with the expectations of its constituencies and build strategic relationships with stakeholders. To this end, public relations units are most effective when they are integrated into the decision-making systems of organizations (Grunig et al., 1992). Luo (2005), in an analysis of communication management in higher education and building on the excellence model espoused by Grunig et al. (1992) added, “An integrated public relations unit is able to quickly respond to issues and allocate resources to address problems without delay” (p. 4). Importantly, Grunig and Grunig (1998) stressed that in contemporary settings, public relations and marketing should serve as separate operational functions: “Public relations is most excellent when it exists as a separate strategic management function from marketing” (p. 149).

Mulnix (1996) studied marketing in higher education structures and found that public relations specialists supported the notion that an integrated marketing communications model was also a more effective system in order to meet institutional objectives. However, “a clear majority disagreed that marketing is considered an equal partner in the overall communication infrastructure” (Mulnix, 1996, p. 290). Essentially, Mulnix concluded that public relations practitioners viewed marketing as a part of an institution’s subsystem but not a dominant unit.

Hon (1996) explored the various definitions of public relations effectiveness and the value of effective communication. Hon’s study, which included interviews with 32 participants from a variety of sectors, found that effective public relations keeps organizations afloat, especially in times of crisis. Another theme arising from the study determined that effective public relations strengthens profits and reduces costs, adding value to the organization and its mission. Building relationships with stakeholders, bolstering media relations, and navigating government systems are examples. “Effective public relations clearly is a good bargain for organizations” (Hon, 1996, p. 46).

Previous Research on the Association and a Public Relations Bond

A broad review of the literature that integrated public relations and higher education revealed some mentions of the American Association of College News Bureaus, the American College Publicity Association, and the American College Public Relations Association, but deep scholarly offerings appeared somewhat rare, especially comprehensive discussions about the group’s genes and earliest label. One of the more noteworthy analyses stemmed from Warner (1996), who examined the development of higher education public relations offices, mainly at individual colleges and universities. Warner’s (1996) analysis touched on the American College Public Relations Association (ACPRA), providing a glimpse of the Association’s standing in the higher education field, describing the organization as a "strong force in the development of public relations for higher education" (p. 38). Warner also included the Association's eventual merger with the American Alumni Council, which formed CASE in 1974, but a comprehensive exploration was not included.

Bonfiglio (1990) critiqued the progression of public relations within the world of higher education and documented the significance of the ACPRA and its connection to formal, operational communication efforts at colleges and universities. Bonfiglio utilized data from two comprehensive analyses on public relations and publicity within a higher education realm. He then conducted a comprehensive literature review and data analysis of the 1958 Greenbrier Conference, which explored a possible merger of the American College Public Relations Association and the American Alumni Council, and the "Mindpower" campaign, launched by CASE in the early 1980s. Bonfiglio found that many public relations units struggle as consistent, effective entities at various periods of time, including enrollment booms. He maintained that institutions faced challenges with establishing a clear, precise definition of public relations and creating a public relations community within the academy that stressed the importance of higher education and its value to a larger public. Thus, efforts to enhance institutional image should also contemplate enriching the value of higher learning at a macro scale. Bonfiglio concluded that higher education public relations practitioners frequently fell short when seeking to promote and distinguish college and university public relations functions from public relations roles in other sectors, leading higher education as an institutional pillar vulnerable to rebuke. "Indeed, the maintenance of public confidence in higher education should be paramount in the work of the public relations practitioner" (Bonfiglio, 1990, p. 158).

Moore (1982) focused his research primarily on the merger between the Association and the American Alumni Council, noting, “The early historical development of both AAC and ACPRA paralleled the growth and the importance colleges and universities placed on external relations with their various constituency groups and the need for external funding” (p. 156). After several years of exploration, the two groups completed a merger in 1974 because of overlapping objectives, similar constituencies and mounting fiscal strains (Moore, 1982). CASE was thus born out of the merger.

Meanwhile, Cutlip (1994, 1995) and Bernays (1952) reviewed the evolution of public relations as a profession and offered constructive insight into the craft as it related to colleges and universities. For instance, Cutlip (1995) pointed to the first known higher education commencement ceremony, held at King’s College, now Columbia University. He wrote, “The officials at King’s College sensed the value of a staged public event in dramatizing its work, thus they sought to publicize the event” (Cutlip, 1995, p. 11). Cutlip noted how Harvard’s Charles Eliot saw the need for universities to monitor public opinion, as stated in Eliot’s inaugural address in 1869. University presidents should “influence public opinion toward the advancement of learning – and … anticipate the due effect on the University of the fluctuations of public opinion on educational problems” (Eliot, 1869, p. 61).

Perhaps the most dynamic early higher education leader, the University of Chicago’s energetic, resourceful President William Rainey Harper, took the notion of public support to another level by launching communication efforts aimed at both internal and external audiences (Cutlip, 1995). Harper’s efforts to promote and shape the burgeoning University are especially noteworthy, in that he departed an attractive professorship at Yale to assume the presidency of Chicago at the behest of John D. Rockefeller, one of the world’s wealthiest men and the institution's founder and primary benefactor (Geiger, 1986, 2015). Several higher education historians have placed Harper's leadership almost in a category of its own, due largely to his zeal to build a vibrant, sustainable institution. "The combination of genius and hyperactivity make Harper's abundant plans for the university almost too abundant to recount" (Geiger, 2015, p. 345). Part of Harper's plans included the launch of a university press, the nation's first, along with an extension office that featured outreach efforts in and around Chicago (Geiger, 2015). Harper's success prompted the affluent Rockefeller to later proclaim, "It is the best investment I ever made in my life" (as cited in Rudolph, 1990, p. 352).

Bernays (1952) reviewed public relations and its structure within a higher education context. He pointed to a survey of college and university presidents. The intent of the analysis focused on assessing the range and purpose of public relations activities within their respective institutions. Bernays discovered that the survey responses varied but essentially fit into four approaches. The first approach embraced the concept of higher education's close link to the public, a very broad viewpoint that everything an institution may do impacts the citizenry at-large. The second viewpoint saw public relations as a means to establish intellectual leadership in the community. A third perspective viewed public relations as a means to boost the image of the higher education institution. The fourth approach framed public relations as a platform for persuasion in order to accomplish specific goals, such as fundraising (Bernays, 1952).

The literature reveals the Association grew and progressed during its first few decades, developing from an informal gathering of a few practitioners to a more formal organization with membership traversing the nation and ties with institutions of all sizes. There are scholarly reviews of the Association focusing on various aspects of the organization, but deep offerings about the group as it matured and ascended to prominence in the first half of the 20th century remain somewhat scant. Perhaps one of the more important historical documents can be traced directly to the Association. Researched and written by Reck (1967), the book provides an insightful, historical overview of the organization's founding and overall progress through the years. Reck, who once served as the organization's president, had a unique perspective of the Association and its growth because of his extensive roles that stretched many decades. Through his own experiences within the Association and related branches, Reck documented the emerging role of the organization, its structural composition, and significant episodes that influenced and affected organizational changes. Notably, and perhaps not by coincidence, the dawn of the Association paralleled the rise of enrollment and influence of American higher education.

Geiger (1986) focused on the emergence of higher education infrastructure in the early part of the 20th century and examined higher education's collaboration with business, industry, government, and the private sector. He pointed to the post-World War I period as critical for colleges and universities, the same era that marked the burgeoning years of the AACNB. Grants for research rose substantially by the end of the 1920s, and many state universities relied upon alumni for donations. Additionally, extracurricular activities and external relations became more prominent, and these undertakings created enthusiasm and institutional pride for alumni (Geiger, 1986). Geiger (2015) also stressed that enrollment in colleges and universities doubled between 1915 and 1924. As noted earlier, the latter years of the 19th century and early period of the 20th century also marked a greater urgency for stakeholder relations and establishing meaningful relationships with constituents. "A president's external relations became more crucial as universities grew dependent on different constituencies for the resources on which they depended" (Geiger, 2015, p. 363). Penning (2008) reviewed media portrayals of public relations in the 1920s and noted, “After World War One, the country made a shift to a consumer culture. Along with this shift came a fascination with the notion of public opinion and formalized attempts to influence it” (p. 345).

This period mirrored the developing years for the Association and its growing interest in endorsing the benefits of colleges and universities and their value to the broader national culture. Harlow’s 1939 essay described public relations within educational institutions as an emerging force for institutions of higher learning. Harlow (1939) wrote, “The possibilities of public relations are becoming evident to more and more of our harassed college and university administrators” (p. 263). Harlow’s essay appeared to be one of the first to urge a more strategic focus on the practice. Public relations, at least conceptually, was ascending in stature, taking on an enhanced professional standing across the college and university landscape.

Rhetorical and Organization Theories

The AACNB and its associated branch organizations served as advocacy and resource groups that sought success for themselves, their profession, and higher education as an industry. A number of theories may be employed to review all of these networking groups. The following overview offers a synopsis of the AACNB via rhetorical theory, with organizational context as a backdrop.

Rhetorical Arena

Rhetoric serves as a helpful model to explore the Association and its growth as it evolved into an instrumental organization in the higher education domain. The concept of rhetorical communities rose to the surface when exploring avenues of discourse, establishing a domain in which higher education and public relations intersect. While the Association and its related organizations hailed from various regions of the country, ongoing professional discourse may have established a new rhetorical space for public relations practitioners linked with institutions of higher learning (Cook, 2014)

Mountford (2001) argued that rhetorical space "is the geography of a communicative event" (p. 42). This study will later analyze whether such rhetorical space extends beyond geography into a new dimension of rhetorical exchange, with the classic rhetorical concept of *Kairos* impacting the organization's founding. *Kairos*, an enduring rhetorical concept of discourse initiation, involves optimal timing, a sense of urgency, and opportunity (Ciurel, 2013). "Implicit in all three meanings embraced by *kairos* is the concept of an individual time having a critical ordinal position set apart from its predecessors and successors" (Ciurel, 2013, p. 44). Killingsworth (2005) stressed that *kairos* is "an awareness of the present situation of the audience and the need to act or change" (p. 26). In a dynamic, ever-changing higher education sector, a window in time may have served as the opportune moment for such an organization. Meanwhile, Zappen, Gurak, and Doheny-Farina (1997) maintained that a "rhetorical community is less a collection of people joined by shared beliefs and values than a public space or forum that permits these people to engage each other and form limited or local communities of belief" (p. 401). This study will analyze to what extent, if any, the Association created such a community.

As its network expanded and roster grew, the Association offered a steady opportunity for professional dialogue with its members and member organizations. To this end, Broom and Avanzino (2010) asserted that rhetoric, as a source of organizational discourse, "brings about identity, stability, growth, and decline" (p. 483). All of these descriptors could likely illustrate a phase of the Association at some point during its rich lifespan.

One researcher, Hauser (2002), described rhetoric as "the use of symbols to induce social action" (p. 3). Killingsworth (2005) defined rhetoric as "a concern for audience manifested in the situation and form of a communication” (p. x). The Association rose to prominence from an expanding higher education system in the early decades of the 20th century. Its purpose was to serve as a platform for members to engage in dialogue and discuss their respective professional responsibilities and challenges, ultimately strengthening their performances and, by extension, bolstering institutions of higher learning. Members sought to achieve positive outcomes through engagement with other professionals and thought leaders throughout the college and university continuum. Hauser (2002), in turn, described this as “social action” (p. 3).

Meanwhile, Foss (2004) defined rhetoric as three-dimensional, with a foundation on the utilization of symbols to communicate. Foss argued that humans create rhetoric, symbols serve as the medium for rhetoric, and the foundation for rhetoric is communication.

Rhetoric offers another meaningful link to the Association’s development from an operational and structural standpoint. College news bureaus existed but were not necessarily part of every institution’s organizational structure during the initial years of the 20th century. Communication professionals within American institutions realized the need for networking and building a professional environment. Frankenberg’s peers “realized something needed to be done along promotional lines . . . . They welcomed the chance for an exchange of views” (Pauly, 1942, para. 6). Dialogue prompted by Association leadership may have helped to generate membership and influence for higher education. As Hauser (2002) described, rhetorical theory focuses largely on symbolic forms, often persuasive in nature, to prompt social action. The study of rhetoric involves two areas of focus, methods aimed at generating discourse and social practice, or, as Hauser (2002) described, “the way symbolic performances influence practical choices” (p. 12). In this sense, rhetoric became operationalized through the Association, which offered a platform and, ultimately, resources for rhetorical strategies and practices. The next segment in the review briefly explores Bitzer's (1968) rhetorical situation, assessing how this communication model could strengthen understanding of the organization's formation and advancement.

Rhetorical Situation

One meaningful examination of the Association's rhetoric rests with a rhetorical theory espoused by Bitzer (1968). Bitzer argued that rhetoric is situation-based, meaning rhetorical forms arise when discourse occurs. Bitzer noted that rhetoric exists due to certain situational variables and is given significance by the situation. Bitzer (1968) wrote,

> A work of rhetoric is pragmatic; it comes into existence for the sake of something beyond itself; it functions ultimately to produce action or change in the world; it performs some task. In short, rhetoric is a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action. (p. 3)

In this sense, did the launch of the Association stem from an interest in initiating discourse about higher education in the public square? Did leaders sense a void, or a specific demand, within the rhetorical marketplace? Rhetorical situations arise when discourse is required to address a particular state of affairs. Bitzer (1968) maintained that rhetorical situations "must exist as a necessary condition of rhetorical discourse" (p. 5). In sum, rhetoric helps to shape image and reality through dialogue.

Bitzer's (1968) impactful model established follow-up perspectives about rhetorical climates. His position, that the rhetorical situation typically serves as prevailing element, dictating a fitting response from the rhetor, is of particular significance. Vatz (1973) urged that rhetors possess greater control in rhetorical environments as compared to rhetors outlined in

Bitzer's analysis. Vatz (1973) wrote, "Rhetors choose or do not choose to make salient situations, facts, events, etc." (p. 160). Consigny (1974) argued that rhetorical situations serve as more of an art, that contextual factors come into play, and that rhetors serve as managers within the process. Consigny (1974) postulated, "The rhetor discloses issues and brings them to resolution by interacting with the situation, revealing and working through the phenomena" (p. 179). Gorell (1997) pointed out that Bitzer did amend his position slightly, proffering that Bitzer later "gives somewhat more attention to the rhetor, discussing 'conditions of responsiveness' to the situation" (p. 398).

Smith and Lybarger (1996) reconstructed Bitzer's (1968) model and suggested reconfiguring it in order "to account for multiple exigences, multiple audiences, and the plethora of constraints they impose on or derive from any situation" (p. 210). This would enable applying the model in more complex, dynamic environments, as roles can be fragmented. Can adjustments be made with how the rhetor may approach different perspectives within the audience? This is an important consideration in that exigences, for instance, occur within the confines of systems and networks. They may comprise a collection of "discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures" (Foucalt, 1980, p. 194). Indeed, Ihlen (2011) appraised public relations rhetoric and reasoned that rhetorical situations are of a multifaceted nature, occurring in "a larger, constantly evolving historical, cultural, economic, and sociological backdrop" (pp. 455-456). Organizations frequently encounter varied situations with a range of issues and influences.

As rhetors within organizations respond to or react within situational contexts, institutions and networks may gain more prominence and notoriety, with timing and purpose serving as potential factors in shaping environments. It is here that a brief examination of organizational context could be relevant to the formation and progression of the Association, as the group's size, brand, and emphasis evolved over time.

Organizational Context

Organizational context helped to explain part of the Association structure, progression, and resilience through the decades. Overall, understanding the transformational dynamics of the Association will shed light on the group's philosophy and governance. The group regenerated following the first World War, endured the Great Depression, survived the second World War, and re-branded on two occasions before its eventual alliance with the American Alumni Council to establish CASE. Importantly, it also endured additional challenges during its multi-decade lifespan, including the birth of CoSIDA as a branch coalition of athletics-focused practitioners in the fifties, the spirited, merger-focused Greenbrier Conference during the same era, along with the campus and social upheaval of the 1960s. The stories woven around the group's challenges and eventual merger in some ways mirrored the broader higher education sector.

Mintzberg's (1980) analysis served as a beneficial concept to apply largely due to research on organizational model clusters. The models detailed by Mintzberg provided both a practical and theoretical framework for the examination of an organization's operating environment. Simple structure, machine bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy, divisionalized form, and adhocracy comprised Mintzberg's structural classifications. Mintzberg's work is of particular significance because of his theorem stressing that some organizations are elastic; they alter forms within and around eras. Organizational shapes evolve depending on situational dynamics; Mintzberg's (1980) five archetypes "represent a conceptual framework which can be used to help us comprehend organizational behavior—how structures emerge, how and why they change over time" (p. 339). Mintzberg's elasticity focus is of significance because of the insight it offers on organizational structure and dynamics over time. The Association took on different names, for instance, as the craft of public relations became more common and operational in both the business sector and higher education complex.

Horizontal Networks

The Association appeared to represent what higher education scholar John Thelin (2010) referred to as horizontal organizations. Such groups "are metaphorically the networks and synapses by which individual institutions are joined, providing multiple connections in which the collective cooperation contributes to each campus's distinctive definition of self-promotion and self-protection" (Thelin, 2010, p. 71). The Association of American Universities conceivably served as the most prestigious of the initial horizontal organizations, and its status helped to establish a certain ethos among its network brethren, including the American Council on Education. This study will explore the influence of the AACNB and its successor groups within this context. While horizontal associations, as described by Thelin, sought to bolster their influence in the public sphere, their pursuit of a larger voice within higher education domain prompted them to seek a greater presence not only in the towns and states in which they were located but in the nation's capital (Thelin, 2010). Harcleroad and Eaton (2011) pointed to external constituencies and networks as units that potentially impact funding and financial support for colleges and universities. Institutionally based membership organizations, private foundations, voluntary accrediting organizations, and voluntary consortia are all examples. Many of these constituencies, including the national associations, remain in place today in the interconnected network of American colleges and universities. Higher education had spread its wings well beyond the brick and mortar classrooms and related structures on campus. It had evolved into a national and international system, a broad, impactful industry with a substantial scope. One particular area of note was the Association's sports section, which sought a greater role within the group as college athletics became more prominent.

Sports Section Launches New Group

The Association was not without challenges at mid-century even as its membership and national network rose. In 1946, the organization changed its name to include the term public relations; thus, the American College Public Relations Association was born (About CASE: History, 2018). The new label marked the second name change for the original AACNB after a 1930 name change to stress publicity, producing the American College Publicity Association (About CASE: History, 2018). Moreover, members of the group engaged primarily in collegiate athletic promotion continued to seek more vigorous dialogue within their specialized field. In 1954, 37 sports information directors attended the association conference but began to explore a separate sports section meeting because of their discontent (Culp, [ca. 1972]). Initial concerns about robust discussion surrounding the new arena of collegiate athletics climbed to the forefront by mid-century. As a result, a separate sports section convention was planned for August 1955. With the new sports section convention process, interest in the larger American College Public Relations Association began to fade for many linked with athletics interests promotions. For instance, only 14 sports information directors attended the 1956 ACPRA convention. Sports public relations members stressed value and believed they could only attend one meeting a year, and that meeting should be the more focused summer gathering, not the broader public relations association meeting. CoSIDA was thus formed in August 1957 with about 102 sports information directors present (Culp, [ca. 1972]). In 2015, some 3,000 members belonged to the group (Our Organization, n.d.). A new conceptual space for sports rhetoric precipitated the need and demand for CoSIDA, and CoSIDA's existence, fashioned out of necessity, served as the presence that facilitated dialogue within that arena.

A Merger

Additional subjects emerged as key topics within the organization after the sports section opted to form its own wing. Development and alumni served as two areas that would prove to be potential suitors. The momentum to network and engage in professional dialogue with similarly minded associations would demonstrate a continuing theme and one that would eventually spark additional merger dialogue. A prominent gathering, held at the Greenbrier Resort West Virginia in 1958, hosted ACPRA representatives and a number of college presidents. The event, known as the Greenbrier I Conference, aimed to consider the increasingly important areas of public relations strategy, alumni relations, and fundraising in American higher education. Instead of operating as separate offices with various objectives, these areas were beginning to be viewed as strategic, functional units, all working collectively within a calculated operating system (About CASE, 2018; Reck, 1967). An official unification did not occur during the Greenbrier event, but the rhetoric surrounding a potential merger was on full display, along with the associated possibility. A union was not pending nor was it inconceivable.

The Association continued to forge ahead, listing more than 3,600 members with some 1,200 institutions represented by the end of the 1960s. This compared to 451 members in 1939-1940 (Warner, 1996). National campus unrest of the 1960s and early 1970s did not seem to impact the group in a negative manner or conversely, the protest movement could have strengthened it. "The association was a strong force in the development of public relations for higher education" (Warner, 1996, p. 38). With a strong foundation in place, solid nationwide programming, and a formidable membership roster, the underlying issue of a potential merger of the Association with other entities remained. A prospective union with the American Alumni Council worked its way into the organization's topics of discussion in the 1950s, and occasional rhetoric on the issue eventually prompted a more serious discussion (Reck, 1967; Warner, 1996). While the Greenbrier meeting in 1958 resulted in no formal alliance, the Association and the Alumni Council fashioned a joint study committee in 1973 and voted to merge in 1974, with the transformation becoming official shortly thereafter. The move toward an alliance and the eventual merger itself did not arrive as a major revelation. Discussions had arisen at various points in time for a period of years, beginning in the early 1950s (Warner, 1996). CASE launched with a new title, but the imprint of the former American Association of College News Bureaus appeared evident in its structural composition.

Public relations began to blossom as a needed profession as business and industry surged to new heights in the early years of the 20th century. Colleges and universities began to experience substantial change, and competition became part of the higher education condition. The Association and its related brands and branches seemed to impact both the structural composition and the culture of American higher education upon its founding in 1915 (Cook, 2014). The shifting names of the initial AACNB organization reflected a broader conundrum within the emerging field of public relations itself. What is public relations? Typically, the most refined definitions include the paramount interests of the organization and its publics, with a strategic focus on managing relationships. These name changes appear to parallel changes within the Association. At the time of the public relations name conversion in 1946, Reck (1946) stressed the strategic concept of the craft, noting, "Public relations is a way of life for an entire institution and not merely the job of a single individual" (p. 273). Bernays (1952) noted the unique nature of public relations as the profession launched itself into a mainstream profession.

In a higher education context, “the college and university presidents, the faculty, and the alumni are the laymen; the public relations directors are the experts” (Bernays, 1952, p. 283). The Association evolved and grew its network and as a result began to have a greater impact on American higher education structures (Cook, 2014). The establishment of a national office in Washington, D.C. in 1950 served as an important administrative and symbolic step for the organization, a major development that enhanced the group’s visibility and moved the AACNB, and, by extension, the ACPRA, into a new domain.

In intercollegiate athletics, instead of a branch of a broad public relations culture, college sports public relations progressed into its own domain, creating a new environment within the structure of higher education institutions. When CoSIDA initially formed, it recorded 152 paid members. A few years later, in 1959, it posted 262 members on its roster. A decade later, in 1969, membership totaled 446 (Culp, [ca.1972]). Membership has climbed to more than 3,000 in 2015 (Our Organization, n.d.). Noticing CoSIDA’s value-added significance, the National Collegiate Athletic Association began to partner with CoSIDA on programming issues in the early 1960s, particularly on matters related to college football (Culp, [ca.1972]). Even today, CoSIDA touts its value through its own web site. The organization (Our Organization, n.d.) stresses a two-pronged mission, including a clear emphasis on strategy:

> 1) Assist communications and public relations professionals at all collegiate levels with professional development and continuing education, helping its members deal in a strategic and effective manner with the various issues, challenges and opportunities that exist within the fast-paced and ever-changing collegiate communications environment.
> 2) Play a significant leadership and resource role (i.e., “Strategic Communicators for College Athletics”) within the overall collegiate athletics enterprise, thus helping other

> management groups and their respective memberships deal with the set of communications-based issues that is the most complex and challenging in history (para. 5-6).

Meanwhile, close ties to the American Alumni Council and the ensuing unification that formed CASE seem to validate the early vision of Frankenberg and his interest in constructing a positive image of colleges and universities and the broader concept of advanced education (Cook, 2014). Some scholars, such as Sands and Smith (2000), have probed public relations, communications, and the role these functions play within the structural framework of American institutions of higher education.

An initial review of the literature suggests that the AACNB assisted in building a foundation for the vocation of public relations within the academy and aided in establishing a structural framework as well. Today, the mission of CASE is, "As a catalyst for advancing education worldwide, we inspire, challenge and equip communities of professionals to act effectively and with integrity to champion the success of their institutions" (About CASE: Mission, 2018, para. 2). This statement seems to reinforce at least the notion of functional integration within higher education organizations.

Summary

This literature review offered a summation of public relations, its development within American culture, and the associated challenges linked with how the craft was defined as it became a prominent profession in the opening decades of the 20th century. The section reviewed marketing schemes as they relate to integration with public relations strategies and offered a summation of previous research on the organization and its associated branch units. The chapter also incorporated an examination of potential theories to the organization's growth and influence, including Bitzer's (1968) rhetorical situation theory and the organizational context discussed by Mintzberg (1980). A brief synopsis of Thelin's (2010) horizontal networks within higher education structures was also discussed because of its conceptual alliance to the AACNB and related educational networks. Finally, the chapter included a discussion of the Association's influence, as it progressed from a small core of higher education advocates to a large nationwide network of communication professionals. The progression of the organization sparked the founding of a branch group, CoSIDA, and a merger with the American Alumni Council, and formed CASE. Both CoSIDA and CASE remain active and engaged higher education coalitions today.

The following chapter will offer an outline of the study's qualitative research approach. It touches on the application of a biographical lens for reviewing the organization and emphasizes that the core of the study employs an historical research methodology, utilizing data collection via historical archives. It incorporates a description of rhetorical theory, particularly Bitzer's (1968) rhetorical situation, which was implemented to add a valuable dimension for understanding the Association's progress. The chapter also describes methods that were utilized to validate findings.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study stemmed from an initial pilot investigation conducted for a History of Higher Education graduate-level course at Indiana State University, prompting a subsequent conference paper and associated presentation (Cook, 2014). In sum, the study extended the earlier assessment and more deeply probed the Association and its development and progression within the higher education sphere. Through this investigation, the study examined the roots and context of higher education public relations and, by extension, the Association. The group's successes led to the birth of the contemporary organizations CASE, and CoSIDA. Via archival data collection, the researcher reviewed the rich narratives that helped to shape the organization from its outset in 1915 until it formed a national office in 1950, although additional documents created after 1950 were reviewed in order to assess and review context and historical developments. The Association and its related bodies offer meaningful potential for scholarly inquiry. Although some research has been conducted about the Association, deep scholarly inquiries and analysis of the organization's rich past are minimal, including research on the group's rhetoric, influence, organizational structure, and leadership culture. Thus, major gaps in the literature abound. This particular investigation will seek to address these disparities. This chapter presents insight into the study's conceptual framework, theoretical base, and methodology. As an analysis of the topic moved forward, a review of prospective approaches led to a qualitative framework featuring a historical narrative with elements of rhetorical theory and aspects of organizational theory. Guiding research questions helped provide clarity to the study. These questions related to how the Association created a new rhetorical arena within higher education and the prominent events and decisions that shaped the organization as it evolved and led to the creation of new, related groups that built their own professional networks. Collectively, these methods and associated questions served as the core of the study.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical base of the dissertation blended educational and interpretative biographical lenses with a rhetorical focus. Rhetorical theory centering on situational context was employed in order to provide insight into how rhetoric and associated narratives may have impacted events and structure. While the study concentrated on the evolution of an organization, the core of the analysis will weave in the narratives that relay the story of the Association, the individuals who led it, and the events that helped to shape it.

Reviewing the organization's story through a detailed, biographical lens offers readers rich context, a glimpse into the past. This particular analysis sought to utilize stories as data. In recent decades, "stories have moved center stage as a source of understanding the meaning of human experience" (Merriam, 2009, p. 32). Biographies often serve as one meaningful platform of narrative analysis. Denzin (1989) maintained that biographies are expressions of lived experiences. Biographical studies analyze, construct, and deconstruct these experiences in search of meaning. The following study entwined the concepts of a biography and applied certain aspects of a biographical overview to an organization's development, giving voice to the decision makers who guided the association through the decades.

A rhetorical communication lens includes the notion of rhetorical situation. Bitzer (1968) submitted that rhetorical situations represent conditions in which the rhetor or rhetors seek to address gaps that summon modifications. Essentially, deficiencies often arise in the public arena and prompt a need for rhetoric to offer discourse and insight. The study will help to determine if the Association addressed such deficiencies, both rhetorically and structurally.

Rhetorical Situation

Bitzer (1968) argued that three primary ingredients comprise a genuine rhetorical situation. Those ingredients are exigence, audience, and constraints. An exigence is ultimately a deficiency, or a flaw. (Bitzer, 1968). Importantly, Bitzer asserted that all exigences are not rhetorical in nature, suggesting death and winter as examples. An exigence may be positively amended through rhetoric. Bitzer argued that rhetorical situations largely control the reaction of the rhetor, that the act is dependent upon the situation. Audience is the second element to comprise rhetorical situation. For instance, a rhetor must have individuals to address within a communication context. A rhetorical audience is capable of being influenced and also serving as agents of change. A rhetorical situation also includes constraints. Rhetorical constraints vary in nature, hold the power of context, and may impact any change or modifications that are part of the rhetorical process. Constraints may include attitude, traditions, personal interests, along with logical proofs and even the style of the rhetor.

The configuration of a rhetorical situation varies, and conditions may be highly or loosely structured. Bitzer (1968) maintained that situations built around clear processes tend to be more highly structured. A jury deliberation within an organized, methodical judicial system serves as an example of a highly structured situation. Loosely structured situations could include environments in which the audience is not clearly defined – or not obviously rhetorical in nature.

As they evolve, situations eventually "mature or decay or mature and persist" (Bitzer, 1968, p. 12). Depending on rhetorical context and structure, conditions may persist, such as a body of rhetorical literature, or recur, such as a presidential inauguration and the environment surrounding the event.

Bitzer's (1968) base theory of rhetorical situation provides a constructive platform for analysis and application to the Association's founding and the dialogue of its leaders through the decades. In essence, Bitzer argued that rhetorical discourse has context and that all rhetoric is situational, that is, certain dynamics exist for a rhetor to create or perform discourse. Bitzer maintained that rhetorical situation is comprised of more than context, or the time, place, and meaning of discourse. Rhetorical discourse also encompasses more than persuasion, which may occur "whenever an audience can be changed in belief or action by means of speech" (Bitzer, 1968, p. 3).

Instead, Bitzer (1968) asserted that rhetorical situations are multifaceted. When situations arise, several modules come into play to generate an *authentic* situation. First, rhetorical discourse exists in response to a situation, similar to someone who offers an answer in response to a question. Next, rhetorical significance arises due to the situation, much like an answer or solution to the question or problem. Third, a rhetorical situation surfaces as a necessary condition of rhetorical discourse, very much like a question acting as a needed condition for a related answer. Fourth, it is plausible that questions may go unanswered and problems may not be solved. Fifth, a situation is rhetorical in that it needs and invites discourse which could impact its reality. Sixth, discourse is rhetorical because it functions as a suitable response to a situation which could need or request it. Finally, the situation controls the rhetorical response similar to the question guiding the answer and the problem directing the solution. Bitzer's rhetorical situation framework has been viewed as a blend between “Aristotle’s realism and John Dewey’s pragmatism” (Smith & Lybarger, 1996, p. 199).

As we have seen, Bitzer (1968) contended that a genuine rhetorical situation requires three elements in order to exist: exigence, audience, and constraints. Bitzer (1968) described an exigence as an “imperfection marked by urgency, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be” (p. 6). If an exigence cannot be altered, it is not rhetorical, and discourse must be present as a solution to resolve the exigence. The exigence requires or invites discourse. Rhetoric also requires an audience, but not just those who hear or read in terms of discursive engagement. Bitzer (1968) wrote, “A rhetorical audience consists only of those persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change” (p. 7). Constraints, meanwhile, comprise any entity that could constrain decisions and actions aimed at modifying the exigence. Beliefs, attitudes, motives, facts, and traditions all comprise potential constraints. Bitzer maintained that constraints could stem from those originated by the rhetor and those within the situation that could be operative. Bitzer (1968) summed up rhetorical situations with a perceptive reflection:

> In the best of all possible worlds, there would be communication perhaps, but no rhetoric—since exigences would not arise. In our real world, however, rhetorical exigences abound; the world really invites change—change conceived and effected by human agents who quite properly address a mediating audience. (p. 13)

This study sought to determine how the concept of rhetorical situations could potentially be framed around the Association, its formation, and its development. Did Frankenberg recognize a genuine rhetorical situation and seize the moment, creating a new rhetorical space for public relations and higher education?

Biography of an Organization

The study was a qualitative analysis of the Association and, ultimately, its impact on subsequent spinoff networks. When studying the Association's evolution and numerous, meaningful experiences of members and leaders rose to the forefront. Collectively, these events conveyed stories within the Association and helped to explain its ascent within the higher education realm. Within this study, the conceptual framework of a biography was applied to the Association. Employing a study through biographical lens offered the opportunity for deeper, richer context. This method assigned a voice to the leaders and stakeholders who shaped the group and its range of influence through the decades. Denzin (1989) analyzed biographical texts and argued that biographies are life stories and are fluid. Denzin (1989) described them as "an unfinished project or set of projects" (p. 29). Denzin pointed to group storytelling as one avenue to understand shared experiences and cultures. Individuals within groups craft their own culture and also re-shape themselves in the process. This study utilized a similar interpretive biographical framework in relation to an organization, conjoining shared experiences by association members across a number of years. Denzin (1989) added that lives can be "studied, constructed, reconstructed and written about" (p. 28). A lived experiences application presents a viable path of analysis. Denzin (1989) framed biographies as a "studied use and collection of life documents" (p. 69) that help to shape an individual's life. It is within the same construct that this study was arranged. Although the primary focus of this analysis examined an organization, it is essential to remember that the organization was founded and coordinated by individuals with their own unique stories who faced challenges and achieved personal and professional successes within their respective lived experiences. For instance, the birth of the organization occurred just before the commencement of the first World War, and the group essentially suspended operations until the War ended, emerging stronger and flourishing in the subsequent decades. The leaders who engaged with the Association during its early days and beyond helped to spur the group's early progress and sought to build a culture that served as an influential voice in the higher education arena. It is within this concept that an interpretative lens is beneficial. "The stories that members of groups pass on to one another are reflective of understandings and practices that are at work in the larger system of cultural understandings that are acted upon by group members" (Denzin, 1989, p. 81). As Finkelstein (1998) noted, biographies serve as more than simple chronicles. They offer insight into the fabric of history and individuals that shaped that history.

Historical Research Approach

The study embedded an historical research approach, or historiography, within a principal methodological approach. Historical research focuses on methodically gathering and organizing data "to better understand past phenomena and their likely causes and consequences" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010, p. 433). Historical analysis typically includes identification of historical sources, validation of evidence, and interpretation of historical data, although these phases may be interchangeable at times, depending on the researcher and the topic. The study relied heavily on primary source documents as instruments for analysis when piecing together material for the study and subsequently analyzing and interpreting the data. This is particularly noteworthy because there is a dearth of deep scholarly or general literature about the organization and primary source documents build a credible stockpile of data, as individuals who contributed to the documents witnessed the proceedings and circumstances affecting the organization. They were witnesses to the meaningful events, dialogue, and cultural sway of an organization that evolved in notoriety in a relatively short period of time. I gathered data from several archived boxes at the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives unit, and archives stored at Ohio State University, and original archives with CASE and CoSIDA. I reviewed several original correspondences, publications, and conference materials from the Association's early years, along with documents leading up to the group's eventual merger with the American Alumni Council, although this study will focus primarily on the AACNB and its growth from 1915 until it launched its national office in 1950. This period established the groundwork for the group's eventual merger with the Alumni Council that formed CASE, which remains a viable resource and advocacy organization. I also secured additional original source documents, primarily conference programs and related materials, from archive holdings at Indiana University in Bloomington, IN. Secondary sources were also utilized to help frame aspects of the broader historical context surrounding higher education and public relations. Within a historical research structure, secondary sources are descriptions of events in which the author was not present but relied upon other means for crafting an analysis. I sought to incorporate a deep analysis of these documents as I moved ahead with the study and crafted my analysis.

Meshing biographical and historical contexts creates a life history. In this instance, the story of an expansive network, an association, is portrayed, largely through the experiences and observations of its founders and leaders. Moser (2013) stressed that life histories connect an individual's context with an understanding of the world. One element of a qualitative life history study involves length of time. "Life histories must span a long period of time to analyze personal development within the individual" (Moser, 2013, p. 50). While this study instead will focus on an *organization's* life history and associated influences, it should be noted that the group's initial configuration lasted almost six decades and its legacy remains integral in the contemporary forms of the modern day CASE and CoSIDA. They each represent history. While this study will primarily review the formative decades, the actions and events transpiring during this period created the groundwork for subsequent organizations. As Thelin (2011), the noted higher education historical scholar, aptly observed, “Colleges and universities are historical institutions. They may suffer amnesia or have selective recall, but ultimately heritage is the lifeblood of our campuses” (p. xxi). It is within this context that the broad public relations alliance working alongside these historical institutions was explored and analyzed.

Guiding Research Questions

The following research questions about the Association helped to guide the study:

1. What were the formative events and narratives that allowed the Association to evolve from 1915-1950, generating succeeding organizations?
2. To what extent, if any, did the Association create a new rhetorical arena for higher education?

Research Design

The study employed a qualitative methodology. A qualitative study is research in which “researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed…how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (Merriam, 2009, p. 13). As Peshkin (1993) stressed in his support of qualitative research methodology, “Many types of good results are the fruits of qualitative research. Its generative potential is immense” (p. 28). Within this construct, I implemented a number of approaches in order to piece together substantive findings. These included deep reviews of the literature on the practice of public relations within higher education institutions. Also, a number of primary and original source documents were examined. Examples included letters and memorandums, historical texts, such as conference programs and proceedings, along with rarely utilized books. Some of these materials were accessed through special library requests. Archived sources were stored in the Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives section of the Indiana University-Purdue University Library in Indianapolis and Indiana University in Bloomington, IN. Other archived resources were held at The Ohio State University Library archives in Columbus, Ohio. I also secured appropriate archived documents provided by CoSIDA and CASE. These archives served as valuable resources for investigation. Other sources of information included a review of Historical Newspapers Online via the ProQuest database. Primary source documents were of particular importance because they functioned as documents or works produced by individuals linked directly to the study's focus. Reviewing primary sources helps reviewers "learn the author's perspective directly without a reviewer's interpretation of what the author wrote" (Gall et al., 2010, p. 92). Within a historical context, researchers often rely on various types of historical primary documents. These may include archives, text and other media, oral histories, relics, and quantitative historical materials, such as census records.

Validity of Data

In this study, archives, such as letters, were of particular significance because of their value in tracing the context of key events within the Association over time. These sources are worthy of review because they offer insight into the professional and personal interests of Association leaders, providing a well-rounded view of communication and decision making within the organization and its branches through the years. Meanwhile, secondary sources are related to the focus of the study but are further removed from the core, such as a review or analysis of a study. Some historical books, no longer in print, will be provided for my review during the research process. Having an abundance of resources to review and examine during the research phase is especially important because it offers opportunity to enhance the study and any related findings with rich detail. Wolcott (1994) stressed that a trio of ingredients are vital within a qualitative research approach. These are description, analysis, and interpretation. A meaningful focus on these three elements offers the potential for a more significant study, and hypothetically, findings. Crafting a solid qualitative review ultimately rests with effective storytelling via close review of the data on various levels. “To be able to tell . . . a story well is crucial to the enterprise” (Wolcott, 1994, p. 17). Ultimately, it is imperative to review the potential for rich story possibilities when analyzing data. “Being analytical – or interpretive – is, after all, a frame of mind” (Wolcott, 1994, p. 408). As the study proceeded, I sifted through archived sources and sought to focus on the documents that offered meaningful insight into the individuals that led it, the events that influenced the organization, and the potential impact on the public relations practices and structures within institutions of higher learning and associated networks.

Employing a close review of data is imperative in order to establish an appropriate amount of rigor for the qualitative analysis and to fortify corroboration. According to Creswell (2013), corroboration of evidence from a number of sources is essential in order to “shed light on a theme or perspective” (p. 251). The objective of data triangulation is two-fold: to confirm data and to ratify data are complete (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). Confirmation essentially involves comparing data from multiple sources and assessing verification, while completeness relates to assembling multiple perspectives from a wide swath of sources in order to offer a complete research picture (Houghton et al., 2013). A second validation strategy involves the applied concept of thick, rich descriptions. Creswell (2013) wrote, “Thick description means that the researcher provides details when describing a case or when writing about a theme" (p. 252). Within qualitative methodologies, clarifying researcher bias, or reflexivity, stands as a third validation strategy. For instance, the research may outline previous experiences or personal predispositions that could influence the study's approach or findings (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Miller, 2000). Peer debriefing provides yet another strategy to enhance validation for qualitative researchers. Peers engage with the researcher and seek to explore key questions related to the study, such as "methods, meanings and interpretations" (Creswell, 2013, p. 251). An individual serving in the peer debriefing capacity is an editor and partner, an auditor who assists in bolstering the ethos of both the researcher and the study.

The plan for this qualitative study was to utilize several techniques. First among these was data triangulation, analyzing artifacts, historical documents, and archives from a range of sources, including original source records. Next, a close review of these historical documents provided ample opportunity to craft thick, rich descriptions of the Association's evolution and the leaders that shaped its development. Researcher reflexivity also stands as a validation method. In this study, I offered a summary of my own professional background and proficiencies as a former public relations practitioner. These previous experiences, coupled with extensive work in higher education, sparked my interest in the historical advances of public relations at America's colleges and universities along with the organization that helped to lead the way for these advances. Such experiences could also have shaped my own interpretation of the many historical documents and archives I reviewed for the study. Finally, I utilized my committee to assist with peer debriefing, adding another layer of credibility. As Creswell and Miller (2000) wrote, "Peer debriefers can provide written feedback to researchers or simply serve as a sounding board for ideas" (p. 129). These procedures encompass all three paradigm assumptions outlined by Creswell and Miller in their detailed discussion of two-dimensional frameworks utilized to evaluate validity. Triangulation fits within a post-positivist, or systematic, paradigm, and is typically associated with the lens of the researcher. Thick, rich description meets the constructivist paradigm, as viewed via the lens of people external to the study. Researcher reflexivity falls within the critical paradigm and is most closely linked with a researcher lens. Peer debriefing also is linked with the critical paradigm as espoused by Creswell and Miller and is most aligned with those external to the study. It should also be noted that archived documents, like many utilized within this study, are open to the review of public and other researchers. Ultimately, “the burden of producing a study that has been conducted and disseminated in an ethical manner lies with the individual investigator” (Merriam, 2009, p. 34). Within the context of this specific study, I reviewed and assessed artifacts and associated archived documents that assisted in revealing the significant narratives surrounding the AACNB as it formed a long-standing network of nationwide communication professionals.

Summary

Chapter 3 reviewed the methodological foundation for the study. It described the study as a qualitative inquiry built around biographical and historical research narratives. Rhetorical theory, specifically Bitzer’s (1968) rhetorical situation, served as a significant emphasis in the study. Guiding research questions and associated design sections assisted with establishing a structure for the investigation. Guiding research questions were: What were the formative events and narratives that allowed the Association to evolve in its early decades, generating succeeding organizations? And, to what extent, if any, did the Association create a new rhetorical arena for higher education? The chapter also provided an overview of data validity, offering blended approaches to strengthen the depth of the study. Because of the vast assortment of original source documents and archives related to the Association and its development, meticulous analysis of the group’s events and narratives were required in order to determine what documents and narratives provided the most value in seeking to better understand the Association’s story and its impact on higher education, public relations, and organizational rhetoric. The anticipated sheer volume of archives alone offered additional opportunities for valuable scholarship and new perspectives of exploration.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The study sought to uncover whether the Association and its related organizations created a new rhetorical ground in American higher education and aided in building public relations as a specialized, proficient entity within the higher education ecosphere. With rhetoric as a theoretical framework, the investigation weighed how the group originated, studied the rich narratives fashioned in its evolution, and examined to what extent the organization may have aided in serving as a foundation for long standing public relations units in higher education.

The following chapter will discuss findings, exploring how the group's founder, T. T. Frankenberg, offered a voice for collegiate communication professionals, helping the AACNB overcome significant hurdles early in its lifespan and move along a considerable growth trajectory in the world of higher education. It will review the principal themes highlighted during key association gatherings, including the impactful 1931 and 1944 conventions and their legacies for higher education public relations. The significance of each theme will also be discussed, linking the group's rhetoric with public relations as an institutional instrument in the higher education sphere. It will also examine how the organization built a coast-to-coast rhetorical presence, underscored by the establishment of a national office in 1950.

Guiding research questions investigated for the study were

1. What were the formative events and narratives that allowed the Association to evolve from 1915-1950, generating succeeding organizations?
2. To what extent, if any, did the Association create a new rhetorical arena for higher education?

Several major outcomes emerged from the research.

1. First, the founder of the organization, T. T. Frankenberg, acted as both a visionary and a vigorous advocate for the bond of higher education and a communications infrastructure, establishing a footing for the Association as it grew from fledgling status to an integral part of the national higher education web.
2. Next, Association conventions served as a critical hub for publicity and public relations discourse, allowing members to synthesize issues of the day and strengthen a broad network in its relative infancy.
3. The primary issues highlighted by the Association, including the concept of higher education *interpretation*, dialogue on the emerging issue of intercollegiate athletics, and a focused, strategy-oriented mindset, allowed it to expand and create an extensive brand, eventually permitting it to establish a compelling profile and national office.
4. The early work of Association leaders enabled the AACNB and its subsequent organizations to fill a discursive gap, creating a new space in higher education, a space suited for communication professionals with a skill set in image making and the knowledge base of navigating the evolving higher education terrain.

The findings will be analyzed and discussed in the following sections.

Presentation of Findings

Frankenberg

It is unclear whether Theodore T. Frankenberg, commonly known at T. T., viewed himself as a pioneer, although he may have done so somewhat reluctantly given his modest demeanor. What is clear, however, is that Frankenberg served as the architect in the founding and development of the Association and its evolving designations (Cook, 2014). Frankenberg's interest in such a group arose from a simple idea, the notion of engaging with like-minded professionals in the higher education field and maybe even enhancing stakeholder communication practices along the way. Frankenberg was not alone in his interest, as about 10 professionals at colleges and universities curious about publicity ideas for their respective institutions planned a late December, 1915 meeting in Ohio (Reck, 1967). Frankenberg, in an effort to gather guidance from prominent journalists for the meeting and perhaps seeking reassurance, crafted a letter to *The New York Evening Post* also in December, 1915, just a few weeks before the group's first gathering. Days later, a response from newspaper's editor, J. P. Gavit, seemed to inspire and encourage Frankenberg. In his reply, Gavit (1915) wrote, "We feel it quite strongly that every College should make it the business of somebody to send to those newspapers that want it, regularly and intelligently, the news of the College as an institution" (J. P. Gavit to T. T. Frankenberg, Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives, December 14, 1915). Frankenberg (1915) answered with notable enthusiasm: "I am particularly glad to be reinforced from such a notable source." Frankenberg (1915) added, "I shall read every word of it to the conference of college publicity when they meet here on the 29th" (T. T. Frankenberg to J. P. Gavit, Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives, December 16, 1915). Thus, the initial meeting of the group sparked more discussion, and the potential for a second get-together gained traction. Frankenberg, who worked for the Western College for Women in Ohio, was a former reporter with *The Columbus Dispatch* (Pauly, 1942). It is possible or even likely that Frankenberg's sense for public relations and promotions emboldened him to push for another meeting, and a second assembly was calendared just more than a year later in Chicago. The meeting was paired with the American Association for Teachers of Journalism due largely to logistical reasons. Held at the LaSalle Hotel in April 1917, the second meeting included an election of officers and served as a springboard for additional, meaningful activities for the organization, including the group's first full-fledged conference (Reck, 1967). Bernard Sobel, of Purdue University, attended the 1917 meeting and stressed his perspective on the importance of the group in a follow up letter to Frankenberg and prospective members within the field. In his correspondence, Sobel emphasized a neoteric relevancy for collegiate public relations, an elevated professional image. For a mere $2 per year, institutions could join and gain boundless value from a membership. Sobel (1917) wrote, "This intention is of the greatest potential and dynamic significance, for it is a means for bringing the colleges of the country closer together, for aiding them in their progress" (B. Sobel to T. T. Frankenberg, Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives, May 4, 1917).

Frankenberg served as convention speaker for the 1917 gathering, largely because he had just co-authored a book on journalism and the publisher recommended him (Frankenberg, [ca. 1952]). The title of his address was *Consider the Wastebasket*. Frankenberg paraphrased the work, which addressed what many editors often viewed as shortcomings of college news bureaus and the lack of focus that would enable higher education officials to receive appropriate attention about their respective institutions. Editors, instead, would place such potential news items in the nearby wastebasket. Each rejected item would have a note on the back to explain why it had been discarded instead of printed in the newspaper. Frankenberg (ca. 1952) later recalled, “The series of failures, or almost successes . . . covered the major sins of college publicity as it was too often practiced in that day” (p. 2).

Following the conclusion of the formal session, attendees interested in continuing dialogue about college publicity efforts gathered in the corner of the conference room. Thus, the Association was formed, but the largest debate centered on the group name. “The more experienced directors were calling themselves what they were: ‘publicity directors.’ But the very frankness of the term scared the more timid” (Frankenberg, [ca. 1952], p. 2). In sum, the title of “news bureaus” was born, complete with 25 members. The group selected Frankenberg as president (Frankenberg, [ca. 1952]). In addition, the Association was officially founded on April 7, 1917, within days of the United States entering World War I. A review of historical artifacts suggested that Frankenberg played a significant role in framing the organization as it bonded during the many inherent challenges of World War I and then moved forward with its formal conference on January 2-3, 1920 (Reck, 1967).

The first convention of the Association in the early days of 1920 stands out on a number of levels, including sparse attendance at the gathering (Reck, 1967). However, merely discussing the event based on its initial attendance would leave significant gaps in a far superior story. The group’s initial national assembly is singularly worthy of scholarship through a number of prisms. However, the rhetorical content included in event details provide rich context as to the conference setting in the early years of the 1920s and sets the tone for the Association’s development in the decades that followed. During his inaugural address on January 3, Frankenberg (1920) discussed the first World War’s effects on the organization. “Out of our very limited membership at the outset, almost 50 percent engaged in some form of war work or patriotic endeavor" (Frankenberg, 1920, p. 1). Frankenberg, seemingly ever focused on communication planning and promotion, also tied the successful war effort to the burgeoning field of publicity, stating,

> It is that few will gainsay the fact that no single force was of greater virtue in the prosecution in the war than that of well-directed publicity. Publicity raised the army. Publicity sold the bonds. Publicity put over war stamps and all of the war time benevolences." (Frankenberg, 1920, p. 1)

Striving to further solidify the Association's network, Frankenberg proceeded to read narratives from various leaders in higher education and their respective views on the importance of college and university publicity. "Publicity of the right sort is wanted and required by practically every first class institution of learning in the country" (Frankenberg, 1920, p. 3). He encouraged Association members to engage in a membership campaign. "The time is now ripe for a concerted movement which shall bring into our fold as members of the busy, brainy men and women who are mediating between colleges and universities of this country and the press of their communities." (Frankenberg, 1920, p. 3)

Frankenberg's words paid dividends, as the Association successfully thwarted initial membership challenges and expanded its base, both in participation and geography. In 1930, looking to broaden its role within college and university structures, including fundraising, the fledgling but resolute group changed its name from the label of *News Bureaus* to the new name of *Publicity* (Reck, 1967). The name change arrived despite early concerns voiced by founding Association members about including *publicity* as part of the group's title, as the mere label of *publicity* often sparked negative inferences about circuses and similar entertainment acts (Frankenberg, [ca. 1952]).

Frankenberg's deep passion for the emerging communication craft extended beyond higher education, although he was clearly fervent about the role of publicity in the realm of colleges and universities. Frankenberg launched a business, T. T. Frankenberg Inc., a promotions firm, which served various advocacy organizations ("The Passing of a Reporter," 1958) and worked as a fundraiser for Marts and Lundy, an influential fundraising agency ("Theodore Frankenberg Obituary," 1958). His work with Marts and Lundy gained Frankenberg considerable notoriety, winning first-place awards in competitions against such large corporations as General Motors, DuPont, and American Telephone and Telegraph (Lundy, 1966). Upon his death, Frankenberg's Marts and Lundy contemporaries offered valuable insight into Frankenberg's professionalism.

Frankenberg's resourceful, creative aptitude spurred him to pen a pair of non-fiction books. One of his books, *Billy Sunday: His Tabernacles and Sawdust Trails*, focused on famed early 20th century evangelist and former professional baseball star Billy Sunday (Frankenberg, 1917). Another book, written with more of a textbook focus, applied an academic assessment of journalism, *Essentials in Journalism: A Manual in Newspaper Making for College Classes*, co-authored with H. F. Harrington (Harrington & Frankenberg, 1912). Frankenberg also served as a public relations representative for the National Association of Master Bakers ("Elusive Weight of the Loaf," 1917), the National Restaurant Association, and the National Anesthesia Research Society (Pauly, 1942). Meanwhile, Frankenberg's fierce internal drive and devotion to a growing communication craft along with the national network he founded helped to nurture the AACNB as it began to shape college public relations discourse on a sizeable scale.

Who was T. T. Frankenberg? What was he about as a person? Frankenberg was a genuine Midwesterner, born in 1877 on an Ohio farm. He hailed from German immigrants who traced their roots to Blankenberg, Germany (Marts, 1966). Frankenberg graduated from high school in 1895 and initiated his professional journey as a writer just two years later (Pauly, 1942). Public relations as its own entity was in its formative years as a profession when the Association commenced its activities and Frankenberg, like others in his professional field, had strong ties to the journalism arena. He served as a respected reporter and drama critic for a number of newspapers ("Theodore Frankenberg Obituary," 1958). Frankenberg's subsequent accomplishments elevated him to new heights in the publicity and news information sector, but many newspaper emissaries fondly recalled his firm journalistic roots. "Every story he wrote was consciously a literary effort," noted *The Ohio State Journal* in 1958 ("The Passing of a Reporter," 1958, p. 4) in its tribute admiring Frankenberg's creative flair for written expression. It may have been that Frankenberg's pedigree as a writer stirred him to promote institutional public relations, as he sought greater deference for writers and associated professionals who were proficient in communication – and made their living endorsing the education industry and concomitant academic banner. Ironically, while Frankenberg possessed a clear knack for writing and effectively promoted efforts in the academic world, he did not hold a college degree (Reck, 1967).

Frankenberg's patronage of public relations as a professional service branch in academia appeared consistent from his early years as an Association founder to latter periods of his career, when he witnessed the group progress into a spirited nationwide communication network. A 1947 letter to fellow ACPRA member Bob Graham of the University of Pittsburgh offered fertile insight into Frankenberg's overarching philosophy of the challenges and entanglements inside college and university circles -- and an expanding, evolving public relations craft. Written just more than 30 years after the group's initial Columbus, Ohio, meeting, the correspondence, responding to Graham's inquiry on developing a code of ethics for the Association, revealed Frankenberg's continued aspirations and perseverance to professionalize public relations offices inside the academic domain. Many institutional leaders within the academy, Frankenberg wrote, held inadequate understanding of the higher education marketplace and required skilled public relations professionals to assist them with communicating their own institution's strategies. Frankenberg (1947) observed,

> I think there is a great deal of delusion about the average college. They think that, because it is their function to produce leaders they are, per se, themselves leaders. This almost never is the case. Even with the present tremendous enrollment, the college crowd is only 10 percent of the public and almost always in the minority. The several media through which the average office operates, have always to consider the majority view. I have had rather intimate contact with some 50 odd colleges and one of my major chores almost always is to get them to see that it takes something more than the average college program to interest the general public. (para. 4)

The letter presented considerable insight, as it revealed Frankenberg's thoughts about the realm of public relations and the growing profession's role with higher education administrative structures. The public relations office was becoming a needed branch on the higher education organizational chart, perhaps part of a policy decision-making unit. It also echoed many of the themes voiced at Association conventions and gatherings, that public relations practitioners needed to serve in greater positions of authority and, especially, operate with a preemptive, informed temperament. Frankenberg (1947) wrote, "For years I have been hearing about our obligation to interpret higher education, but I feel there is an equal and opposite responsibility which is never mentioned and that is to interpret the public to the college" (para. 3).

Frankenberg also began drafting chapters of a book about the Association and its history. A review of archived documents revealed a two-chapter summary, entitled as *History of the American College Public Relations Association* (Frankenberg, [ca. 1952]). Frankenberg's composition provided a valuable perspective about the organization's early years. Frankenberg, for instance, was quoted in *The Chicago Evening American* during the organization's inaugural 1917 meeting in Chicago, and he seemed intent on shaping a warm and accommodating image of the newfound group to the paper's readers. According to a story in *The Chicago Evening American*, "College Press Agents Meet in Chicago" (as cited in Frankenberg, [ca. 1952]), Frankenberg [ca. 1952] said, "But we don't call ourselves press agents, or publicity directors, or even propaganda pushers . . . We are news disseminators. We aim to keep the world well informed of the discoveries within the walls of our universities and colleges. Otherwise, how would the world know?" (p. 7). These comments provided a valuable snapshot into Frankenberg's passion, especially his perception into the framework surrounding the group's organizational philosophy during its formative years. It is also interesting to note that Frankenberg, in this observation, stressed the term "news disseminators," not publicity, the designation adopted by the organization's leaders about a decade later.

As the Association was holding its inaugural formal gathering in April 1917, the United States was preparing to enter the First World War. Frankenberg observed that due to the War's outbreak, he not only served as president of the organization but also, within three months, as the vice president *and* secretary-treasurer. The professionals elected to those offices, E. W. Smith of

Stanford University and Bernard Sobel of Purdue University, had become part of the wave of civilians who assisted with the massive war effort (Frankenberg, [ca. 1952]).

While his role with the Association was both visionary and immense, Frankenberg did not necessarily view the organization's launch as a cutting-edge moment, as it appeared to follow a movement commenced by business and industry (Frankenberg, [ca. 1952]). However, there was no distinct, organized professional talent collection like it within education circles, and its original members helped to form a foundation that would serve as a springboard for public relations and communication in a deep-rooted, sophisticated college and university domain. Essentially, the Association was a needed insurgency, a complementary ally to a mammoth higher education complex that was still seeking to unearth its calling. Frankenberg [ca. 1952] wrote, "Yes, in the first third of the century that group was to so well establish itself as to claim a membership of more than 800 professional persons, representing some of the larger and better known places of higher education" (p. 4).

Frankenberg enjoyed theater and drama and lived his life with a vibrant elegance. Outside of serving as an occasional drama critic, he also appeared in various theater productions. His wardrobe often consisted of a "white tail, long tails and silk hat" (Marts, 1966). Frankenberg also carried along a signature item, a cane, during his daily travel routines. Arnaud C. Marts (1966), of Marts and Lundy, for whom Frankenberg had worked, recalled in a letter,

> For all the years that I knew him – over a quarter of a century – I believe I never saw him without his black, silver handled cane, either in his hand or within reach. Wherever he went on Marts and Lundy assignments, he had the cane with him which never failed to astonish our clients in every state of the union. (A. C. Marts to W. E. Reck, September 2, 1966)

In fact, Frankenberg was engaged with Marts and Lundy from 1924 until he retired from active work in 1952. Marts and Lundy remains an international fundraising consulting firm today ("A history of exceptional results," 2018). Reck (1976) later estimated that Frankenberg had been instrumental in raising some $100 million for colleges and universities across the United States, an achievement bolstering Frankenberg's dedication to higher education.

George Marts of Marts and Lundy connected with Frankenberg in 1924 when the firm was seeking assistance to raise funds for the Friends Church as part of a $5 million program. Frankenberg did a "bang up job" (Lundy, 1966, para. 6). Lundy added that Frankenberg twice won national advertising awards while with the firm (Lundy, 1966). Lundy (1966) concluded:

> T. T. was not only a good publicity director, but he was a grand person and his services for Marts and Lundy always reflected admiration not only for he himself, but credit to the firm with all our clients whom he served. (para. 5)

Frankenberg retired in his native Ohio but continued to assist institutions of higher education with their public relations efforts. In 1951, he aided Campbell College in Buies Creek, NC, with its efforts to promote a fundraising campaign. He suffered a heart attack while preparing for the return trip home. While the incident did not prove fatal, his long-term health suffered. Frankenberg passed away at an Ohio assisted-living facility on July 26, 1958 (Lundy, 1966).

Many tributes recognized Frankenberg as both an innovator and collaborator in the higher education space. Frankenberg's countless, diverse talents offered a frequent refrain. Thomas F. Morgan, former president of Marts and Lundy, remembered Frankenberg fondly in a letter to Frankenberg's son, Roderick, in 1958, shortly after the elder Frankenberg's passing. Morgan (1958) recalled, "He had an unusual flair and talent for public relations and publicity in fund-raising, and I have yet to meet his equal" (Morgan to Frankenberg, 1958, para. 2). Louis W.

Robey, who had worked alongside Frankenberg at Marts and Lundy, described his recollections of Frankenberg's expansive skills, especially his knack for creativity. Robey (1966) remembered, "Frankenberg had a very fine artistic sense. This was of great value in the publicity that he produced. He was always on the lookout for some fine painting or statute that he could put into a piece of publicity" (Robey, 1966, para. 2). Frankenberg's creative abilities often ascended to the forefront when former peers discussed his talents and professional skills, and it may have been his creative flair that helped Frankenberg foresee the value of an embedded public relations space for colleges and universities.

Conventions Serve as Discursive Hot Spots

Association conventions offered members an opportunity to convene, share thoughts directly with group members, network, and plan for activities and itineraries for the year ahead. The following chapter will discuss several conventions, some with converging themes and others more distinctive in nature. One of the more significant events, in terms of rich topics and abundant ideas, was the 1931 convention, held in Chapel Hill, NC, at the University of North Carolina. The assembly offered revealing insight into the range of ideas fluctuating throughout the organization. The 1931 convention program demonstrated a diverse platform of issues for participants and seized on the emergent theme of funding and the potential value of raising the profile of communication professionals.

A report crafted by member Frank Elliott, the publicity director for Indiana University, explored the relationship between publicity efforts and rising assets held by many American institutions of higher education. How had increased publicity efforts contributed to the soaring resources and endowments of colleges and universities? While a precise measurement tool for publicity may have been unachievable, publicity was a clear boost to the finances of higher education institutions. Elliott (1931) concluded, “Publicity we do today will live long after we are gone. If it is constructive, it will never die” (p. 37). Elliott urged practitioners to follow the fundamentals of publicity in order to be effective. He recommended that organizations mesh publicity efforts with institutional objectives, conceivably an early indication of what lay ahead when the Association began to incorporate alignment of public relations strategy within its common discourse and branding efforts. Elliott suggested the fundamentals of publicity, chiefly related to fundraising measures, included six prongs. The six approaches were

1. To analyze situations where public attention is needed for a cause, an idea, or a product.
2. To formulate working plans and program for attracting public attention through the medium of the printed word, meetings, radio, moving pictures, etc.
3. To write and distribute articles, speeches, statements.
4. To originate and carry out features designed to attract the public eye and ear.
5. To organize meetings, dinners, and other gatherings and secure the requisite amount of public attention thereto.
6. To plan, write, make layouts and supervise distribution of booklets, leaflets, and other printed material (Elliot, 1931, pp. 37-38).

Elliott (1931) concluded, “It is clear that not one of our nationally recognized experts in fund raising would think of going into an educational campaign without painstakingly formulated, thoroughly organized, and carefully coordinated publicity” (p. 38). Elliott’s suggestions reflected a meticulous approach for many leaders of the organization as they sought to grow and educate members on an array of matters shaping colleges and universities nationwide.

The convention also featured several other speakers discussing an assortment of prevalent higher education issues that related to the publicity sphere. Topics included *Publicity Office Organization, The Organization of the Publicity Office for a Woman's College, The Radio and College Publicity* and *College Publications* (DeCamp, 1931). The speaker discussing radio as a communication platform, James E. Pollard (1931) of The Ohio State University, told session goers that radio as a publicity medium boasted remarkable potential: "The radio, in particular, has opened up new avenues for education" (p. 58). Further, it served as "one of the simplest, one of the most effective and one of the most valuable means of publicity open to a college or university," especially for institutions owning or operating their own stations (Pollard, 1931, p. 61). Pollard (1931) noted how the State of Ohio had partnered with radio stations to utilize air time for educational purposes and mentioned how The Ohio State University launched an adult education radio program aimed at educating parents on "practical problems of home life" (pp. 59-60).

Participants were also able to attend a substantial program on athletic publicity in intercollegiate athletics. Some specific topics in this session included, *How A Woman Handles College Sports Publicity, Sports Publicity for the Large University, Sports Publicity for the Smaller Institutions*, and *Some Football Publicity Experiences* (DeCamp, 1931). Commentary ranged from practical to humorous to perhaps even visionary. Margaret Welles Ragsdale (1931), Director of News Bureaus at the University of Tennessee, spoke about her role in the relatively new field of college sports publicity, telling attendees she initially had disadvantages in topics related to athletics due to a dearth of personal sports knowledge, but she "could read and there was always the printed word, and there were always sports pages to be dug into" (p. 78). Ragsdale (1931) advised that winning teams always helped in attracting positive coverage as well, noting that the University “had a very colorful (football) team” (p. 80). She summed up her address by telling attendees that faith, hope, and charity likely described her role best.

These sports-related speeches revealed a fledgling area of focus within the inner workings of the organization, a configuration that would serve as a platform for the permanence of college athletic sports publicity. That structure became evident during a business meeting with organization officers on the Saturday of the conference. At the meeting, Louis C. Boochever of Cornell University voiced concern about the depth and richness of meeting content for attendees engaged in athletic publicity. Boochever (1931) told business officers,

> I have been talking to the athletic publicity men and they feel that they are not getting enough of this convention to come just for this one session . . . and I think we ought to definitely recognize them as an integral part of the organization. (p. 15)

Boochever’s (1931) observation seemed to foreshadow concerns that would arise later, when Association members in the 1950s opted to initiate CoSIDA due to stronger interest in sports-related issues from members who focused much of their work on college athletics. As a result of Boochever’s remarks, group participants decided to include athletics publicity as a permanent division within the organization. Culp [ca. 1972] also pointed to the years of 1931-1932 as the era in which the organization’s sports section was created. Other key moves included the establishment of districts within the organization, a move that passed unanimously (DeCamp, 1931).

A Jury Deliberates

In 1935, the group’s annual meeting moved west to Omaha’s Blackstone Hotel. Hosted by Creighton University, the convention featured a jury panel on poor public relations practices, along with a banquet address by Kansas University Chancellor E. H. Lindley, whose speech was entitled, *Youth Will Not Wait*. Noteworthy dialogue during the jury panel, entitled *Our Poor Public Relations*, focused on distinctions between the concepts of education and teaching or, as member Robert Madry of the University of North Carolina described, pedagogic tactics in the classroom (Hosman et al., 1935). Referring to some University faculty who had drawn concerns for teaching socialist doctrine in the college classroom, Madry served as a panel participant and continued, “As has been brought up here today, the public does not get the distinction at all between explanation and teaching of these ‘isms’” (Hosman et al., 1935, p. 44). Madry’s comments and the jury discussion highlighted several of the challenges Association members encountered as they sought to bolster public understanding of higher education and navigate the labyrinth of university leadership configurations across higher education. Related concerns were “a trouble that won’t be solved today but will always be popping up,” Madry stressed (Hosman et al., 1935, p. 44). Edward Stromberg, Director of Publicity with Northwestern University, R. P. Crawford, Assistant to the Chancellor at the University of Nebraska, Everett Hosman of the University of Omaha, and E. P. Chase, Editor and Publisher of the Atlantic News-Telegraph, of Atlantic, Iowa, discussed the effectiveness of public relations practices of the day and wondered if newer, more refined measures could polish the image of the respective organizations they represented and the expansive network to which they belonged (Hosman et al., 1935). Crawford emphasized that institutions often spent an abundance of time on publicity, largely sending communication to newspapers. Rather, he added, practitioners should also employ energy building rapport with students and alumni, thus executing communication plans beyond a simple publicity approach. Crawford stated, “The proper public relations should be maintained between the higher institutions, the press and the taxpayer” (Hosman et al., 1935, p. 30), but additional focus on students would be vital because “they are the ones to color the institution in later years and that seems to be a quite critical point" (p. 30). Stromberg agreed, stating interpersonal relationships with both internal and external populations strengthen stakeholders and help to maintain and elevate the image of collegiate institutions. At the conclusion of the jury panel exchange, Hosman summed up the deliberation, characterizing public relations as more multifaceted and refined than mere publicity, that public relations "should give meaning to the general education of the public, or to the general interpretation of education to America" (Hosman et al., 1935, p. 44).

Lindley, the Kansas University Chancellor, addressed the group's banquet and emphasized the notion of enhancing morale for the populace through education. Lindley particularly urged a renewed awareness of youth seeking opportunity and counseled educators to open doors for prospective students seeking to improve their circumstances. "Our job in college is to see to it that the morale of this generation shall be kept at its best" (Lindley, 1935, p. 52).

Bernays Speaks in Boston

In 1936, the ACPA moved to Boston and assembled what leaders described at the time "one of the best programs in its history" (Graham, 1936, p. 7). A highlight of the conference was the appearance of public relations scholar Edward Bernays, who earlier had authored the book, *Crystallizing Public Opinion,* then a few years later, *Propaganda.* Bernays delivered a speech entitled *Higher Education – A Public Relations Problem,* emphasizing strategy and a needed focus on the definition and objective of higher education. University goals could range from seeking truth in the abstract to expanding cultural education to vocational training needs, Bernays declared. He stressed that public relations programs are needed within higher education configurations to help explain each institution's distinctiveness and mission. Bernays (1936) said, "No university exists in a vacuum. Each university exists in a world of human beings and depends upon the good will of the world it lives in" (p. 81). And public relations efforts cannot be effective without a clearly defined institutional objective, Bernays emphasized. Once an objective is defined, a comprehensive, integrated program should be implemented, touching all layers and stakeholders of the organization. Knowing the intricacies of institutional publics is vital when designing a public relations blueprint, Bernays advised. Students, legislatures, alumni, faculty, staff, and the public at-large all comprise the various audiences that impact a university and related efforts to create and employ an effective image shaping plan. Bernays declared that implementation would include analyzing attitudes about the organization, explaining the institution's objectives clearly to stakeholders, and utilizing symbols as a communications tool. Bernays (1936) stated, "Symbols are short cuts to thinking – to understanding. Words, pictures, ideas, actions are used as symbols and form the currency of propaganda" (p. 85). Terms about higher education should be clear and easily understood by the broader public. Bernays (1936) concluded, "Learning, education, knowledge, research, truth – these do not mean the same thing to everyone . . . The public relations problem of education today . . . is to become aware that its relations with the public are a vital factor in its continued existence" (p. 86).

1937 Gathering Stresses Educational Value and a Voice for Publicity

The Association's 1937 convention, held in Louisville, KY at the Brown Hotel, highlighted the title, *Publicity Problems* (Graham, 1937). The gathering continued to focus on underscoring an effective education narrative to the broader public. One report, entitled *The Need of Effective Educational Interpretation,* stood to be both pragmatic and strategic in nature, echoing a refrain frequently heard in contemporary higher education culture, justifying the value of a college education and resources that strengthen education and associated research. The session speaker, C. S. Marsh (1937), vice president of the American Council on Education, said, “Your help is needed to tell the story, to prepare the public mind for larger costs by showing the returns which the college and university make to society” (p. 48). Urging Association members to advocate for higher education as economic and cultural challenges mounted, Marsh (1937) added, “I know of no group whose burden demands more of understanding, of tolerance, of skill, of faith” (p. 54). Marsh pointed to four prongs as critical in strengthening and communicating the case for higher education’s purpose. Those four groupings included educational costs, scholars, academic freedom, and curriculum adaptation. “College leaders are doing their utmost to train leaders for tomorrow – this is a task indeed worthy of your mettle” (Marsh, 1937, p. 54). The 1937 Association president, Frank Wright (1937), of the University of Florida, reiterated this notion in his remarks, urging attendees build logos for their profession within the higher education infrastructure. Wright urged members to highlight their skills as valuable assets to their respective institutions, building value for both the institutional president and the broader collegiate infrastructure. University public relations practitioners, Wright said, stood as professionals who executed many tasks and had a medley of duties and responsibilities that helped to shape and maintain institutional image. Wright urged if communication professionals did not operate with a pre-emptive mindset, who would then do so when shaping public opinion was at stake? He stressed that presidents of institutions should lean on communication professionals for guidance, but public relations representatives within the college and university sphere needed to don a more authoritative style. Wright (1937) advised,

> I am telling you fellows and ladies that nobody is going to do your job for you. You put your shoes on every morning and lace them up; the president puts his shoes on every morning and laces them up . . . I think that it is time you make your job just as great a job in your institution as you can. (p. 19)

1943 Convention Looks Ahead

The 1943 annual meeting gathered in New York as the Second World War raged on, and the conflict in both the European and Pacific theaters served as a thematic backdrop for much of the Association's proceedings (Hall, 1943). Envisioning a paradigm shift in American higher education populations in post-war America, keynote speaker Dr. Harry Woodburn Chase of New York University stressed the war's potentially far reaching impact on colleges and universities. Chase (1943) said, "The thousands of young men and women who come back to our schools and college won't be the same who left us. They will be more mature men and women whose eyes and minds have been opened by experiences we can never know" (p. 24). Public relations scholar and practitioner Bernays (1943) returned to the group's annual event and emphasized his views of persuasion or, as Bernays described, "the engineering of consent" (p. 33). Bernays discussed the importance of meshing communication with precise strategy, a type of message engineering. He indicated, "Through it, we may work effectively for public support of democratic goals – the winning of the war and the peace to follow, opportunities in higher education, the maintenance and development of our ways of life" (Bernays, 1943, p. 36).

Bernays' speeches to the ACPA in 1936 and 1943 were significant for several reasons. First, they directly connected the organization with a prominent scholar who comprehended the concept of public relations, providing credibility from a known theoretician to a largely practitioner-based organization, still evolving. Next, the speeches solidified, either directly or circuitously, the concept of public relations in contrast to the less complex practice of publicity. Bernays stressed the notion of precision, that persuasion should not serve as a random act. Elements of persuasion must be coordinated, much like military execution. Bernays (1943) said, "You must weave your idea or your project into your public's pattern of life" (p. 35). Both of

Bernays' arguments in 1936 and 1943 emphasized public relations as a strategy, a deliberate approach, design, and implementation of communication coupled with interpersonal relationships. Although a review of documents did not reveal a clear record of Bernays having direct influence on the Association modifying its name to include *public relations* in the years ahead, Bernays' views seemed to provide at least tacit support for the notion. In the post-war period, the Association, on the coattails of the War's end and the surging awareness that public relations was more strategic than ever, moved increasingly toward the embrace of public relations not only in the group's overall principles, but also in its name.

The 1944 War Conference

Always focused on image and higher education enlightenment to the public at-large, the Association marched forward. In the early and mid-1940s, a newer and mostly welcome challenge began to emerge for Association leadership. Bernay's speech in 1943 was followed by additional discussions at the 1944 convention, focusing on the mounting responsibilities of colleges and universities after the war. Beyond mere publicity, a strategic posture began to serve as a leading modus operandi about the organization's place within the training and education sector and broader population. Performance and outcomes aligned with the mainstream of the organization's temperament. In his book on the Association's history, Reck (1967) reflected on the group's 1940s era and observed, "More and more the Association and its members were concerned with education's performance rather than with its publicity" (p. 7). A publicity approach, a staple of the group and part of the Association's name for almost two decades, seemed to be viewed more commonly as only one prong of a multi-pronged, intricate, and evolving profession. Publicity was more tactic; public relations was heavily focused on strategy. In 1944, Association members were distinguishing between the concepts of publicity and public relations, looking ahead to an enrollment boom following the War. The 1944 convention in Chicago, aptly titled the *National War Conference*, focused on anticipated growth and a focused line of attack aimed at providing higher education opportunities for returning veterans. Publicity and public relations served as common refrains during Association discussions, as did the notion of interpreting higher education culture and its associated navigation to stakeholders (Given, 1944). The Association generally viewed most of its interpretation efforts to the masses as successful (Given, 1944). However, as the War effort expanded, the group's future would consist of newer, distinctive concerns, educating multitudes of non-traditional students. Many of these projected students would be former combatants and service personnel with countless subjective experiences and proficiencies.

During the group's annual presidential address, Association leader E. D. Whittlesey (1944) of Western Reserve University told convention attendees, "Our biggest job and greatest responsibility is ahead. The crucial period in higher education is before us" (p. 20). Whittlesey subsequently painted a vision for the Association that pointed to six fundamental subjects the higher education sphere needed to resolve as communication professionals constructed a plan to strengthen institutional programming as the War ended. The six topics included race relations, reconversion, reintegration, foreign relations, public relations, and religion. With regard to race relations, Whittlesey urged a close look at potential solutions to addressing disproportionate resource gaps in minority groups. Whittlesey (1944) said, "Colleges can gain support for any program which will help relieve the tension and aid in the solution of these vital problems" (p. 21). Reconversion, Whittlesey noted, included post-War adjustments in both facilities and personnel, specifically citing facility reconversions from war to peace time production, personnel retention, and worker retraining programs. The concept of re-integration focused on the immersion of military veterans into everyday life following the War. College and university curricula, services, and rehabilitation efforts should all be part of an innovative process to welcome veterans, he urged. “Plans for the returning service people are inherent in the fulfillment of dreams” (Whittlesey, 1944, p. 21). Building and maintaining foreign relations stood as a fourth pillar of Whittlesey’s recommendations. He outlined a plan of support for an international office of education. “It is impossible to imagine foreign trade or peaceful negotiations without peaceful understanding” (Whittlesey, 1944, p. 22). Public relations stood as the fifth fundamental component of focus for the network, according to Whittlesey. Practitioners needed to enhance a greater understanding of the public relations craft among stakeholders. Building faith and understanding in systemic public relations efforts, he said, was essential in order for the craft to be fully efficient and effective in its interpretation strategy. “We need not only do our jobs, but should also provide for the training of others – for the solution of the human equation in life remains the basic problem” (Whittlesey, 1944, pp. 22-23). While addressing a shifting higher education landscape, Whittlesey concluded that religious institutions should emphasize efforts in spiritual guidance through curricula and services. These six principles, if executed, “will meet the challenges of the moment, it will meet the unmet needs of our country” (Whittlesey, 1944, p. 23).

Public Relations Versus Publicity

The network sought clarity in branding and struggled for a name that would best define its purpose and mission. Association members engaged in continuous dialogue surrounding the models of *publicity* and *public relations* and began to consider a more strategic approach to their practices as the group evolved, especially at the commencement of its third decade. A reflection on image, and associated mission, was certainly not an entirely new thought for organization leaders. Early in its establishment, the Association deliberated the name of the fledgling organization, a discussion that mirrored a more expansive professional dialogue about the appropriate meaning and representation of *publicity*. Frankenberg [ca. 1952] himself noted this in a draft of a book designed at reflecting on the Association's history. In early discussions during the Association's inception, featuring *publicity* as a share of the organization's official title concerned several leaders, largely due to the word's perceived subtext relative to to the circus industry. Circuses and similar entertainment enterprises often applied vigorous, dynamic promotional efforts in the early part of the 20th century. Frankenberg [ca. 1952] recalled,

> But the very frankness of the term scared some of the more timid. In justification of their attitude, it should not be forgotten that at the time the word 'publicity' was very largely associated with the circuses and the less desirable forms of theatrical entertainment. (p. 2)

The industry had progressed since its early days, becoming more strategic, or, as several leaders observed, results based. The concept of public relations within the profession and its related vocations was shifting from a basic but meaningful publicity practice, which was largely technician-oriented, to a more intricate strategic configuration, a communications archetype modification that influenced higher education culture. This alteration, more evolutionary than revolutionary, served as a reflection in the Association's name. The group's title launched with the notion of news bureaus, shortly moved to publicity, and, eventually, in the 1940s, evolved to a public relations brand and associated methodology (Brandon, 1946; Reck, 1967).

Bernard Lichtenberg, founder and president of the Institute of Public Relations, told conference attendees at the 1944 conference that the difference between *publicity* and *comprehensive public relations* reminded him of the distinction between medicine and surgery. Lichtenberg conveyed that medicine corresponds to public relations and surgery to publicity.

Lichtenberg (1944) said, "The aim of public relations is to win public respect and goodwill for the institution. Publicity is one, and only one, means to that end" (p. 34). In the following year, more discourse ensued, and another name change was put forth and unanimously adopted by members in 1946 at the Association's Lexington convention proceedings. The group changed its name to the American College *Public Relations* Association, shedding *publicity* from its official organizational label, more than three decades after its original name deliberation. (Reck, 1967). A new code of ethics, pushed by the Association's President and endorsed in spirit by Frankenberg, was established in 1947. Respecting the truth, being dignified and well-mannered, and being responsible to the public highlighted its first three code requirements (American College Public Relations Association, 1947). The name, the concept, and the branding of the group served as a reminder of the shifting culture of public relations. Perhaps by coincidence or perhaps by design, Reck (1946), the long-time Association member and leader, crafted a book in the same period with the term *public relations* as a prominent part of the title: *Public Relations: A Program for Colleges and Universities*. Bernays (1952) followed by unveiling his landmark book, *Public Relations*, where he accentuated the importance of a broad public relations program, arguing that publicity only served as one component of an effective public relations strategy. Reck (1946) maintained that public relations enables institutions to scan the environment and react, including building and maintaining relationships and goodwill with stakeholders. Publicity draws attention to the product, but public relations enables institutions to shape an image for the product. "For public relations is any act or situation, act or word that influences people" (Reck, 1946, p. 7).

Interpretation

Educational interpretation served as a common refrain for the Association from its inception, as members sought to secure a deeper foothold within the organizational configurations of American academic institutions and strengthen the perception and value of higher education across the nation's vast and complex networks. Always seeking to build recognition for their abilities and a seat at the table of decision makers, Association leaders consistently urged members to promote the value and purpose of higher education effectively and to be viewed as indispensable authorities by the top leadership at colleges and universities. Serving as an effective conduit of understanding between the university and a large range of stakeholders would be crucial to not only the communications craft but also the publics who had a vested interest in the mission and value of postsecondary education to the broader population. The Association sought a connection with its stakeholders, much like the one Carl and Duck (2004) described in their work on community influence and relationships. These relationships are could serve an instructive purpose. Carl and Duck (2004) noted that everyday communication is substantial because it connects individuals with their respective environments. In this vein, leaders continued to seek effective means of promoting higher education issues within the scope of their regular university assignments. This approach helped to build a bond, serving as a conduit for target communities. In 1930, *The New York Times* explored the interpretation matter, carrying a story on an Association survey of college and university presidents that weighed the role of educational publicity ("College Heads See Publicity as Vital," 1930). Survey results concluded that institutional leaders favored "full and complete interpretation of academic and scientific information to the public" ("College Heads See Publicity as Vital," p. 30). And the majority of respondents viewed educational publicity as "essential" (p. 30). Perhaps most strikingly, the survey revealed education leaders believed that institutions should appoint a liaison to share information with the public and that the doors of education should be open to a wider populace. The survey also revealed concerns about the growing influence of intercollegiate athletics across the college university landscape (“College Heads See Publicity as Vital,” 1930).

Interpretation was a centerpiece of discussion at various Association gatherings. Robert Madry, of the University of North Carolina, stressed the importance of framing issues and ensuring institutions promote their programs to key stakeholders. During his presidential report in Cleveland, Madry (1934) exclaimed, “Interpreting an institution to people in general and to its constituency in particular is just as important as any job in the institution, with the exception of the presidency” (pp. 8-9). Madry advocated for fostering the importance of collegiate public relations and interpretation, noting that the profession seemed on its way to greater influence with the top leadership echelon of many institutions. However, opportunities for more prominence, coupled with clear professional standards for Association members and practitioners, remained. Madry’s comments at the convention perhaps reflected some of the aggravation members frequently faced within many higher education networks. A worthy practitioner image remained not only valuable, but also indispensable. Madry (1934) voiced, “It is not a racket in any sense of the word. It is a permanent sort of work that must go on as long as the printed word is read” (p. 9). At the same 1934 convention, Sidney Wilson, of Western Reserve University and the Association’s secretary-treasurer, offered an example to luncheon attendees, noting that one member possessed the skillset to communicate technical material into colorful, rich stories that would pique the curiosity of audiences outside of the academy. Wilson (1934) described, “He translates the didactic discourse and purely scientific discussion into the language of the everyday reader. He clarifies for the layman the intricacies of the academic interpretation" (p. 100). Wilson's example perhaps was an example of a higher education leader understanding the value of a lively narrative, applying a story to an otherwise mundane topic.

Bernays (1936) also touched on the importance of interpretation in his *Higher Education – A Public Relations Problem* banquet address. Grasping institutional objectives and crafting effective images stood as paramount but in tactical execution, Bernays (1936) emphasized that institutional public relations practitioners "must advise on every contact, every activity of the institution in relation to its public" (p. 83).

In 1941, Association President Emerson Reck sent a letter to the group's annual Southeastern District meeting, emphasizing the vital nature of effective public relations efforts and clear explanation of the profession, pointing to the notion of "quality, not quantity" (Reck, 1941, p. 4). He urged evaluation of every effort and planning ahead. Reck (1941) stated, "Confine ourselves to those efforts which will indeed interpret the work and contributions of our institutions" (p. 4).

Many Association correspondences and proceedings underscored the importance of interpreting higher education's significance to internal stakeholders and the public masses. Clearly defining higher education's role in America's corporate and cultural ecosphere and the critical relationship with public relations stood as a chief objective. But perhaps no gathering or communication exemplified the significance of this distinct belief than the 1944 annual meeting, the *War Conference* in Chicago. The conference featured a report shared by a Committee on Education Interpretation, a group of Association members appointed the previous year (Harvey, 1944) and an award granted to Emerson Reck for his contributions to the Association, including his achievements to strengthen public relations strategies and policies at colleges and universities (Given, 1944). The committee, in its analysis, highlighted the integration of liberal arts education with technical and vocational programs. Group members acknowledged the need for a post-War focus on technical education but pointed to the value of liberal arts to strengthen critical thinking and decision-making skills. Public relations and communication professionals would then convey the need for amalgamation of liberal arts and vocational education opportunities (Harvey, 1944). Reck, meanwhile, received an honor for *Outstanding Achievement in the Interpretation of Education in the Current Year.* Association leaders recognized that Reck "not only demonstrated an individual history of the progress of learning, but also implemented that history with the story of its significance to all mankind – an outstanding illustration of the high caliber of professional service in educational interpretation" (Given, 1944, p. 113). At the same conference, Eleanor (Mosely) Collier, with Boston University, endorsed a thoughtful, deliberate approach to publicity and, by extension, interpretation and explanation. Although not employing the term *interpretation* in her convention lecture, Collier (1944b) pointed to meticulous execution as a means of achieving results in an often cluttered and complex college public relations environment. Collier (1944b) said, "Evaluate every move. It is not too much to say that we should not make a business, professional telephone call without thinking" (p. 106). She urged members to acquire a "long range view" (Collier, 1944b, p. 107) of publicity within the higher education sector. "We have a definite responsibility in this big program of our postwar world" (Collier, 1944b, p. 107). Collier's observation again pointed to the Association's concerns about higher education in a post-War setting. The public relations domain was changing along with the national and international marketplace. Would the sector adapt? Would higher education meet the assortment of demands it would surely face? How would the Association position itself? Many Association leaders believed finding a permanent center, a home, would be a fitting response to meeting the long-term issues of a post-War era and the second half of the 20th century.

Athletics and Public Relations

A common theme throughout many ACPA and ACPRA conventions focused on the burgeoning field of collegiate athletics and related publicity efforts. The Association's 1931 conference at the University of North Carolina signified the opening chapter of athletics as a standing group within the organization's structure (DeCamp, 1931). The topic of managing athletics publicity had arisen prior to the 1931 annual gathering, however. A survey conducted by the ACPA in 1930 touched on concerns university presidents had with the proportion of athletics coverage in newspapers versus traditional academic news reporting, with leaders voicing trepidations about what they perceived as overemphasis of college athletics publicity ("College Heads See Publicity as Vital," 1930). Nonetheless, athletics representatives within the group continued engaging with sports-related discourse, contributing at annual conferences and addressing a variety of matters facing their distinctive but emerging branch of collegiate publicity.

When attendees left the 1931 conference at the University of North Carolina, it was evident that the Association was gaining a stronger grasp on a diverse range of subjects. Members seemed curious and eager to engage, and many foresaw opportunities for strengthening the network's rank within a mammoth higher education domain. Intercollegiate athletics embodied one such genre. The 1931 conference's Saturday session focused primarily on college athletics publicity. Wallace Wade, the head football coach at Duke University and formerly the University of Alabama, served as one speaker and advised Association members that athletic departments needed their own news bureaus (Wade, 1931). Wade suggested such athletic news offices should focus on promoting the institution as a whole throughout the year but then narrow down the broader emphasis to endorse specific events during singular college sports seasons. In additional remarks, Wade recommended communication practitioners avoid sending newspaper space filler stories, stressing quality of content, not quantity.

Fred Turbyville (1931), of the University of Pittsburgh, offered eight points to enhance athletic publicity outcomes. Turbyville (1931) recommended the following:

1. Contacts.
2. Entertainment, comfort and convenience of visiting reporters.
3. Complete and sincere news announcements.
4. Liberal policy on complimentary tickets.
5. Plenty of good art.
6. Promotion stunts.
7. Exclusive features for column writers and feature writers.
8. Promotion of friendly relations between coaches and press. (p. 83)

Turbyville proclaimed the importance of developing and maintaining interpersonal rapport with media representatives. Relationships were indeed critical. Turbyville (1931) said, “A publicity man may be an unusually clever writer, unusually clever at finding good angles to a story, unusually clever with features . . . but his best stock in trade is contact” (p. 81).

John Maxwell, of Lehigh University, discussed college sports publicity from a small college perspective, pondering the aggregate worth of intercollegiate athletic communications and how it could serve as an asset to institutions. In the case of Lehigh, Maxwell observed that at the time he could discern little value in athletic communication as it related to student enrollment and overall university philanthropy, but an emphasis on promoting athletic successes boosted the spirits of alumni and friends of the institution. Maxwell (1931) voiced that “alumni, families, friends of the latter and other friends of the university” (p. 85) benefited from learning about athletic achievements of the institution. Maxwell (1931) added, “We consider a definite function of our news bureau to furnish this news or assist in any way possible toward its dissemination. In our opinion it has little or no tangible value except indirectly” (p. 85). He advised that institutions distributing ideas and news to media representatives must ensure those items are interesting and newsworthy. This confirmed the value of the product and maintained the credibility of news bureau efforts. Too much trivial information and sending material just to prescribe to a certain formula per week “can do a great deal of harm” (Maxwell, 1931, p. 87).

The Association’s 1933 conference in Chicago included an address on “Athletic News in Colleges” by Major John Griffith, who served dual roles as Commissioner of Athletics for the Western Conference and President of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Griffith told members that a market existed for newspaper coverage of college athletics. Despite criticism years earlier from college presidents and The Carnegie Foundation about the volume of focus and emphasis on college football, Griffith insisted the marketplace would drive a greater demand for intercollegiate narratives. He added that alumni of institutions enjoy tracking news and developments featuring their respective alma maters, including athletic news. In essence, purchasing power stood as a formidable reason to feature college and university sporting events. Griffith (1933) said, “It seems clear to me that the newspaper that wishes to render the best possible service to its advertisers might well consider the advisability of feature amateur athletics in preference to the commercialized sports” (p. 37).

Griffith focused on potential differences between amateur and professional sports. Others occasionally sought to delineate among athletic genres. In 1935, Robert G. Phipps of the *Omaha*

World Herald spoke at the Association's Saturday luncheon and offered his own guidelines for what defined college athletics. Phipps (1935) told attendees that athletics served as "competition of the body which exhibits some skill and athletic movement" (p. 112). In Phipps' view, sport exemplified theatre, a spectacle for athletic skill and competition. Of course, many Association members grasped the dynamic culture of athletics and the value-added benefits of college sports publicity. At the 1936 convention, members of the sports publicity committee urged standardization of football statistics, maintaining that a clear statistical template would facilitate information offered to journalists. The data sheets included everything from first downs to yards on punts and kicks. Homer Dunham (1936), of Western State Teachers College and athletics committee vice president, noted that uniform "statistics will be highly useful in follow-up stories and in furnishing arguments as to why a player may be entitled to consideration for the All-American, All-Conference or other teams" (p. 28). Joseph Petritz (1937), of the University of Notre Dame, acknowledged concerns existed about the athletics arm of the Association and its overall role, including a balance between traditional academic promotions and college sports publicity. However, Petritz also stressed the value of athletics to institutions. College sports enhanced coverage in all corners of the institution. Petritz (1937) predicted, "Academic publicity will not suffer as a result. Notre Dame . . . has been able to place academic publicity in recent years because of its athletic prominence during the regime of the late Knute Rockne" (p. 39). Petritz encouraged members engaged in athletic publicity to link college sports with each institution's own everyday culture, including academic modules.

A New Rhetorical Arena

A second guiding research question posed by my study was, "To what extent, if any, did the Association create a new rhetorical arena for higher education?" The following discussion explores key findings to this question. The inquiry will expand on the significance of the Association's national office, examining what it represented as a practical, physical space for everyday operations. In addition, the investigation will establish that the group's decades-long goal of a national headquarters firmed up the Association's desire of creating a new space, a respected rhetorical position, within an intricate higher education infrastructure.

The importance of a launching a national office, a physical headquarters, for the network stood as a principal organizational goal. As the Association endured the challenges of the Great Depression and weathered the immense uncertainty of war and conflict-related impediments, dialogue centering on where public relations ranked in the halls of academia frequently rose to the surface. The expanding network of higher education entities revealed a diverse membership, with Association participants hailing from all of the nation's geographic regions by the early 1940s. One topic that began to take hold in the latter part of the 1930s focused on the notion of a national headquarters, an enduring, brick and mortar office that would serve as a tangible, practical enterprise, a tangible nucleus, of sorts, for the network. Such a headquarters would represent stakeholders across the country and foster influence for the Association in the nation's capital. Overall, the group faced Depression-related issues in the early years of the 1930s but began to witness an increase in the concluding segment of the decade, growing from approximately 145 members in 1934 (McNeil, 1934) to just more than 400 individuals on the roster in 1938-1939 (Reck, 1967). More and more, Association members sought a physical space that would signify permanency or, at the least lift its national profile. Efforts to initiate a central location began in 1938 with Eleanor Mosely of Boston University leading the endeavor (Reck, 1967). Mosely (1939) was named to a position as chair of the Central Office Committee. In 1941, Mosely wrote to Association President Emerson Reck about the proposal's status, concluding that the attempt had stalled, largely due to resources and the absence of a detailed, comprehensive plan. She also advised that prospects for securing additional resources remained, including raising revenues from within the organization and fashioning a potential proposal to the Rockefeller Foundation for assistance. Mosely (1941) observed,

> My only reaction, as a result of my investigations, is that our financial situation as an association does not inspire confidence on the part of anybody whom we have approached to ask for money. In each case the reaction has been the same -- namely, that the ACPA should raise its dues or, in whatever way seems advisable, should find more financial support for itself, by itself and then ask for funds from outside. (para. 4)

Mosely (1941) also alluded to a prospective partnership with the Association of American Colleges, a union that would eventually pay dividends for the organization as it battled to boost its coffers and secure a lasting headquarters.

Despite an ongoing dearth of resources, group leaders remained bold and steadfast with their headquarters vision. They created a standing committee on establishing a central office. At the network's 1943 convention in New York, Mosely shared that the Committee on Central Office "would welcome suggestions and practical assistance in bringing about the realization of this great need" (Hall, 1943, p. 85). Organizations expressing interest in a potential partnership with ACPA included the American Council on Education and the Association of American Colleges (Hall, 1943). Mosely also emphasized assembling enough fiscal support for the likelihood of hiring an executive to serve as chief administrator for the growing college public relations alliance, ideally operating out of the new, central headquarters that Association leaders envisioned.

Later, married and as Eleanor Collier, she forged ahead to foster a deeper support base for a central office. Collier was tireless in her efforts. In 1944, she returned to the Association's annual convention, its *Chicago War Conference*, and shared that the committee had sought to raise national awareness with key stakeholders about the desire for a central headquarters (1944a). Collier (1944a) said, "Your committee has endeavored to indoctrinate ACPA membership, as well as outside agencies with the necessity for the office" (p. 117). Leadership had written columns with the group's internal publications, *Publicity Problems*, according to Collier. Ongoing conversations with the Association of American Colleges and its representative, Guy Snavely, offered some encouragement for a broader support base, but fiscal resources remained a critical barrier.

Continuing dialogue with the Association of American Colleges (AAC) paid dividends. Concurrently, the American College Publicity Association re-branded to insert *Public Relations* instead of *Publicity*, a reflection of the evolving view that the profession was reflective of a broader skill set than simply scripting news releases and generating promotional material for colleges and universities. Collaborative discussions remained persistent between the AAC and the newly minted American College Public Relations Association. Collier worked closely with Snavely and other organization leaders. Meanwhile, with the war ended, ACPRA membership continued to surge, growing from about 400 members in 1939 to 849 by 1950 (Collier, 1950b; Reck, 1967). A major breakthrough in central office headquarters deliberations occurred in January 1950, when the AAC agreed to offer financial assistance to ACPRA (Collier, 1950a). Collier (1950a) later noted that AAC leaders viewed the effort as a beneficial strategy for its members because of ACPRA's deep pool of expertise in the public relations arena (Collier, 1950b). In sum, the AAC committed to offer $9,000 over three years to the Association, and an agreement to commence a national office was in tentatively in place by June 1950, with a total annual budget of $18,000 per year (Collier, 1950a; DeCamp, 1951). As a final, official decision neared in Summer 1950, Collier continued to push, setting any potential notion of complacency aside. She penned a letter to AAC president Daniel Marsh, pressing Marsh to support the effort with his group in the name of efficiency, benevolence, and branding. Collier (1950b) appealed,

> So much more could be done through this channel for a better and broader understanding of higher education in our country, that there is scarcely a limit to the list of possibilities . . . Why wouldn't it be a national achievement if you, as Association of American Colleges president, and I, as pioneer in this project, could bring it to fruition? (p. 1)

American education, Collier (1950b) added, is bolstered by its "democratic spirit, a spirit that is being fostered more and more by institutions of higher learning, but which isn't being assimilated by the lay public as it should be" (p. 4). Collier's efforts proved fruitful.

Both groups approved the proposed move, and the ACPRA opened its new headquarters in October, at Room 502, 726 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington (Collier, 1950a; Reck, 1967). A few months later, Collier (1950a) recalled, "This will be of inestimable value in reducing time lag of correspondence throughout our entire program, and will relieve the officers' time and energies for more productive services to the profession" (p. 2). Leaders chose Marvin Topping, of the Medical College of Virginia, as its new full-time executive secretary (Collier, 1950a). Collier (1950a) had earlier lobbied for a public relations professional to serve as the initial full-time leader of the office. *The New York Times* included the appointment in its Sept. 24, 1950 edition ("Heads Public Relations of College Association," 1950). Former Association president, John DeCamp (1951), reflected,

> Although there is new prestige for the association in its national office in Washington, there is far more than that in the way of practical benefit. In only a year or two from now, it will be hard to understand how a vigorous, service-giving organization like ACPRA ever managed to carry on without such nerve-center. (p. 10)

In his summary of Association history, Frankenberg reflected on the group's progress from its developing years. As it eyed greater traction in higher education culture, the Association hoped to "prove its value" (Frankenberg, [ca. 1952], p. 3). As the group advanced, Frankenberg became more and more encouraged by a growing culture of acceptance within college and university circles. He recalled that when seeking facts and figures from like-minded communication professionals, "I never yet have failed to receive them if the p.r. authority, or the college, had what I asked for" (Frankenberg, [ca. 1952], p. 3). Frankenberg emphasized that the Association sought to establish and maintain a reliable imprint on collegiate public relations, even as it weathered changes and attrition through the decades. Frankenberg [ca. 1952] wrote:

> The present ACPRA is still a great source of new material for the industrial world. The recognition for which the AACNB fought during its early years has now been accorded it by most of the large corporations and industries, practically all of which have someone in charge of public relations. The editorial door is also more ajar than it used to be. (p. 4)

Frank Elliott, of Indiana University, predicted the significance of credible public relations during the Association's 1931 gathering at the University of North Carolina, indicating the implications of following sound publicity fundamentals. In its first decades, group leaders kept the organization and its dreams afloat through two major world wars, a depression, and staved off membership challenges, along with abundant worries about the role of publicity and public relations in a multifaceted college and university lattice.

Largely adhering to the advice and expertise of its own membership, Association supporters celebrated the addition of a national office by mid-century. The headquarters served as a tangible reward for the larger higher education public relations sector, but for long-time members especially. ACPRA had proven its worth within the collegiate ecosphere, but lively chapters in the Association's development remained, including the conception of a branch network dedicated to athletics, CoSIDA, a sizeable merger with another higher education assemblage (American Alumni Council), and an accompanying name change. The modern day CASE, an international resource network of universities, colleges, and related academic institutions, was born (About CASE: History, 2018).

Role of Women and Minorities

While women were within the minority in both membership and conference participation, a few members did engage in diverse roles within the organization and serve on various programs during the network's early decades. Eleanor Mosely of Boston University, later Eleanor Collier, held the premier role with the group during its foundational era and remained engaged with higher education issues for a number of decades. Collier served as the Association's first female board president in 1939-1940. Prior to her role as president, she functioned as membership chair beginning in 1934 and was preceded by another woman, Priscilla Gough, of Radcliffe College (McNeil, 1934; Graham & Pellegrin 1935). Collier worked as the lead member on women's issues within the Association in 1937, and soon thereafter, the group relied on her to study and pursue a permanent, national headquarters. She was the instrumental figure within the Association to enhance dialogue with the AAC when the networks launched efforts to collaborate and establish a permanent facility in Washington D.C. The CASE

Collier award for the organization's District 1 service area was named after Collier. Tempesta (n.d.) summed up the award on the associated CASE district web site:

> Eleanor Rust Mosely – who became Mrs. Edward Collier after her marriage to the BU professor in 1943 – was more than the first woman president of the American College Public Relations Association, she was also associated with nearly every single advancement made by the Association, which later merged with the American Alumni Council in 1974 to form CASE. (para. 3)

Collier commented on the role of higher education in 1954, when discussing Boston University's public relations efforts to a graduate student researching a public relations thesis. She suggested effective public relations stretched beyond institutional borders and served a benevolent role with a greater purpose (Worden, 1955).

> He (the interpreter of education) is to shape his service program (of publicity) on the basic thought that each act (or piece of copy, etc.) he performs is done, not alone for its timely value or for its local stimulation, but for the ultimate good of humanity. (Worden, 1955, p. 42)

The faith associated with Collier's leadership seemed well placed. She appeared reflective and astute, offering insight into the union of her personal and professional philosophies during a *Radio Talk* to the Association's District Six meeting in Cleveland, December 1939 (as Mosely). The speech functioned as an unwavering endorsement of higher education and the related activities of communication professionals. Her comments revealed her conviction to build a strong, tangible public trust with institutions of higher learning. Mosely (1939) wrote,

> It is no longer enough that our faculty members are researchers and seekers of pure truth. You, the American public, want to know in terms you can understand, what their

> achievements are, what they mean, and what service they may render you, mankind . . . The college and the university is a public trust, and for this reason its public relations program is conducted with a focus on social implications and social consequences created through the multitudes of its impacts upon the public. (Mosely, 1939, *Radio Talk*, para. 4)

Her address touched on the broader image of higher education and the compulsory function of interpreting public relations effectively to the broader public, shaping institutional image. This exhortation appeared frequently throughout textual and rhetorical analysis of Association archives, and Collier was one of the group's more articulate advocates, maybe its most fervent, in terms of the network's viability and long term advocacy. A glowing story in the 1955 *Boston Globe* helped to summarize how many in media circles viewed Collier. "She needs no introduction to Boston's press. Every ranking editor and publisher in town knows her" (Grossman, 1955, p. 75). As one of the organization's most loyal supporters, Collier engaged in Association activities throughout her long career as both a practitioner and professor, retiring in 1969. Her decision to step down from her long-time roles at Boston University evoked thoughtful responses from peers across the higher education landscape. One, Emmanuel Goldberg (1968), assistant dean for planning at Brandeis University, wrote,

> The honesty, the candor, the tenacity, always stood out and when combined with Eleanor's incredibly long work day, constructive results invariably followed. These, along with her personality, endeared her to editors, reporters, educators, co-workers, students, and all sorts of people. (p. 13)

In retirement, Collier predictably remained steadfastly drawn to the Association, even following its merger with the American Alumni Council, establishing CASE. In a letter to her long-time collaborator and organization historian, Reck, Collier (1975) hinted at frustration watching from the sidelines. In gauging the newly formed organization from afar, she wrote,

> Now that the merger is accompli, I wonder what attention [the] ACPRA side of the work will get? From your letter I am discouraged about the answer to this thought, Not being in on any of the finalities, I have no idea of the politics, etc., of which I am sure there must have been and be some. (E. Collier to W. E. Reck, May 6, 1975, para. 2)

Collier's work with the Association is both noteworthy and historical. An argument could perhaps be made that without her dedicated efforts decades earlier to create a national office, CASE may have never existed, at least in its current form. Collier's life ended suddenly. Only one month after her May 1975 letter to Reck, she tripped and tumbled down a stairwell at a friend's home in New Jersey, suffering fatal injuries ("Eleanor Collier," 1975).

Meanwhile, racial and ethnic minorities were rarely mentioned or noted in Association records during the organization's first few decades, and most photos of the group's early conventions and events rarely display African Americans or other minorities. However, there are a few exceptions recorded in the network's accounts and records. One such notable occurrence arose during the Association's annual convention in 1944, when E. D. Whittlesey addressed the group in his role as president. Whittlesey urged six "R's" of effective higher educational performance and interpretation. Race relations was among these. Whittlesey (1944) said:

> Many authorities are of the opinion that all will be lost in this war if we do not find a happy solution for the problems of the racial minorities among us: The Negroes, the Mexicans and the Nisei. Let's be on the alert for statements, reports, ideas, scholars which can contribute to our progress with these matters. (p. 20)

In 1943, the Association's membership roster consisted of 368 members, with five members from institutions comprised primarily of racial minorities (Hall, 1943). The group's 1944 roster included members from 13 colleges and universities composed of predominantly racial minorities (Given, 1944).

Other issues confronted the group as it moved from a burgeoning, growing network of practitioners to an authentic national, influential association, including ongoing conversations to collaborate and merge with like-minded organizations, such as the American Alumni Council. More research can perhaps be completed in this arena, particularly the rhetoric surrounding the 1958 Greenbrier Conference, which explored efficient higher education administration strategies. The conference also sparked additional dialogue about potentially merging the two organizations (Reck, 1967). Today, CASE remains the legacy of Frankenberg, Reck, Collier, and other leaders who envisioned a home, a rhetorical space, for collegiate public relations within the matrix of a massive higher education infrastructure and a culture tracing to the origins of acquiring greater knowledge. Public relations had become part of the higher education framework, reaching all corners of the United States and, later, international soil.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the impact of the Association and its subsequent organizations, discussing four primary findings. The results were arranged based on the order of the study's two primary research questions. These two questions were "What were the formative events and narratives that allowed the Association to evolve from 1915-1950, generating succeeding organizations?" And, "to what extent, if any, did the Association create a new rhetorical arena for higher education?" The study was a qualitative, historical study, or historiography, incorporating biographical and educational lenses through narrative analysis. Such an approach allowed for scrutiny of deeper, richer stories, meaningful context within the biography of the AACNB. Rhetorical theory, including Bitzer's (1968) rhetorical situation theory, played a central role within the study. Elements of organizational and leadership concepts were also included. With historical narrative analysis as a framework and rhetoric as a principal theory, the study established that the founder of the organization, T. T. Frankenberg, acted as both a visionary and advocate, assembling a conceptual and structural footing for the Association as it expanded in scope. Although Frankenberg rebuffed the description of pioneer, it is clear he served as an innovator, an influential public relations entrepreneur, building a strong foundation for a new occupation in the higher education world.

The second finding highlighted the importance of annual Association conferences, stressing their emphasis on robust dialogue and associated policy. The yearly gatherings, held at various sites throughout the nation, served as discursive hot spots, featuring specific topics and themes and concurrently emphasizing the importance of a grander voice for the news bureau/publicity/promotions role within higher education culture.

The third outcome recognized that Association leaders urged *interpretation* of higher education and athletics emphasis as chief priorities. With regard to interpretation, leaders argued that effectively articulating the value of college and universities to the nation's greater benefit stood as a central focus. Members from the organization, who represented these very same institutions, embodied the nucleus of this objective. Meanwhile, the rising emphasis on intercollegiate athletics also commanded attention and became an integral part of the Association's internal operation with the 1931 conference at the University of North Carolina.

The fourth outcome within the study discussed the Association constructing a needed rhetorical space, both in terms of erecting an expansive network of public relations professionals to address issues and challenges of the day in the higher education milieu and also garnering enough resource support to establish a physical address, a practical and metaphorical development which helped to build credibility and national prominence for the group, goals that Association leaders had sought for decades. In sum, the Association filled a rhetorical void, addressing a significant gap in a quickly evolving higher education ecosystem. A permanent home address in Washington, D.C. served as symbol, establishing credibility for the group and enjoining it with an establishment that offered a more powerful voice for public relations. The significance of explaining higher education to the masses grew and became a part of a conventional education configuration with the opening of a permanent home in 1950. Significant chapters would follow, including the formation of CoSIDA, the dialogue-rich Greenbrier Conference, and an eventual merger with AAC in the mid-1970s. But the opening of a national office laid the foundation for higher education public relations to integrate itself fully with a national conversation on education advocacy, fully a horizontal network with rising support.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The purpose of this historical study was to explore the foundation of higher education public relations through the establishment and development of the American Association of College News Bureaus and, by extension, the modern day CASE.

The study unearthed several findings to its two primary research questions.

1. What were the formative events and narratives that allowed the Association to evolve from 1915-1950, generating succeeding organizations?
2. To what extent, if any, did the Association create a new rhetorical arena for higher education?

First, T. T. Frankenberg, who founded the Association, served as a visionary and a resilient campaigner for a strong public relations voice within the higher education sphere. He sought to build a foundation for the Association as it matured from a small group of college administrators curious about their craft into a national organization impacting higher education infrastructure and practices. The study also found that annual Association conventions served as a constructive terrain for higher education discourse within the public relations realm, functioning as a link for practitioners as they sought to strengthen their skills and lift the profile of their profession. The Association's emphasis on significant public affairs issues, including the concept of higher education interpretation, the role of an evolving public relations profession in a complex higher education network, and, eventually, intercollegiate athletic public relations, aided its expansion and generated a new branch of public relations. To this end, a substantial final outcome revealed the birth of a new rhetorical space within the public relations and higher education domain, one filling a clear discursive gap, generating both an operational and conceptual discipline dedicated to the effective practice of communication and the elevation of higher education.

This chapter offers a discussion of the study, analyzing and interpreting the study's key results by providing an analytical examination of the organization's founding and developing years and discussing the significance of Kuhn's critique of paradigm emergence, which is followed by a overview of the concept of functionalism and its relationship to the Association's emergence. The chapter will showcase rhetorical theory as a central framework, with Bitzer's rhetorical principles as an underpinning, highlighted by the concept of rhetorical situation. The first segment of the chapter will analyze findings. The second segment of the chapter will assess how the findings are interconnected. The chapter will also include implications and recommendations for additional research.

In sum, the chapter will summarize key findings as they related to the Association's development, evolution, and impact, including its locus in a complex, multidimensional higher education enterprise and its longer term influence on college and university configurations and culture. The Association carved a new space for rhetoric within the higher education and public relations ecosphere.

Frankenberg as a Rhetorical Innovator

Frankenberg must be recognized for his contributions within the higher education and public relations complex. While Frankenberg did not serve in an *official* capacity as leader for as long as some other advocates, such as Reck, it was Frankenberg's vision to model a group of practitioners with analogous communication responsibilities that stands as a primary motive for the organization's formation and evolution. Indeed, Frankenberg's concept to build the group out of a modest meeting in 1915 was central to the Association's very existence. But why did Frankenberg feel compelled to push for the organization's creation? What led Frankenberg to advocate for a new, developing craft within such a complex sector?

Frankenberg's personal experiences, interlaced with his sense of possibility, triggered his vision. He felt a void within the field of publicity, especially as it related to the higher education world. Frankenberg (1942) noted his early impressions during a meeting of the Association's silver anniversary gathering in Columbus, Ohio:

> For me, it was pioneering work. I soon found that the usual publicity techniques of the day were ineffective. I began to ask around to find what, if any, other colleges were trying a similar experiment. Very few were. Correspondence developed the fact that some were interested. (p. 15)

Frankenberg's professional practice was not exclusive to higher education, although his work impacted the field more than other areas. He served a number of entities during his career, both before and after his stint at the Western College for Women. It was clear to him early on that the burgeoning trade of publicity, later morphing to public relations, could be sharpened, enhanced. The first World War helped to accelerate public relations as a vocation, and institutions of higher learning followed (Frankenberg, 1942).

Although he unfailingly ascribed the group's success to others, it was Frankenberg who rounded up the first group of practitioners for the group's inaugural meeting in 1915. Perhaps just as vital, he followed up on a second meeting for the budding alliance. When the party next met in 1917 with a national journalism teachers' organization, it was Frankenberg who addressed participants at the behest of his peers. When he recollected the meeting years later at the Association's silver anniversary meeting, Frankenberg (1942) described the occasion in reserved, matter of fact terms:

> It was just the start of an experiment. The fact that I became the first president was not due to any outstanding achievement on my part. Rather, I have always thought, it was because I had my own, independent, office. (pp. 15-16)

Frankenberg's self-described experiment seemed more than serendipitous. Although he labeled the early venture as a mere trial, it is apparent that Frankenberg's knowledge of the field was motivating him to press forward with a newfangled professional construct. Understanding Frankenberg's motivation is essential. His focus on founding an organization for public relations rhetoric may perhaps be found in both his sense of effective, efficient communication but also through his observation of a rhetorical void, especially as it related to the higher education sphere.

Discursive Hubs

A second finding noted that Association conventions served as discursive hubs, or hot spots. These conventions were focal points for group members and enabled robust discussion on issues impacting the organization and higher education institutions as an entity. Annual conferences served as centers of dialogue, where members discussed the role of an emerging professional field and their place in a trade that seemed quickly evolving, notably within the higher education milieu. Although many members were alike in concept and occupation, fragmentation of the group existed, especially during the formative years of the Association. Conferences thus served as a focal point, the bond of ideas and innovation, common practices, ideas, and everyday challenges. Conferences were of a utilitarian nature, communities within a larger higher education communications guild. The proceedings were more than obligatory. They were essential, important, and desired for the Association's long-term success. Colp-Hansbury (2007) stressed that the concept of community involves joint activity and membership but also includes active, responsive engagement. "Yes, one can certainly maintain a type of association by simply being in a particular location, but community is what emerges when one is truly emotionally involved" (Colp-Hansbury, 2007, p. 7).

Association conferences were designed to be active centers of discursive engagement and served as such. Community and public relations operated as the core concepts of Association meetings due to the shared professional interests of participants and their largely intrinsic rationale to enhance personal skills and broaden support of a progressing higher education field. Conventions offered a sense of community, and the notion of community-building and related community building theory may be viewed concomitantly as a process and an outcome that includes the unification of individuals and the groups they represent, both seeking to work together toward a mutual objective (Valentini, Kruckeberg, & Starck, 2012). By extension, public relations is interwoven with community, implying a hearty obligation, a covenant. "Public relations is seen as strongly anchored in the concept of community" (Valentini, Kruckeberg, & Starck, 2012, p. 874). Technology is also imperative, particularly contemporary online platforms, as part of the larger world community. When Frankenberg and his contemporaries launched the Association, the newer platform at the time *was* the group's annual convention, augmented with communication via telephone, written correspondence, and newsletters. A sense of community influenced convention dialogue and endurance. Meetings occurred throughout the nation, from New Orleans to Nashville to New York. Carl and Duck (2004) encouraged a definition of community that involves a network of genuine, engaged connected relationships. Communities of relationships serve an *epistemic* function. This is to say, “the conduct of relationships not only instantiates a person’s way of knowing the world but also represents a foundation for new forms of knowledge” (Carl & Duck, 2004, p. 3).

Association conferences thus served as a mode of recognizing the importance of professional and personal development, gaining greater awareness of the field via organized, engaged discourse. This observation is not to suggest the group was unique in terms of holding annual meetings. It was not. But the burgeoning field of public relations served as a companion to many of the fluctuations within the higher education arena during the first half of the 20th century. As Geiger (2015) observed, higher education surged after 1915 and particularly following the first World War. Simultaneously, the nation was experiencing a rise in high school graduates. Traditional colleges and universities revealed growth, but formal, higher education was also becoming more available to the masses through institutions offering vocational and technical programs. Branch campuses of universities began to offer opportunities for students (Geiger, 2015). The Association emerged during this time period, seeking to build a foundation and grow a professional network, a new branch in which many sensed an opportunity to contribute to the growth of an industry and the development of a profession. Skilled communicators within the group and in a broader context operated as more than idealists in search of a common pursuit–they executed effective interpersonal communication practices. To this end, Carl and Duck argued that relationships serve as rhetoric, or, more specifically, as rhetorical action. Carl and Duck (2004) observed,

> When people are in relationships, they are not only part of a relational entity that has a recognizable social form, but they are also part of a shared knowledge system that

> distinguishes itself from other relational groupings by its taken-for-granted, but actually quite laboriously worked out, assumptions of what is known and how it is known. (p. 11)

Rhetoric helps to label our understanding of one another and the world. Relationships, including those within the Association, possessed a communicative core, and Association conferences served as an exceptional platform for imparting knowledge, ideas and goals, both in an interpersonal context and broader group configuration. They were at once networking events and professional development platforms.

When examining the intersection of public relations and community, the question of target publics likewise comes to mind. Association conventions served as networking and engagement gatherings for Association members and related cohorts, not the public at large. Communication within the group was especially important. Welch and Jackson (2007) conducted research on internal communication and defined the concept as “the strategic management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders at all levels within organization” (p. 183). Association conventions were largely strategic, especially as the network evolved. Convention programs, topics, and speakers typically aligned with a certain theme. Welch and Jackson maintained that four internal stakeholder groups fall within an internal communication matrix. These are internal line management communication, internal team peer communication, internal project peer communication, and internal corporate communication. The last two categories, project peer communication and internal corporate communication, dovetail within the Association’s internal framework. Project peer communication involves a focus on team goals and communication in networks and small groups. Corporate communication involves communication and engagement with all employees. The Association as an entity, and conferences in particular, blended this pair of categories. Smaller teams, comprised largely of

Association leaders and dynamic members, directed elements of convention proceedings. When these proceedings were joined into a deliberate, planned configuration, they served as a convention, a communication apparatus to the more expansive network. As the Association advanced, its convention topics covered an eclectic group of topics, ranging from athletics to war-related issues. The 1944 convention, as an example, was branded as the *National War Conference* (Given, 1944).

Higher Education *Interpretation* and *Athletics Communication* Act as Roadmap

An emphasis on *interpretation* and a visionary approach to the burgeoning issue of *intercollegiate athletics* embodied a measured, steady schema for the Association. The theme of interpretation and how Association members could illuminate both the Association's value and the merits of higher education ascended to the forefront continuously during group conferences (Graham & Pellegrin, 1935; "College Heads See Publicity as Vital," 1930; Harvey, 1944). Robust discussion of athletics stood as a consistent theme during Association meetings and related publications, with the 1931 conference representing the first year athletics was integrated as a permanent committee within the national configuration (Boochever, 1931; "College Heads See Publicity as Vital," 1930; Ragsdale, 1931). Association members with strong athletic-related interests eventually moved to create their own organization, CoSIDA, which remains in existence ("Our Organization," n.d.). These issues became the salient themes that persisted for the Association as it sought to seize upon matters that would not only impact members directly but also affect the larger higher education ecosphere. While framing information, labeled as interpretation, was more conceptual in nature, it functioned as a core principle for group members as they sought to shape credibility, *ethos*, both within both colleges and the university sphere and also to external publics. Athletics communication represented more of an issue management concern for the organization. The continued recognition of intercollegiate athletics as a manifest segment of higher education industry shaped topics and dialogue at Association events along with content in the group's related publications. The issue eventually spawned CoSIDA ("Our Organization," n.d.; Reck, 1967).

This historical study incorporated rhetoric as a framework with which to view the commencement, development, and growth of the Association. Frankenberg's long-term thought process and vision, Association conventions, and the matters of interpretation and athletic communication all encompassed significant dimensions of Association discourse and planning. The study revealed that Frankenberg's foresight formed the organization, Association conventions then acted as dialogic centers, and a pair of prominent themes delivered focus to leaders seeking a greater voice in the college and university dominion. What about the Association's place in the grander rhetorical arena? What can we say about the network's rhetorical influences? What was the Association's role as a conceptual space?

A new national office in 1950 afforded the network a new beginning, strengthening its presence among the countless alliances engaging with thought and policy leaders in the nation's capital. Meanwhile, after decades, the formation and evolution of a national system of public relations practitioners serving hundreds of higher education institutions strengthened the Association's brand and elevated its rhetorical presence. To be certain, a physical manifestation served as a symbol, a recognition of the network's decades-long effort to elevate its profile, but a grander homage suggested a more profound meaning, more complex and theoretical in nature. Two conceptual topics come into focus: new professional space in higher education marketplace along with a new space for rhetoric within the public sphere. Applying a theoretical lens complete with a rhetorical underpinning offers insight into the Association's enterprise and progression. It also gives rich context to the study's second research question:

To what extent, if any, did the Association create a new rhetorical arena for higher education?

The simple answer to this query could simply be "substantial." This descriptor is indubitably accurate, but a deeper explanation is required. Employing a rhetorical lens breathes life and meaning to the relatively simple answer of "substantial." Such an analysis also serves as a springboard for evaluating the study's effects and potential avenues for additional scholarship.

The following sections will establish rhetoric as a valuable lens to examine the Association's progress and development. It will first include an overview of Kuhn's (1970) impactful analysis of paradigms, followed by a discussion on rhetorical criticism and Bitzer's (1968) theory of rhetorical situation. An analysis of how rhetoric intersects with public relations will follow, along with suggestions for additional exploration and research.

A Paradigm Creation

The Association's birth as a result of Frankenberg's steadfast efforts appeared to represent a paradigm shift, or even a paradigm creation, because of the far reaching influence of several group members meshed with the many changes impacting higher education in the early decades of the 20th century. Kuhn (2012) argued that new paradigms are not shaped by extending the framework and actions of an older archetype. Rather, the field reconstructs itself, offering new fundamentals and, essentially, entering into a transition phase toward a new paradigm. If a question cannot be answered within the current paradigm, an anomaly arises, and if the abnormality cannot be solved, a scientific revolution occurs. Kuhn (2012) wrote, "When the transition is complete, the profession will have changed its view of the field, its methods and its goals" (p. 84). Kuhn focused his impactful analysis largely within a science framework, a physics lens, but his exploration could apply within a more universal orbit. In a new, revolutionary paradigm, scientists “see new and different things when looking with familiar instruments in places they have looked before” (Kuhn, 2012, p. 111). Because rhetoric and communication served as foundations that created formal structures of collegiate public relations and strategy, Kuhn’s critique of paradigm emergence seems to apply with the Association’s founding and ensuing influence within the higher education sphere. Frankenberg, along with early Association supporters and leaders, the early “scientists” of the network, sensed an opportunity to enhance their profession through collaboration and interaction, utilizing similar tools at their disposal but implementing an understanding of higher education with new communication approaches. They moved from a conceptual model, envisioning a need within the higher education ecosystem, to implementation, creating a prescribed structure for the Association. Through Frankenberg’s vision and the Association’s birth and influence within a vastly multifaceted education infrastructure, the AACNB generated a new paradigm for the practice of higher education public relations. The entities of higher education and the emerging practice of public relations launched a new, emerging synergistic relationship, a sometimes coarse affiliation that would become a fundamental ingredient of America’s college and university ecosystem.

Functionalism

Indeed, Kuhn’s theory holds valuable lessons and serves as a constructive foundation for conceptual models, almost like formulas, that act as root causes for a new paradigm emergence. Vos (2011) discussed potential societal vacuums when exploring potential links between public relations and functionalism, the notion of filling voids in eco- or social systems when essential roles are needed. “Any social function can be understood as performing some role in the preservation or maintenance of a social system . . . A particular institution or a particular social practice exists because it solves a social problem" (Vos, 2011, p. 122-123). In his analysis, Vos subsequently questioned the view of the public relations sector developing due to a functionalist reason - other logics of explanation may be stronger. Vos (2011) wrote,

> Institutional and cultural logics see public relations in a temporal context—not just as the answer to what the world needed at a particular moment, but as a historically situated institution whose DNA can be traced back, at least in part, to its context in the early 20th century. Thus, these logics allow people to explore how it is that history matters. (p. 136)

Historical context is central to grasp when analyzing the construct of the Association. However, it is this researcher's view that a functionalist interpretation of the craft and its role within the higher education realm is also quite worthy of consideration, especially when coupled with rhetorical theory. Morgan (2006) took note of an ecological perspective and how organizations monitor, navigate, and execute change. "An awareness of the changing structure of critical resource niches and patterns of resource dependencies can make important contributions to our understanding of the success and power of different organizations" (Morgan, 2006, p. 61). Critics of this perspective argue that the environment has too much influence on a particular organization's success or failure; businesses and organizations live within a complex ecosystem. For instance, the Association lived within a broader, complex higher education structure and culture. However, the Association's establishment and contributions at a critical time cannot be ignored. Perhaps the creation and subsequent growth and progression could be analyzed through both an ecological lens but also through other organizational frames.

The industry's growth paralleled the rise of higher education and the need for enhanced communication practices for those promoting institutions of higher learning. This stood as a central motivation for Frankenberg conceptualizing and embarking upon initial meetings of collegiate communication professionals. Trow (1997) compared the evolution of higher education to a market ecosystem. Higher education institutions are like business entrepreneurs, seeking to adapt to market conditions in order to survive. Meanwhile, higher education enrollment grew 4.7 times as fast as the population between 1890 and 1925 (Rudolph, 1990). Growth fueled more growth. In the early decades of the 20th century, access to higher education increased and improved access to colleges and university hallways swelled enrollments for the decades to come, with overall admissions continuing to swell by five times between World War I and World War II (Thelin, 2010). The emerging prospect of a college education opened new dialogical doors in more American households, with families visualizing potential pathways to an advanced socioeconomic rung. Within this milieu, the image of the postsecondary institution became imperative. Association members were now part of a necessary enterprise and the group's support network was integral.

Rhetoric

As noted, rhetoric and rhetorical theory connect in a conceptual and practical union to function as a fundamental structure for this study. Rhetoric offers rich potential for study. As discussed, an emerging public relations craft in the early decades of the 20th century addressed a void, or, at minimum, a fissure, in the marketplace of ideas. What is the optimal definition of rhetoric? The origins of rhetoric are often traced to Greek philosophers, although the term *rhetoric* may prompt ambiguity when researchers seek to pinpoint every detail of its origin. Plato served as a critic of rhetoric, concerned about its impact on rational arguments, essentially seeing rhetoric as persuasion with little or no empirical evidence. Plato based his notion of rhetoric largely on absolute truth and certainty (Marsh 2013). Aristotle, meanwhile, devoted much of his time to promoting and defending rhetoric, espousing how it serves as a platform for collaboration, not a tool for repression or falsehoods. For Aristotle, rhetoric was both philosophical and practical in nature, and persuasion served as the very core. What persuades is at the heart of Aristotle's view on rhetoric (Marsh, 2013). Aristotle, who crafted a formative work on the topic, *Rhetoric*, contended that "rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion . . . it is not concerned with any special or definite or class of subjects" (Aristotle, trans. 2004, Chapter 2, para. 1). Some truths may not be apparent through scientific logic and could be contingent on culture or situational issues (Campbell, 1996).

In more contemporary settings, Burke (1950) also pointed to persuasion as being at the foundation of rhetoric but dissects classical definitions by correctly accentuating that persuasion itself carries forth assorted meanings. Persuasion, Burke (1950) argued, may speak to attitude rather than to specific actions. And rhetoric contains social context, a utilization of symbols to help us understand one another as human beings (Burke, 1966). In a practical sense, humans are differentiated from other animals through the utilization of symbols to communicate. Symbols serve as primary channels for interaction, conduits for messaging. In relation to human connections and cultural context, Hansen (1996) observed, "Through the symbol's ability to create terms for order, language emerges as a tool. Burke's theories address the implications of considering language as a tool that separates us from our natural condition" (p. 55). In essence, words help to label and classify the world around us, the world in which we live. Campbell (1996) offered a well-rounded definition: "Rhetoric is the study of what is persuasive. The issues it examines are social truths, addressed to others, justified by reasons that reflect cultural values" (p. 8). Rhetoric evolves around truth and discourse on issues. For instance, Aristotle viewed rhetoric as a means for diplomacy or statesmanship, rather than a tool for despotism (Nichols, 1987). To this end, rhetoric, the art and execution of persuasion, helps to build community, something essential to the formation and success of the Association and its participants. Taylor (2011) viewed rhetoric as discourse and public relations as execution of the discourse, creating and building social capital to enhance communities. Taylor (2011) observed, “Rhetoric through public relations provides the discourses that construct issues and their resolutions” (p. 437). In applying this concept, it could be argued that individual members of the Association created the necessary discourse to build an efficient nationwide public relations network while the organization itself served as a vehicle, a means, to enact the group’s collective ideas across a more expansive societal framework.

Rhetorical Situation and the Association

Rhetorical situations stem from necessities, rhetorical needs, overtures in an imperfect world. Frankenberg appeared to envision such a condition in 1915 when he pictured the early prototype for the Association, some 53 years before Bitzer (1968) tendered his rhetorical situation model. A void in the rhetorical marketplace existed, and Frankenberg conceived the AACNB platform to address the gap, calling together a small band of practitioners to meet with him in Columbus, Ohio. It is important to remember that Frankenberg had reached out to editors of large newspapers to gather their ideas and guidance for news and story placement. His optimism was well placed and served as a precursor for several future Association convention proceedings.

Following is a breakdown of Bitzer’s (1968) rhetorical situation model and how the model applies to the Association and its founding, development, and overall legacy. This historical study, wrapped largely around a rhetorical structure, contends the *exigence* linked with the birth and development of the AACNB, and its branch factions stems from a rhetorical need, an invitation for discourse evolving around the mounting growth and complexity of a national higher education structure combined with the nascent professional field of public relations and associated practitioner-based communication. While Bitzer focused much of his landmark theorem on singular, individual circumstances, such as a specific rhetorical act, this analysis advances Bitzer's rhetorical concept and seeks to apply it to a more expansive, global condition, tendering that a professional discipline rose to prominence through an exigence, thus addressing a discernable vacuum in the newly coupled, specialized home of higher education public relations.

Bitzer (1968) contended that a rhetorical situation determines the response, or type of response. As American colleges and universities evolved into more intricate institutions and as the 19th century progressed to the 20th century, the mechanisms within higher learning institutions and culture deepened. Historian Frederick Rudolph (1990) noted that universities addressed challenges associated with growth by augmenting administrative positions. Most college administrations prior to the American Civil War consisted of a president, a treasurer, and a part-time librarian. "But now, with the enlargement of function and scope, administrative responsibility was necessarily splintered" (Rudolph, 1990, p. 434). And as Rudolph (1990) added, by the beginning of the first World War, "the apparatus of the organized institution was complete" (p. 438). Public relations platforms, such as the AACNB, became one of the functional splinters to which Rudolph referred. Professionals within institutions began to create their own clusters of content experts. These professionals comprised the groups of horizontal networks to which fellow historian Thelin (2010) referred. The formation of functional splinter administrative groupings and related horizontal networks aligns with Bitzer's rhetorical situation first because of the exigence itself, the broad necessity for organized public relations discourse within a greater circle. As Frankenberg initiated the early steps to form the Association, he recognized a viable opportunity, a correctable flaw in the realm of substantial public relations discourse in the field of higher education. Frankenberg viewed this condition as a means of addressing a blemish around the bounds of organizational and cultural structures and acted. Frankenberg (1942) pointed to the profession's awakening as he ruminated about the Association's first 25 years. Frankenberg (1942) recalled,

> World War, of course, made publicity as a calling. Whereas it was a mystery in 1915, by 1925 all sorts of groups had their publicity representatives. Slowly colleges and universities saw either the wisdom, or the necessity, of doing something about it. (p. 16)

An early recognition of a public relations vacuity, or an exigence in Bitzer's (1968) terminology, quickly evolved into a broader recognition of needed action, an act of rhetoric that set in motion the creation and development of a public relations organizational platform.

Bitzer (1968) asserted an exigence must be rehabilitated or altered in order to be *truly* rhetorical. Importantly, historic context impacts rhetorical works, according to Bitzer. "An act is moral because it is an act performed in a situation of a certain kind; similarly, a work is rhetorical because it is a response to a situation of a certain kind" (Bitzer, 1968, p. 3). With Frankenberg and the Association, we see a response, and given what we know about the Association's durability, a *fitting* response, to a rhetorical void in the higher education rhetorical and administrative sphere. As Bitzer (1968) aptly stressed, a rhetorical situation serves as "a natural context of persons, events, objects, relations, and an exigence which strongly invites utterance" (p. 4). Brinton (1981) scrutinized Bitzer's analysis and offered that the fundamental normative concept for rhetoric related to suitability, or a sound fit, due to the particular situation. Brinton (1981) elaborated, "Rhetorical acts are to be evaluated in terms of the degree to which they fit the situation. It is for this reason that situation is essential and basic to the theory of rhetoric" (p. 238). The Association, led initially by Frankenberg, engaged in consistent rhetorical acts. These acts included setting in motion the group's early meetings, planning and vigorous dialogue at annual conventions, its deliberative brand transitions based on market and environmental factors, and its advancement to concentrate on a strategic practice. All of these acts aligned with Bitzer's situation framework and led to the ultimate installation of the network's national office.

Of course, a review of *audience* is necessary within Bitzer's (1968) theorem. An authentic rhetorical audience must be impacted by discourse and also must serve as an arbitrator of change. Thus, audience members are not merely passive. They engage and participate, mediating possible action for modification or alterations to the imperfection, or, in Bitzer's world, the exigence. Within the Association, the audience included members themselves, those participants who comprised the expansive network of communication professionals in the higher education ecosphere. The role of participants in the network adjusted from time to time, due to individual positions on committees and conventions, but engagement within these clusters only enhanced the voices of supporters on a grander scale. Annual Association conventions, as my study has recognized, served as discursive hubs, but they also functioned as stages for rhetorical situations, establishing dialogue for exploring *if* change should occur but also enabling audience participants to employ the contexts of *what*, *why*, and *how*. The Association's decision to change its name on two occasions, due largely to existing conditions in the public relations and image making marketplace, and its 1950 convention that set forth the final phases for the making of a national office offer examples of executing change to address a need (American College Public Relations Association, 1950; Reck, 1967). The theme of higher education and the Association's role in interpretation and, later, the approach of implementing a strategic culture for group pursuits further illustrate audience and stakeholder proprietorship. These realities signified the Association's purpose through dialogue and planning, its blueprint to seek a discernible formal presence in the nation's capital and work to strengthen the interpretative component of the Association's mission. These objectives paralleled broader, collective outcomes of a higher education system facing its own ups and downs.

The Association faced a number of *constraints* after its inception. Constraints, Bitzer (1968) argued, possess the power to limit decisions and actions, thus hindering execution to amend or transform the exigence. It appears the earliest tangible constraint faced by the Association was the first World War, which began with United States engagement just after the organization became a reality. Subsequent constraints included membership and related support structures, economic malaise in the form of the Great Depression, lack of a niche and consistent voice within the nation's higher education structure and, of course, a dearth of steady resources that prohibited the establishment of a permanent, national office until 1950. Bitzer later fine-tuned his theorem to answer critics. Many Bitzer critics disagreed with his rhetorical situation model, arguing that the model was too undeviating. A rhetorical situation instead is determined by events rather than meanings and values present in "individual auditors and the rhetor" (Smith & Lybarger, 1996, p. 200). Bitzer acknowledged that rhetorical situations are not necessarily stationary--they might "flow and change," (Smith & Lybarger, 1996, p. 201) and could also intersect. Thus, Bitzer acknowledged that while "situational rhetoric is predictable, it is not necessarily predetermined" (Smith & Lybarger, 1996, p. 201). These acknowledgements lend additional weight to how Bitzer's model couples Frankenberg's vision and the Association's story with higher education and public relations. Ihlen (2011) offered a concise summary of

Bitzer's concept: "The rhetor must define and translate the problem into words, identify an audience that can help solve the problem, and understand the constraints in the situation and hence what is required of his or her rhetoric" (p. 460). Hence, the Association and its leaders recognized early necessities, namely an integrated space to address relevant higher education concerns in the rhetorical, public square. Also, an emphasis on the group's role within the education sector and consequent movement toward a more intensive strategic philosophy act as a chief illustration of such reforms. When the Association supplanted its label from *publicity* to *public relations* in 1946, a strategy mindset represented a significant passage for the leadership's planning calculus. Several years before the new moniker became official, Frankenberg recognized an undercurrent of change for the alliance, picturing a move away from a practitioner conceptual model to a policy-and planning-driven approach, supplemented with data. Frankenberg (1942) projected,

> It will consider causes and results. It will accumulate such a mass of data that certain courses, at least, can be platted with some assurance of success. It will . . . become an authority; it will be a storehouse of information, a leader, not only in education, but in the whole broad field of human affairs. (pp. 17-18)

Perhaps no one explained the transition in a richer fashion than former Association President Arthur Brandon, of the University of Michigan. Transitioning from *news bureau* to *publicity* was a necessity in the 1920s and became essential again when the group moved from *publicity* to *public relations.* Needs within higher education institutions expanded, and publicity became more of an engaged, two-way relationship between universities and stakeholders. Brandon (1946) maintained, "Publicity is like reputation–what the public learns about you. Public relations is like character–what you really are. The whole personality of an institution in its many parts and personnel affects the public's attitudes toward it" (p. 4).

As such, publicity had now grown into public relations, encompassing a broad spectrum of undertakings, permeating the education and communication landscape with deeper, broader responsibilities, including relationship building via continuous engagement with stakeholders. The network's cognizance of a shifting profession hastened an approach that focused on deliberate tactics to strengthen institutional image, and largely within a measured, strategic mindset. The Association became a textbook vehicle to offer resources for practical, every day public relations installments for institutions of higher learning. Coupled with the realization of a public relations focus, the establishment of an Association national office and a permanent executive leader only solidified its mission.

Public Relations and Rhetoric: A Bond

A bond between rhetoric, public relations discourse, and the Association as it relates to the network's role in higher education appeared evident. As we have discovered, structurally and strategically, the public relations function matured and performed a loftier role within the Association's system as the decades passed, eventually and appropriately attaching itself directly to the group's brand name and purpose. Rhetoric served as the primary platform from which public relations functioned, principally within a strategical and practical context. Of course, rhetoric extends to the days of classical Greek rhetoricians and philosophers. As the study established, public relations, while conceptually existent for centuries, only became more of a common term in the American public lexicon in the 1940s, although the practice existed well in advance of that decade. Did rhetoric, in a classical sense, establish a foundation for the Association's strategy emphasis and tactics?

The findings in this study appear to confirm this suggestion, based on the conceptual models applied with and around the study's methodology. In practice, public relations operates frequently within a rhetorical frame. If an exigence is established per Bitzer's (1968) model, a response, ideally, as Bitzer stressed, a *fitting* and appropriate response, should follow. Enter the craft of public relations as a stylistic annex, a mechanism to address an exigence. Rhetoric, or a rhetorical framework, drives public relations but, perhaps equally as important, rhetoric pushes the strategy, the approach and vision to how topics are addressed within public relations practice. Bitzer proposed that in a perfect scenario, rhetoric may not exist because there would be no valid need for an exigence. "In our real world, however, rhetorical exigences abound; the world really invites change—change conceived and effected by human agents who quite properly address a mediating audience" (Bitzer, 1968, p. 13). As the study found, Frankenberg served as an integral human agent to propel change, address the rhetorical exigence and shape a professional rejoinder, a new space, within America's higher education arena. As an outcome, a public relations model and to some extent a new communications brand were born from the Association, its successors, and its legacy. Through Frankenberg's vision, the determined nature of organization leaders and an ability to adapt and, in many ways, morph as a network, the Association designed a new rhetorical model for a complex, multi-layered higher education system.

Study Advantages

A narrative, historical study that relies on archives and similar documents does hold certain advantages. One would be offering a voice to the individuals, the lives, who impacted the subject in a significant way (in this instance, the Association). Denzin (1989) wrote, "Lives are biographical properties. They belong not just to persons, but to social collectivities, including societies, corporations, and, for some, the world-system" (p. 29). To this end, the study's approach offered robust context to the Association's story as it evolved from its early years to the months leading up to the formation of a national office. Another advantage of the study's approach may be associated with study validity. Reviewing multiple documents crafted by multiple individuals through several decades offers valuable information to the researcher. In sum, the researcher may draw from multiple sources, not merely one leader. Thus, policies and events are more than facts. They are facts formulated by individuals. Denzin (1989) noted, "A person has a life or a set of life-experiences which are his or hers and no one else's" (p. 28). This perspective perhaps summarizes the advantages of this particular study. I felt as if I was gaining valuable context and insight about the vision of Association leaders as they sought to enhance the group's credibility and, concurrently, its influence within the nation's vast higher education infrastructure.

Finally, the blended approach, meshing historical narrative with rhetorical theory, served as a benefit. Incorporating rhetoric as an integral aspect of the study's framework helped to strengthen the analysis and focus on Frankenberg's influence and the Association's prominent role in the nexus of public relations and higher education. This approach seemed to add context to archives written decades ago, providing thick description of integral events. A mix of conference proceedings coupled with letters and reports offered multi-dimensional insight about key topics and issues impacting the Association.

Limitations

The study contained certain limitations. First, being able to evaluate spoken words through a personal interview methodology would have likely offered exceptional contextual insight and perhaps richer narratives into the Association's past. Having noted this, the group's record keeping efforts appeared efficient and effective, so having a rich treasure of archived documents to review proved beneficial during the study's implementation and review phases. In addition, many documents offered exceptional detail into Association plans and the related issues that surrounded the group across several eras.

It should be noted that literature on Frankenberg, outside of his personal writings, is limited outside of Association-related archives. While this may offer fertile ground for additional exploration, it also presents challenges in relation to gathering additional biographical information on the organization's founder.

While perhaps not a direct limitation, it is important to examine the various factors linked with such a historical study, including this analysis. Scholars seeking to employ a similar research opportunity would be wise to seek as much context as feasible, reviewing the details and nuances of events that occur at a specific point in time. For instance, what events or instances may have been prevalent when the document or archive was produced? Similarly, documents that may seem mundane at first glance may be quite valuable when applied within the framework of a historical study. Importantly, the personal filters used by one researcher may be quite different than filters utilized by other researchers. It is important to recognize this and ensure any study integrates means of safeguarding credibility for research outcomes. Prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation are all facets of securing trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These elements also assist the researcher in determining what documents may not be worthy of additional inquiry. This study began as a project for a History of Higher Education course during the Fall of 2013. Several hundred archives were reviewed in the process, both at the Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis and The Ohio State University Library Archives. Committee members also reviewed the study, ensuring I asked the appropriate research questions and employed sound methodology. Additionally, it is worthwhile to explore prioritizing documents. The sheer number of archives that may require appraisal could appear to be insurmountable. I experienced this during my first visit to the Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. Researchers should know what archives serve as a priority for review before an evaluation. When launching an analysis of multiple archives, some will simply be more important than others within the construct of the study. It is recommended to adjust as needed. While I sought to ensure to interpret, analyze, and share data as accurately, effectively and objectively as possible, I realize it is important for me to reflect upon my experiences and continue to sharpen my craft as I pursue similar qualitative research possibilities in the years ahead.

It should also be stressed that rhetoric and rhetorical situations frequently apply to individuals, not necessarily entire organizations, but groups may be explored. Of course, this study focused on how rhetoric shaped ideas, organizational vision, and culture. It examined how certain individuals, Frankenberg in particular, founded and navigated a network through uncertain, sometimes turbulent waters to prominence and a national, meaningful profile. And as Denzin (1989) observed, biographies could apply to entities beyond people. This study sought to implement such scholarship, seeking to achieve a greater understanding of the Association and its impact through the rhetoric and actions of its leaders.

Implications, Recommendations, and Reflections

Implications for Visionary Leadership

The Association and its succeeding configurations established an innovative frame for how institutions of higher learning advocate and create a narrative for policy and related issues impacting the college and university spectrum. Through its formation, growth, and constructive achievements, the Association formulated an effective prescription for shaping its own image within higher education and public relations culture. The study asked two primary research questions. First, what were the formative events and narratives that allowed the Association to evolve from 1915-1950, generating succeeding organizations? And next, to what extent, if any, did the Association create a new rhetorical arena for higher education?

First, T. T. Frankenberg served in a role much greater than a publicity, public relations, or communications professional. He recognized the higher education industry required a new voice that would not only elevate both the college and university domain but also bolster the talents of a burgeoning field of practitioners. How might Frankenberg's vision, wisdom of the moment, and long-term dedication be replicated in contemporary environments? Frankenberg and his early colleagues realized both the need for greater professional engagement and the necessity to build and sustain the organization through a multitude of weighty challenges. This devotion paid dividends in the longer term and impacted the nexus of public relations and higher education, activating the groundwork for the modern day CASE. Can contemporary leaders in higher education, either within the academy or within groups associated with the academy, such as CASE, *consistently* collaborate with an expansive universe of stakeholders to establish cohesive, prosperous programs, services, and even organizations to benefit the college and university sector? Frankenberg seemed to be the right fit at the right time, especially given his creative energy. Who are the contemporary visionaries and innovators who can draw a clear, efficacious roadmap for higher education and serve as a commanding rhetorical voice for institutions large and small?

Implications for Rhetorical Space

Second, the Association's growth and development functioned as a cornerstone in securing a new space for communications and public relations practice within the higher education realm. The historical study's findings supported this view, and the accompanying rhetorical analysis helped to offer insight as to how the network realized and fruitfully addressed the need for reliable professionals. The Association's founding and development established a new paradigm for resource and organizational development, particularly for professionals within the horizontal networks that service and support the mission of higher education institutions. These early practitioners of public relations served as pacesetters in their own right, seeking to enhance their talents in a deeply intricate higher education matrix. In a 1949 summary of the Association's annual convention, Cecelia VanAuken [ca. 1949] of Tufts College wrote,

> Pointing out that college presidents once rejected the idea of public relations, President Cloyd Heck Marvin of The George Washington University welcomed ACPRAers to their 1949 convention in Washington April 27 by declaring now that PR had won a secure place in the building of social good in a time when "there is greater need than ever before for the integrity of our college to be known." (p. 12)

The craft of public relations within higher education had received the recognition it had sought for decades, confirming a new place at the table for practitioners and their alliances in the immense and often complex college and university arena.

How do the colleges and universities of today address the conceptual and operational needs within their respective organizations? How do institutions go about shaping the image of their institutions? Is their public relations approach built around a strategic, two-way symmetrical practice? Do they integrate public relations with up-to-date marketing concepts?

These are questions the early leaders of the Association faced, not perhaps in terms of marketing applications but with regard to the negative perception of the term *publicity* within the larger societal domain. Meanwhile, do institutions build and sustain professional development opportunities for their faculty and staff? To what extent do present-day institutions support advocacy and service networks, such as CASE? Today, CASE, which was born out of the Association and its eventual merger with the American Alumni Council, aims to help its members bolster relationships with stakeholders. This includes promoting institutions to prospective students and building comprehensive public support for education. Stakeholders, international in scope, range from students, families, educational institutions and alumni to businesses, corporate executives and government officials ("About CASE," 2018). The CASE web site states, "CASE helps its members build stronger relationships with all of these constituencies by providing relevant research, supporting growth in the profession and fostering support of education" ("About CASE," 2018, para. 2). The study found that the Association's early core emphasis largely centered on networking and collaboration, a distinction that remains highlighted within CASE's organizational pillars. Recently, CASE's value statement declared,

> We value professional excellence, integrity and respect for our community of volunteers and staff as partners, stakeholders and leaders. We aspire to be bold, agile and innovative. And we are committed, in all that we do, to be collaborative, inclusive and embracing of diversity ("About CASE: Mission," 2018, para. 3)

Bold, agile, and innovative may also be accurate descriptors for the Association and its growth, although at times through the decades the group's progress appeared to be stalled. But the foresight to stay the course, address rhetorical and marketplace needs, and the long-term vision to foresee the benefits of a permanent national office epitomized a strong, inventive flair that propelled the organization forward in the longer term, impacting organizational values with its CASE successor in contemporary university settings. Higher education historian Darryl Peterkin offered a valuable reminder of history's enigmatic nature in his overview of the past within the brick and mortar walls of institutions. Peterkin (2010) observed, "Colleges and universities are like people: they are born, they mature and thrive, and (at least some of them) eventually die. A great deal of mundane, miraculous, and mayhem occurs in between these two poles" (p. 17). The same can perhaps be ascribed to the Association and its members, as the network faced an abundance of trials and opportunities during its formative decades. A strong market for athletic-related public relations spurred CoSIDA, which formed in 1957 and then the Association's eventual merger with the American Alumni Council created CASE in 1974. Associations, organizations, councils, networks and any group do not form and simply exist on their own. They are born out of imaginations, visions, of pioneers and leaders who sense a need for interaction and collaboration. Their experiences serve as narratives, stories that are woven within the fabric and fibers of the organization's DNA. Discourse drives decision making and policies, builds institutional culture centers around discourse, rhetorical discourse, and places rhetoric at the very core of organizational evolution. The Association served as leading illustration of rhetorical influence, from the group's founding to its conventions, national office, and eventual merger and transformation to form CASE.

Modern Day Public Relations and Implications for Image

In 1942, Louis Lyons penned a column for *Publicity Problems*, a journal of the Association. He focused his writing on the topic of education interpretation, sharing relevant news, and building trust with the public. Lyons (1942), of *The Boston Globe* and curator of Nieman Fellowships at Harvard University, stressed the significance of university engagement, almost pleading for institutions to build image credibility from within:

> Before it can have an effective public relations policy, the university must determine what is its place in the community . . . If it says it has none, save to its own academic community, then there is little occasion for or excuse for publicity for it . . . If it accepts responsibility to the community, this will be expressed in activity – extension courses, radio programs, public lectures . . . These are themselves public relations of the most direct and effective sort. (p. 4)

Today, academic institutions continue to seek relevancy on various fronts, whether they be the significance of the credentials they offer, the culture within their institutions, or the sheer cost of attendance and associated return on investment. Jaschik (2018) wrote about a recently published book, *Media U*, which focused on contemporary public relations within the world of higher learning. More specifically, the authors of *Media U* contended that higher education institutions are also media institutions, that public relations and image making are woven within the organizational fabric and practices of institutions (Jaschik, 2018). Thus, universities and colleges are often conveying information on various platforms to audiences within the school's core mission along with other audiences that are likewise important but stretch beyond the mission, such as fans of athletic programs, taxpayers, and other external stakeholders. In sum, institutions connect a variety of stakeholders through media platforms. The challenges and opportunities of conveying the value of higher education, through academic programs or the extracurricular, exist in present-day environments. Media platforms could be eclectic in nature. Thus, what are the collaborative opportunities that exist for institutions as they build strategic plans for internal and external audiences? How flexible are colleges and universities at conveying messages within their respective cultures and structures as technology and media platforms continue to evolve?

Recommendations for Higher Education Practice

This study examined the story of the Association and how it impacted higher education configuration and practices and addressed a needed rhetorical opportunity by building an enduring legacy. First, institutions of higher education design heterogeneous missions, but many possess similar administrative configurations. Within these models, does the organization's primary public relations leader have direct access to the university president or chancellor? Are there administrative layers between the institution's chief decision maker and its principal communications representative? If so, how many? Higher education across all spectrums inevitably faces challenges and crises, some more intense than others, and effective communication plans may impact the image of every institution.

Second, Frankenberg inspired an innovative assembly to review publicity and public relations within higher education institutions. Present technology offers much different pathways of network communication than 1915 and the early decades of the 20th century. Conventions and regional gatherings provided the Association with effective platforms to build and establish a sense of community, a convergence of dialogue, and hubs of idea exchanges. Professional conferences and networking symposia remain integral facets of higher education community building and should remain a priority within the college and university landscape, utilizing technological advancements to supplement, not supplant, customary interpersonal gatherings.

Finally, it is important that colleges and universities partner with external stakeholder organizations to build cooperative relationships, share resources, and develop innovative ideas for creating and assembling programs and attracting students, a web of relationships instrumental in advancing the cause of higher education.

Recommendations for Future Research

The study and its related findings deliver a number of pathways for additional inquiry on the Association, its leaders, and its compelling story. In order to reform and advance higher education, we must understand its history and the various chapters that comprise its biography. The central focus of this study examined the Association, its development, and its surrounding rhetoric primarily through 1950, when the network's national headquarters launched. Certainly, grasping the dialogue that impacted the Association's birth and rise during its early years was and is critical. A follow-up historical study exploring additional aspects of the group's story, employing a rhetorical framework, would be worthwhile of examination. We know the Greenbrier conference in 1958 spurred abundant dialogue about a potential (and eventual) merger with the American Alumni Council, but what about discourse just before, during, and following Greenbrier? An investigation of rhetoric, through close analysis of historical artifacts, may offer additional understanding. Would Bitzer's (1968) rhetorical situation model serve as a suitable framework or could another rhetorical analysis act as a superior alternative for assessment? In addition, organizational theory application would perhaps add value into the group's structural arrangement and its alignment over time. Mintzberg (1980) described five configurations in his assessment of organization typologies: simple structure, machine bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy, divisionalized form, and adhocracy. Did the Association fit one of these typologies, a hybrid of these forms, or can it be assigned to a newer, evolving structure, the elasticity that Mintzberg described? Leadership theory also would be an intriguing framework to employ around Frankenberg or, potentially, other Association leaders who steered the network through unpredictable and often rough waters, such as Collier. For instance, was

Frankenberg a transformational leader or were there other modes that applied to his approach when fashioning the Association?

Additionally, a review of diversity within the Association would be meaningful. As the organization developed, we know women engaged in some essential organization tasks, and one woman, Eleanor Collier, held a significant position with regard to the permanent establishment of a national office and previously served as the group's first female president. What would additional inquiries reveal about their stories and the narratives woven around their personal responsibilities within the organization? What would further research disclose about the roles of racial minorities involved with or related to the national network? During the study, documents touching on racial and ethnic diversity appeared to be limited in scope. Most were created and developed via a white male prism, a disadvantage with regard to securing a multitude of perspectives through diverse life experiences. Thus, a focused, deep review of archives may shed additional light and scholarship opportunities on spaces of diversity.

Other horizontal organizations may also benefit from additional research. CoSIDA, for instance, formed as a result of Association networking efforts and dialogue about intercollegiate athletics. Athletic-related topics became an enduring part of the Association's committee structure at the University of North Carolina convention in 1931. Leadership theory, conceptual models related to organizational development, or perhaps applying a rhetorical analysis could offer deeper insight into CoSIDA's evolution and perhaps reveal parallels between Association and CoSIDA. Would applying Bitzer's (1968) rhetorical situation theory divulge similar findings as they related to the athletics communication arena? Are there additional organizations that followed a similar path to growth and influence or that created a new rhetorical space in the public sphere?

This study assessed the rhetoric surrounding the Association and its successors. Further scholarship may add value if examining organizational rhetoric with two specific audiences: external stakeholders and internal publics. Did the rhetorical strategy or dialogic approach and, by extension, the rhetorical situation, change, depending on the stakeholder target audience? Further analysis may contribute constructive understanding on this question.

Much of the previous, limited scholarly work done related to the Association has focused largely on the “what” but not necessarily the “why” or the “how” of the group’s evolution. This study sought to forge ahead with a deep exploration of the rhetoric, the stories and the narratives that shaped the organization’s influence both within the public relations arena and the world of higher education. Implementing a historical study with a rhetorical focus aided in revealing and framing details of the Association’s expansion that might have been overlooked or discounted otherwise. I am hopeful this research will contribute to the literature and serve as a springboard for additional scholarly inquiry. Not all qualitative studies may offer the value of intricate discovery or disclose valuable, appealing narratives that the Association provided. However, seeking answers through a qualitative methodology and incorporating a blended approach may serve as a conduit for productive scholarly practice, especially with certain topics.

There are a number of ways to explore the Association’s history and growth. Its story contains many chapters, and additional inquiry would likely shed valuable light on the group’s influence and legacy along with the alluring stories of its members and leaders. To be sure, the Association had many important, colorful characters along the way. We have described several. What other stories remain? And would they serve as potential sources for additional scholarly inquiry? This is why such an approach to history is so rich. The events of yesterday may serve as the iconic stories of tomorrow.

Conclusion

This qualitative, historical study explored the birth and rise of the Association and its successors, examining the group's influence and legacy in the nexus of public relations and higher education. The investigation considered how the organization created and maintained its own successes and then shaped the structures of an intricate, multi-layered college and university network. The study focused on and then applied a rhetorical framework to analyze critically two primary research questions:

1. What were the formative events and narratives that allowed the Association to evolve from 1915-1950, generating succeeding organizations?
2. To what extent, if any, did the Association create a new rhetorical arena for higher education?

A close, intensive review of hundreds of archives, including letters, memorandums, conference programs, and publications, revealed an assortment of rich narratives, all interwoven within the complex, multi-layered American higher education industry and a burgeoning but gritty Association, a newfangled assembly with a visionary founder and determined, resourceful members. Blended together, these findings tell stories and piece together vivid themes of how the Association came to be, launched by a founder with creative, visionary flair, spurred on by lively annual convention dialogue, and validated by a meaningful national presence.

A dream of early 20th century journalist and communication professional T. T. Frankenberg and his like-minded peers, the Association forged a coast-to-coast presence, established itself as a cogent horizontal network, and raised the public relations craft as a critical organizational branch inside the architectural scheme of America's colleges and universities. The group created a new rhetorical space, a new paradigm, by addressing a need in the higher education and communications arena, building strength through dialogue, network camaraderie, and effective issue management and navigation. While this study did not focus on detailed dialogue and strategy after the group opened its permanent office in 1950, the Association's success is apparent, as it merged with the American Alumni Council to establish CASE, in 1974.

The current CASE web site offers an overview of the organization's strategic plan and a glance at its vision for the future. CASE stresses that it looks to its history in order to enhance its future, acknowledging the significance of an engaged stakeholder network seeking to shape and sustain a successful alliance. Outside of perhaps the global focus, it would be feasible the overview could have been written several decades earlier by the CASE's Association predecessors. The CASE statement reads,

> Our work is grounded in the awareness that CASE is much more than a collection of staff members in offices around the globe. CASE is, in fact, a remarkable aggregate of staff, volunteers, individual members, member institutions and stakeholders from inside and outside the profession who routinely share their best thinking and combine their efforts for mutual improvement. There can be little doubt that sustaining this incredible ecosystem is among our most important roles, and we can assure you that no matter how we might reimagine ourselves, our capacity to connect all those who care about advancing education will be at the core of what we do. ("Looking to the Future," 2018, para. 2)

T. T. Frankenberg, Emerson Reck, Eleanor Collier, and other principal Association architects would very likely agree. Their work stands as a monument to creating, building, and maintaining such an ecosystem, a living, breathing rhetorical space for public relations entrepreneurs dedicated to enhancing their craft and ensuring a prominent voice within the nation’s higher education structure. Led by Frankenberg, they were profound image makers, pioneers who provided heart to a nimble profession, revealing that the most tradition-laden, historical institutions reaped benefits from constructive rhetoric.

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APPENDIX A: FIRST CONVENTION PROGRAM

Inaugural convention program for the American Association of College News Bureaus, January 1920. The Association, led by President T. T. Frankenberg, looked forward to formally launching its networking plans following the nation's involvement in World War I.

CONVENTION PROGRAM

Friday Evening, Jan. 2, 8 o'clock.

Social Conference and Inspection of Exhibits.

Saturday, Jan. 3, 9:30 A. M.

Roll Call

President's Address --
T. T. Frankenberg,
Western College for Women,
Oxford, Ohio.

"What Do Colleges Expect of Publicity" --
Ralph W. Bell, Western Reserve,
University, Cleveland.

"Press Bulletins -- Do They Pay?" --
Joseph F. Wright,
University of Illinois,
Urbana, Illinois.

"What Publicity Costs" --
W. W. Woods,
Institute of American Meat
Packers, Chicago.

"Is Cooperative Use of Plate Possible?" --
W. A. Patterson,
Editor-in-Chief Western
Newspaper Union, Chicago.