

Apollo Award For Communications Leadership Q&A With Chancellor Gordon Gee



Chancellor
Gordon Gee

1. What is the importance of communications in your role at Vanderbilt University?

It is nothing short of critical. Vanderbilt is a very complex institution, which requires us to communicate constantly with our many stakeholders – faculty, staff, students. Their absolute involvement in and commitment to our vision and values is required in order for us to make real progress. They cannot be expected to do that if we have not made communicating with them a priority.

2. Explain your vision of tearing down the invisible walls at Vanderbilt to integrate the university further into the community. How has public relations and communications played a role in that?

Vanderbilt is great when Nashville is great, so connected are we to this city we proudly call home. Therefore, it is essential that we are involved with community building, especially with communities with whom we have not been previously engaged. We must communicate to them

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Behind the Gavel - FROM THE PRESIDENT

Invariably, a scroll through the Web sites of public relations firms finds an allusion to teamwork as a factor in the organization's success or why it's a great place to work.

The same holds true for PRSA. Teamwork is the byword for a successful 2004. Most gratifying is the emergence of functioning committees that is meeting our strategic objectives. One of this year's primary goals is getting membership involved in the chapter.

For years, our membership-to-meeting attendance ratio has been solid, but the "committee" chairs were essentially committees of "one." We have been successful in changing that dynamic by using committee meetings as small networking events, for example, to create more interaction among members.

Credit our Young Professionals for the idea. Since its inception, this special group within the organization has enjoyed the benefit of numerous committee members, sharing the workload and getting to know one another in the process and creating successful events in our PR community.

This year, our Apollo Award Committee, under Sue Amos, has redefined the award and delivered a worthy recipient in Vanderbilt University Chancellor Gordon Gee. Sue and her committee colleagues deserve our thanks for bringing us the Apollo Award for Communications Leadership. Join us on Wednesday, Nov. 3, to be a witness to their great work.

Especially noteworthy is the success of the Membership Committee, led by President Elect Teresa Corlew, APR. Her committee includes a cross-section of membership that went to work and assembled a prospect list that numbers in the 90s. They're still working that list. But most impressive is their year-to-date results: a net increase of 13 new members for the year. This committee achieved by taking the time to do the little things and work as a team.

Now we have to find a place for the 27 new chapter members to display their talents and enjoy the opportunity to be a part of our very successful team. As Henry Ford once said, "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."



Greg Bailey, APR
2004 President

2004 Nashville Chapter Officers & Board

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what we do, what we have to offer. We also, though, have to hear what they want and need. This relationship is very much a two-way street.

3. **Do you take a hands-on role in developing communications strategy – such as with the uncoupling of the athletic department and announcing the success of the VU capital campaign?**

I am surrounded by very capable people who share with me their great strategies and recommendations. We have a very collegial relationship, which involves them asking for my opinion and me giving it. It is gratifying – and satisfying – to know that some of the country's best communications strategists have cast their lot with Vanderbilt.

4. **What are your thoughts on being recognized for your efforts as a strong communicator?**

I am absolutely delighted and honored because I believe so strongly in the importance of communicating honestly and effectively. It is personally very meaningful.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Oct. 23-26 2004 PRSA International Conference; New York City
- Oct. 28: Interactive Tele/Web Seminar: **When the News Is Bad - Handling the Toughest Questions and Emotional Questioners**
2 - 3:30 PM CDT; James E. Lukaszewski, ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA
- Nov. 3: **Apollo Award Presentation**
The Apollo Awards will be at:
Nashville City Club
2004 Recipient: Vanderbilt Chancellor Gordon Gee
\$30 for members, \$35 for guests

Members must RSVP for the monthly luncheon meetings by the preceding Friday; openings on the day of the meeting are offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations may be made by e-mailing or calling Jackie Cavnar, Chapter Administrator (jccavnar@cs.com, 615-661-6752). Luncheon meetings may vary in cost; no-shows are billed.

PR Ink

A monthly publication of the Nashville Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America

To submit comments, ideas and news, please contact Trey Campbell (391-2801, trey.campbell@southwestern.com) or Todd Smith (764-2598, todd.smith@progenymarketing.com). Submissions are due on the second Friday of each month.

5. **What is your philosophy of dealing with the news media? Would you prefer to never give another interview?**

I enjoy working with the media and have long believed that the most important things – for someone in my position – are to be honest, to be transparent, and to be available. I look forward to many, many more interviews.

6. **What are your media habits? Daily reads? Do you watch local TV news?**

I listen to NPR for my early morning news and then read the papers – *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, and, of course, *The Tennessean*. I do not watch much local television news because I get most of televised information from CNN, MSNBC, and, in order to remain fair and balanced, Fox.



Eric Barnes



Mimi Bliss



Stephen Drachler

WELCOME!!!

New Members

Eric Barnes, Corporate Affairs; Louisiana Pacific Corporation

Mimi Bliss, Bliss Communications

Stephen Drachler, Executive Director - Public Information, United Methodist Communications

Cynthia Politte, Director - Sales & Marketing; Scarrit-Bennett Center

Public Service Committee Partnership With ANE

PRSA-Nashville's public service committee has embarked on a long-term partnership with the Association of Nonprofit Executives (ANE).

Founded in 1996, ANE represents leaders from over 80 nonprofit organizations in Middle Tennessee. ANE serves the nonprofit community by advocating on public policy issues and establishing partnerships between nonprofits, private business and the government. ANE also provides opportunities to build the individual and collective capacities of nonprofit chief executives.

PRSA approached ANE with a desire to share our members' skills and expertise to assist the group with marketing and communications assistance. The thought was to reach numerous nonprofits with resources and tools that would not only benefit ANE as an organization, but would assist ANE's individual member organizations as well.

To date, PRSA has assisted the group in rewriting their membership recruitment brochure, developed media kit documents including media templates and is in the process of creating a media source guide whereby the media will be provided with a directory of members and their areas of expertise.

"One of our main goals is to increase membership in ANE and the documents and activities that have been created by our Marketing Committee and PRSA will help us do just that. We are grateful for the time and talent brought to us by partnering with PRSA," said Jaynee Day, 2004 ANE President.