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TRANSFER TO AND OPERATION OF THE CACHE CITIZEN
BY THE UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

by

William P. Davis

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

In

Communication

Approved:

Major Professor

Committee Member

Committee Member

Committee Member

Dean of Graduate Studies

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

1986

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Special thanks to Nelson, Nancy, and John. When you walk into a tornado, it's nice to have some company.

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In memory of my friends Joan Swanson and Gail Lenell, because the best travellers don't always cover the greatest distance.

And above all, with love, to Kris, because sometimes they do.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kris", located at the bottom right of the page.

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ABSTRACT

Transfer to and Operation of The Cache Citizen
by the Utah State University
Department of Communication

by

William P. Davis, Master of Science
Utah State University, 1986

Major Professor: Nelson Wadsworth

Department: Communication

On January 21, 1985, the USU Department of Communication assumed the responsibility of providing editorial content for The Cache Citizen, a weekly newspaper published in Preston, Idaho. The department plans to continue operation of the paper, to provide professional experience for undergraduate and graduate students.

The thesis has a twofold purpose. First, it is an historical document, designed to preserve the details of the transfer and first year of operation by the department, for use by future journalism scholars and historians. Second, it analyzes the transfer, identifies problems encountered and steps taken to correct them, and makes recommendations for the future. This section should aid

other institutions interested in developing a similar program.

The main portion of the thesis is divided into four sections: Literature Review, Methodology, Chronology and Analysis. The Literature Review is designed to familiarize readers with dominant issues in journalism education applicable to The Cache Citizen project. The Methodology section justifies the use of a combination of historical and journalistic methods in gathering and interpreting data for the study, and the Chronology section lists the basic sequence of events and identifies topics for analysis. The Analysis is based on readings in the literature, documents, interviews with participants, the author's 13 years of professional experience in the field and one year as a Citizen editor.

(113 pages)

INTRODUCTION

Just before dark on the frigid, snowy afternoon of Monday, January 21, 1985, three graduate students and one faculty member from the Department of Communication at Utah State University arrived at the office of The Citizen Publishing Company in the small farming community of Preston, Idaho, to seek answers to a question: Can an academic journalism department own and operate an off-campus, commercial weekly newspaper? Granted, this question, as it applies to a daily newspaper, had been answered each day for the past 76 years by the University of Missouri, through its publication of the Daily Missourian. However, the question of whether a small communication department could operate a commercial weekly as a laboratory experience for students, remained. In addition, the students and their instructor were participating in a nationwide debate over the form journalism education is to take in the future.

The January afternoon marked the first attempt by the department to produce the editorial content of The Cache Citizen, one of a chain of papers operated by the Preston firm. The project was the result of negotiations between the department and the publishers of the financially troubled paper, on whether the university would be willing

to take it over as a laboratory publication.

According to a review of the literature, at the present time, Utah State is one of three universities in the United States operating a commercial, off-campus newspaper, and the only one operating a weekly in a competitive market.

The paper was to be supervised by the department faculty, with graduate students serving as editors, and undergraduates as reporters and photographers. Plans called for the department ultimately to take over the entire operation, including advertising, circulation, and other business functions.

This thesis will describe the development of the project, the first year of operation, and the greater educational context in which it took place. The value of the study is its uniqueness. This unique position provides a natural focal point for a discussion on what role professional experience should play in university journalism education. There is also a need to preserve an historic record of the project while documentary information is readily available and memories relatively fresh. The record should serve a threefold need: First, to preserve information which might be of use to future historians; second, to provide details for other institutions considering a similar project; and third, to serve as a springboard for discussion of the value (or lack

thereof) of a laboratory newspaper to a journalism curriculum.

This discussion begins with a Literature Review, which will identify dominant issues in journalism education and the profession applicable to The Cache Citizen experiment. Topics will include an overview of the current state of journalism education; some approaches used by universities to provide professional experience; the view of professionals and educators toward journalism education; and the applicability of the laboratory paper concept.

The Methodology section opens with a comparison of the roles of reporter and historian, using complementary features of the two fields as justification for collection and presentation methods involving elements of each for coverage of recent events. Use of traditional historical method and oral history techniques in the Chronology and Analysis sections will also be discussed.

This thesis is a hybrid, in that the author attempts both to create an historic document through preserving the sequence of events, and to analyze the experiment from the point of view of a participant. For this reason, it is best from an historical standpoint to divide the Chronology and Analysis, to minimize distortion which might result from the author's involvement in the project in the former, while taking advantage of that same involvement in the latter.

If, as stated above, part of the purpose of the study is to create an historical document useful to other historians, accuracy of information must be maintained, particularly as this is the first history of the project, written shortly after its inception. For this reason, a basic chronological list of events, presented with minimal discussion, will provide a relatively "pure" source, keeping in mind the "purity" is dependent upon the events selected for inclusion or exclusion. The selection is based, of necessity, on the author's judgment. Despite this effort at objectivity, it is possible that some significant events may have been excluded. If this has occurred, the Notes section may provide leads to primary and secondary sources useful to other historians attempting to correct the error.

A discussion of the transfer and operation of The Cache Citizen is presented in the Analysis section. In this section, problems encountered in the program are identified, along with the steps taken, or not taken, to correct them. Recommendations are included, to assist other institutions that might consider initiating a similar experiment. The Analysis is based on readings in the literature, interviews with participants, and the author's 13 years of experience in the field as reporter,

photographer, and news editor, and one year as a Citizen editor.

The Analysis also includes discussion of the major issues raised by participants, proponents, and critics during the first year of operation by the department. It is likely that if the author's biases through involvement appear in the study, they will be in this section, where issues that occasionally generated intense emotional responses are examined. However, an effort to maintain objectivity was made, and an understanding of these issues is critical to an understanding of the project as a whole. In their outcome, ideas and emotions can attain the reality of a falling brick. For this reason, their inclusion in the study is essential, providing the "essence" of the experience, without which no true understanding is possible.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An extensive literature review failed to locate any books or journal articles dealing specifically with the transfer and/or operation of a commercial weekly newspaper by a university department of communication. However, a substantial number of sources on related issues were identified which are useful in understanding the reasons behind Utah State University's decision to acquire The Cache Citizen.

These issues include the general state of journalism education in the United States; approaches used by various universities to provide professional experience; concerns of professionals in the field and educators regarding journalism education; and the applicability of the laboratory newspaper concept. This selection of topics provides a framework for the reader to develop an understanding of the issues outlined in the Chronology and discussed in the Analysis.

A large number of articles were also identified which dealt with one of the core issues of this thesis: the complex debate of theory versus skill-intensive instruction. This debate lies at the heart of The Cache Citizen experiment.

Education is predicated in large part on the belief

that life experience can be modeled and introduced to students in a controlled environment, to facilitate learning while preventing complete student failure through inexperience. The debate arises when one attempts to determine just how closely the educational experience should mirror life experience. Specialization must be balanced against the need for the broad-based, well-rounded education traditionally associated with the university system.

While general information on journalism education was located in several books, journal articles proved to be the richest source of curriculum proposals, reports on commercial operations by universities, and debate on theory-based classroom instruction versus "hands-on" skill training. Two journals, Journalism Quarterly and Journalism Educator, yielded most of the articles cited. Information on the USU program was obtained from several sources, including interviews with participants, documents from Department of Communication files, and personal observations by the author.

Information on The Daily Missourian, a commercial daily newspaper operated by the University of Missouri, was provided by A. Edward Heins, general manager, in an interview with the author. Heins stated that, to his knowledge, no historical study of the operation of the

Missourian by the university has been made. No article dealing specifically with the Missourian was located in the review of literature. The review begins with an overview of journalism education in the U. S., as it applies to the study.

The Current State of Journalism Education

The need for systematic examination of journalism education in the country is obvious, from even the most cursory examination of literature in the field. An ambitious two-year examination of this type was completed in 1984 by the University of Oregon. The study, under the direction of Ev Dennis, dean of the School of Journalism and 1983-84 president of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, was designed to examine and analyze the existing status and anticipate future needs of departments of journalism and mass communication throughout the U. S. The project was a major effort by the journalism education field to "understand itself" and spark a nationwide dialog on important issues. In an executive summary the "Project on the Future of Journalism and Mass Communication" (hereafter referred to as the "Oregon Report,") sounded the warning note that "The general state¹ of journalism and mass communication education is dismal." And later:

In the midst of what has been called a communication revolution, the nation's journalism/mass communication schools seemed anything but revolutionary. Indeed, there was ample evidence that they were nearly stagnant. In their fundamental structure and curricular offerings, they had not changed much in decades. What changes they had made were typically incremental course additions and occasionally new sequences of study. Not one school had ever engaged in a systematic study of its curriculum in relationship to its peer institutions elsewhere in the United States.²

The report, which provides just such a systematic study, takes a "middle of the road" stance in the discussion of whether theory or skills should be emphasized, calling for "a creative merger of more generalized mass communication study with the lessons of professional practice."³ In addition to the necessity for students to gain a grasp of the effects of mass media and society, the report suggests that:

Every undergraduate completing a professional sequence should be encouraged (in some cases, required) to get experience in a professional setting where they can test out the lessons of the classroom and experience real-world demands.⁴

Parallel studies performed at Brigham Young University in 1979 and 1980 indicated that magazine and newspaper editors were dissatisfied with the product of journalism schools. In the first, Haroldsen and Harvey found that 57 percent of responding magazine editors felt that journalism graduates were poorly prepared or not prepared at all to serve in editorial positions. Only one

percent felt that graduates were excellently prepared. The greatest concern listed by the editors was the lack of basic writing, grammar, and editing skills. The editors also called for additional classes in publishing as a business, the technical aspects of magazine production, and design and layout.⁵

In the 1980 study, involving daily and weekly newspaper editors, Mills, Harvey, and Warnick concluded that "journalism school directors would do well to appraise their own programs and, where necessary, work toward providing students with training more in line with professional expectations."⁶ The study found that the editors "would be more inclined to hire a graduate of an intensive two-year trade school journalism program than a graduate of a typical university journalism program."⁷

Thirty-seven percent of the newspaper editors participating in the 1980 study felt that journalism graduates were poorly prepared or not prepared at all to handle editorial positions on their papers.⁸ Listed in order of responses, the editors felt journalism graduates were unprepared in basic grammar and spelling (35 percent), and knowledge of how a paper operates (17 percent). Lack of experience was listed by 16 percent of the editors, followed by unprepared generally (15 percent); not motivated, poor attitude, no discipline (9 percent); and unable to work under deadline pressure (8 percent).⁹

The editors were also asked to rank educational reform suggestions. Listed first by both daily and weekly editors was the need for additional training in basic grammar and spelling. This was followed by the need for more training in how to write clearly and concisely, and more experience¹⁰ in writing under deadline pressure.

The study also pointed out that most university journalism programs are geared toward training students for working on daily newspapers, whereas the authors estimated that in the two years preceding the 1980 study, only about 5,000 new college graduates were hired by daily newspapers, compared to approximately 16,000 hired by weeklies.¹¹

In describing the difficulty of designing a journalism program, Gilbert L. Fowler Jr. pointed out that there is "a considerable difference in the end product¹² needed by the big daily vs. the weekly press." He stated that most graduates from Arkansas State University begin their journalism careers working for small dailies and weeklies, which require skills beyond those of entry-level reporters on large dailies. With small staff levels, a reporter on a weekly may also have to serve as editor, circulation manager, and production supervisor. Fowler went on to comment:

Academia tends to hire professionals with expertise on the larger, seemingly more prestigious newspapers. Also, available texts frequently used in journalism have been authored by those who have

worked in the metro-press.¹³

In 1980, Fowler reported, Arkansas State initiated a program allowing students wanting to begin as a reporter on a large daily to specialize in "news-editorial journalism," while those interested in working for small dailies or weeklies can specialize in "community journalism." In an effort to determine what materials should be included in the community journalism program, Fowler conducted a survey of editor/publishers of 41 weeklies and small dailies throughout the state. The survey found that:

Areas receiving more than a 50 percent response as "very important" were: newspaper ethics; advertising; news policies; community involvement; readership; newspaper's relations to community organization, community growth and development; building goodwill with readers; and promoting the newspaper's services.¹⁴

The survey raises a number of interesting points for the journalism educator. First, a program designed to meet the needs of students who will be working in community journalism must acknowledge the variety of functions they will be expected to fulfill, beyond basic writing and editing skills, possibly including the business-related duties. However, it is important to note that the area of newspaper ethics, a theory-oriented subject, was listed by 60 percent of the editor/publishers as "very important."¹⁵ This indicates that, while skills are important, areas of theory such as law and ethics must not be ignored. Students must also have an appreciation of the newspaper's

role in the community, which can best be developed through a combination of classroom lecture courses and "hands-on" experience that will provide "real world" examples of press powers and accompanying responsibilities.

A study in the Feb. 2, 1985 issue of Editor and Publisher reported that newspapers hired more journalism school graduates in 1984 than other media-related fields. The survey, prepared by the Journalism Resources Institute of Rutgers University for the Newspaper Fund, indicated that 17.1 percent of the 1984 graduates were working for dailies, weeklies or wire services, compared to 5.4 percent in television, 5.2 percent in radio, 8.6 percent in advertising, 8.5 percent in public relations, and 8.2 percent in other media. Significant to the USU program is the fact that, according to the study, the average entry-level media job was found in cities with populations between 300,000 and 500,000, compared to newspaper entry-level jobs, which were found most often in cities with populations of between 50,000 and 100,000.¹⁶ This indicates that most journalism graduates will find the largest number of job opportunities on weeklies and small dailies, where a variety of skills may be needed.

Some newspaper-related skills are valued in other media fields, according to a study of association communications presented in the summer, 1982 issue of Journalism Educator. Byler reported that:

Journalism Educator. Byler reported that:

Publications-oriented writing, editing, design and production skills were ranked most highly by the respondents for their value to students aiming at careers in association communication.¹⁷

Following in the rankings were publications production and management; advanced newswriting and reporting; advanced magazine article writing; newspaper feature writing, public speaking, persuasion, and speech writing; business communication; photography and photo editing; interpersonal and small group communication; writing for TV, film, and audio-visuals.¹⁸

The need for "real world" experience is emphasized in an article on role-playing in the summer, 1968 issue of Journalism Quarterly. According to McCalib:

For the journalism student, actual on-the-job reporting or editing situations within the curriculum would provide the best corollary to classroom instruction. But high quality experience of this nature frequently is not available even to students who complete their journalism degrees.¹⁹

McCalb argues the need for role-playing in the classroom based on the limited availability of internships, particularly for students early in their journalism program.²⁰ In speaking for the value of role-playing, he stated that the classroom situation was realistic, involving "Situations with near-real consequences, yet without the possible crippling impact of on-the-job consequences,"²¹ indicating the need for appropriate caution while still providing experience for students.

Johnstone, Salawski and Bowman found that older and more experienced journalists appear to be less bothered by deadlines than younger, more inexperienced journalists.²²

Studies involving organizations other than newspapers indicate that as a person's experience with a tension-filled position increases, the negative impact of those tensions decreases.²³ Logic dictates that students exposed to and familiar with deadline pressure in school will deal more effectively with similar pressure on the job.

McElreath reported:

On-the-job training programs are appropriate strategies for improving the performance of journalists working under deadline pressures, and so are classroom situations. A major conclusion for journalism educators is that adding deadline pressures to a classroom situation increases the realism of the assignments and increases the student appreciation of the learning experience. Managers of news organizations also should appreciate job applicants who have had specialized journalism training and experiences working under deadline conditions.²⁴

In recent years, criticism has been leveled at journalism schools from some quarters of the profession that not only are their graduates unprepared for employment, but that research done by the schools is of minimal use in the "real world." According to Schweitzer:

Without getting involved in the debate about whether journalism is a profession, I believe that at least one of the reasons journalism schools don't get any respect is because they are rarely on the cutting edge of the problems and issues facing their professional constituents. We too often follow the industry rather than lead it.²⁵

Numerous articles in the literature indicate there is no lack of topics for newspaper-related research which could be of practical use to the industry. A 1970 study by Haskins ranked the kinds of information requested by daily newspaper publishers that could be provided by research. Ranked according to percentage of those specifying "great need" were: Mechanical/production/technology (70 percent), personnel (70 percent), newspaper image (53 percent), journalism education (52 percent), research (48 percent), editing/content/selection (42 percent), circulation markets (37 percent), reporting/writing (37 percent), advertising (35 percent).²⁶ Although the data were collected from daily editors, it indicates the need for "practical" research, useful to professionals on both dailies and weeklies. In discussing the need for this kind of research, Copple observed:

One of the accepted ways to draw a few laughs at a newspaper convention was to recite a half-dozen thesis or dissertation titles. Or, an even easier way was to read a few of the more esoteric paragraphs from a complicated article in Journalism Quarterly. Of course, it was unfair. But we asked for some of it. We, like some of those we imitated, hid rather than shared our research.²⁷

What are Other Universities Doing?

In an effort to give students experience in newspaper operations, a variety of systems are now in use at journalism and mass communication schools throughout the

country.

The program initiated in 1979 at Central Missouri State University, where the campus newspaper was transferred to the Department of Mass Communication as a laboratory paper, serves as an example of systems now in place at many other schools. ²⁸ Unlike The Cache Citizen, however, the Muleskinner is a campus rather than community newspaper. In discussing the reasoning behind the transfer, Rampal stated:

An ideal setup would provide professional supervision of student reporting and writing while assuring the maximum opportunity to engage in aggressive reporting and writing within First Amendment freedoms.²⁹

The university selected the laboratory newspaper approach over the options of a student-run and controlled newspaper produced by student government (similar to the Utah Statesman), or a university-controlled "house organ." Previously, the paper was produced by the university's Office of Public Relations. Rampal commented that "experience over the past one year indicates that the move has been beneficial to the needs of journalism students and the university community."³⁰

A statement of policy for the Muleskinner was developed by a publication board made up of representatives of the Department of Mass Communication, student government, the university faculty, and campus chapters of

journalistic organizations. Under the policy, students hold the positions of managing editor, news editor, features editor, sports editor, photo editor and business manager. A member of the mass communication faculty serves as supervisor. A journalism graduate student serves as managing editor. All editors are selected on the basis of writing experience and academic performance.³¹

In a system similar to that developed for The Cache Citizen, the laboratory newspaper is integrated with department courses. Reporting, copyediting and layout, feature writing, basic news reporting and photojournalism classes all contribute to the paper, with the instructor of each class handling assignments and serving as a preliminary editor.

With the change, Rampal said, "There was a noticeable difference in journalism student motivation before and after the transfer of the newspaper."³² He added:

The understanding that quality work means publication and, as a result, a needed portfolio for journalism majors has generated a healthy competition among students. Armed with reporters' identification card issued by the department, the student reporters have sought out news stories from various aspects of campus life and, in the process, obtained firsthand training in effective interviewing, accurate reporting and quoting in appropriate context. In addition to getting feedback through letters to the editor, student reporters also learn about the quality of their work from Muleskinner's direct contact with the sources after the story is published.³³

Following publication of a story, the supervisor of

the newspaper sends a standard questionnaire to the sources of the story for rating student reporter accuracy. A similar process is planned for the Citizen.³⁴ The successful transition of the Muleskinner has, according to Rampal:

Generated a greater credibility to the department's journalism program among the area's newspaper publishers. Greater acceptance of students as interns and graduates as employees is an exciting extra benefit.³⁵

Similar benefits in student motivation and university support have been noticed during the Citizen experiment. There has been a significant increase in the number of students registering for the basic newswriting class,³⁶ although it remains to be seen whether this is a long-term or temporary change, and to what extent the newspaper is a contributing factor. Other contributing factors may include curriculum changes in other areas, such as broadcast journalism, which now requires Comm. 130 as a core class. Student motivation may be further heightened by the numerous Utah Press Association and Society of Professional Journalists awards received by the Citizen during its first year of operation by the department (detailed in the Chronology). Increased support by the university is evident by funding provided for major capital acquisitions during the 1984-85 school year, including a typesetting computer, graphic camera and darkroom.

In 1978, the Arizona State University Department of

Mass Communication reached an agreement with the Mesa Tribune, by which journalism students would produce the news section of a Sunday edition for the paper, which had previously published only six days a week.³⁷ Students participating in the program attend a single class entitled "Producing a Daily Newspaper." They are required to meet in class one hour per week, write at least one story for publication, develop two story ideas and work at the Tribune office four hours each Saturday. Those participating in the class are required to have completed basic reporting and editing classes. Student responsibilities in producing the paper include writing and editing stories, laying out pages, writing headlines and reading proofs of pasted-up pages.³⁸

The Arizona State project is smaller in scope than the Citizen, in that the USU department is attempting to integrate most of its journalism classes into the laboratory newspaper, thus providing students exposure to a wider variety of skills, such as graphic camerawork, paste-up, photojournalism and editorial writing. Unlike the Citizen, ultimate responsibility for publication of the Arizona State edition remains with the Mesa Tribune, rather than the university.

An arrangement similar to that between ASU and the Mesa Tribune was reached by the University of Florida and

the Gainesville Sun in 1978. In the revised program, students in the College of Journalism and Communication are responsible for producing a Campus Page printed four times a week in the Sun. Under faculty supervision, the students are responsible for story assignments, selection, editing and layout. Rob Oglesby, managing editor of the Sun, reports the "close involvement of the journalism faculty with the student news effort and student understanding of the demands and responsibilities of their 'live news' coverage" is the key to improved cooperation between university journalism programs and newspapers.³⁹

In February of 1975, the University of Arizona Department of Journalism took over operation of the biweekly Tombstone Epitaph. The agreement was worked out by department representatives George W. Ridge Jr. and Philip Mangelsdorf, and Harold O. Love, president of the Epitaph Corporation, publishers of the paper. Under the agreement, the corporation continued to publish the monthly National Tombstone Epitaph, which is distributed nationwide, and carries primarily items of historical interest. The department took over responsibility for producing the local, news-oriented edition of the paper. The first department-produced issue was printed March 7,⁴⁰ 1975.

Students are required to take a course entitled The Tombstone Epitaph as part of a journalism major. Student

reporters take three-day shifts covering local news in Tombstone, which is located 75 miles southeast of the university in Tucson. Students are also responsible for production of camera-ready copy, including typesetting and half-toning.⁴¹

Unlike The Cache Citizen, the Epitaph carries no advertising, except for free business classifieds. The program is financed by scholarships and grants from the Scripps-Howard and Reader's Digest Foundations. There are no competing newspapers in the town of 1,600.⁴²

The longest-running and most successful commercial paper run by a journalism program is the Daily Missourian, produced by the University of Missouri at Columbia. The paper was created in 1908, at the same time the university created the School of Journalism. The concept of development and operation of a commercial daily by the university is credited to Walter Williams, the school's first dean.⁴³

Missourian General Manager A. Edward Heins, in an interview with the author on Oct. 4, 1985, stated local newspaper publishers protested against the program. Bowing to lobbying pressure, the Missouri Legislature passed a statute specifying that no state funds could be used by a state department to operate a commercial business. In response, a non-profit organization made up of newspaper

created. The association contracted with the School of
Journalism to produce the paper.⁴⁴

According to Heins, the association "bypassed the state law, and was an effort to build up a political buffer for the university." He said Williams felt a department-operated commercial daily in a competitive market would facilitate comparison of student and professional work by the faculty. Students were also involved in advertising sales, which, Heins said, provided a method of monitoring both faculty and students to determine if they were able to keep up with current market conditions. Called "the Missouri Plan," this program allowing students to participate in both the business and editorial aspects of a daily newspaper has worked well, according to Heins, although "It is still a struggle every day, even after 76
⁴⁵ years," referring to the day-to-day problems inherent in the newspaper business.

Continuing a tradition begun with creation of the paper in 1908, editor positions on the Missourian are filled by members of the faculty, as part of their regular teaching assignment. Students serve as reporters and photographers. Production and distribution staff members are full-time professionals, paid prevailing rates. Market pressures recently forced the hiring of full-time ad sales
⁴⁶ personnel. The school's paper is in direct competition

with the Columbia Daily Tribune, a local daily, a situation which continues to generate debate in the journalism education field and the profession.

"It is a very controversial method of education,"
Heins said, his tone implying massive understatement.⁴⁷

The Argument for Academics

Also controversial in journalism education and the industry is the question of what proportion of an undergraduate journalism major should be devoted to "skills" courses, such as reporting, editing, photography, etc., as opposed to "theory" courses, such as law of the press, communication ethics, communication theory. The first category is concerned primarily with developing the techniques needed to enter the field, while the second is concerned more with the nature of the mass media and its place in society.

The discussion of liberal arts education versus technical training is not new. In a survey of the Nieman Fellows of 1950-51, none of the 12 favored the existing system of journalism education, which, at the time, consisted largely of skills courses. Five spoke in favor of a liberal arts education alone for undergraduates, while seven favored a combination of journalism instruction and liberal arts, with the emphasis on the latter.⁴⁸ In a statement that can be applied to the USU program nearly 35

years later, Sylvan H. Meyer of the Gainesville (Ga.) Times said in the survey:

I guess a liberal arts course with some journalism electives plus some practical experience would be best. I think the college daily on which student writers, editors, and managers have a maximum opportunity to learn by trial and error and to get the "cuteness" out of their systems offers the best field for training in newspaper work.⁴⁹

In the same survey, Hoke M. Nooris of the Winston-Salem Journal took a more extreme view:

I do think the liberal arts education is the best preparation for journalism. . . I certainly wouldn't devote an entire four-year college course to journalism. . . Writing aptitude can be sharpened by schooling, but if the basic talent is lacking, nothing in the world can make a newspaperman of one.⁵⁰

The argument continues, and is most sharply focused in the present debate over Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) national accreditation standards. Currently under consideration are standards which would require an undergraduate journalism program to include no more than 25 percent of coursework in journalism, with the remaining 75 percent in liberal arts and sciences.

Anthony Serafini and Howard Good, in related articles appearing in the July/August, 1984 issue of The Quill, set the stage for a discussion which exemplifies this debate. Serafini said of the proposed 75/25 standard:

That alone is provocative, inasmuch as a similar distribution in any other field would

strike one as preposterous: Imagine the reaction if, say, medical schools suddenly required that no more than twenty-five percent of course work should be in medicine? What if law schools demanded that most course work be in fields other than law?⁵¹

Serafin went further, and triggered a storm of debate, when he added:

The conclusion is inescapable: Since future journalists have, by the nature of the business, to write on so many facets of human knowledge (even with journalistic specialization), they must acquire as much understanding as possible of these areas. And that means a broadly-based education - education a journalism school cannot, by definition, provide. In short, the ACEJMC's distribution requirements are on target. But in being on target, they implicitly argue for their own self destruction. There is no need for journalism education in its present form.⁵²

Good, in a protest against departments and schools of journalism "that are basically adjuncts of the newspaper industry,"⁵³ said:

If I had my druthers, then, journalism professors would leave instruction in reporting and editing to newspapers, which can do that stuff better anyway. The teachers would devote their energies to exploring with students the legal, ethical, cultural, social, and economic ramifications of the proliferating media, and they would encourage the help of experts in other fields.⁵⁴

In response, several readers stated in letters to the editor that most journalism programs already provide more liberal arts and science education than most majors. James M. Neal of the University of Nebraska pointed out that his department required "a more rigorous liberal arts program

than do the departments of history, philosophy, or
English."⁵⁵

Dr. Jay Black, who has been placed in charge of the USU Communication Department's effort to obtain accreditation, said many academics are now insisting that mass communication education is among the most liberal arts/theoretical orientations a student can receive, as even the coursework within the major, such as press law, mass media history, etc., is drawn from many disciplines. With recent changes in journalism education, he said, students are now receiving instruction in areas that go beyond basic skills. He cautioned against developing a curriculum that went too far toward either theory or skills. Concerning recent developments in his own department, he expressed enthusiasm "for the efforts that are being made to strengthen the practical component," and the desire "that the balance (between practical and theoretical instruction) be retained."⁵⁶ The department plans to apply for accreditation during the 1987-88 school year.

In addition to the issue of skills versus theory, designers of a communication program also must not lose sight of the fact that rapid technological development is tending to blur the margins between areas traditionally regarded as separate, such as print and broadcast journalism. To do so would be to run the risk of creating

a "four-year trade school." Schwartz points out:

Technical proficiency is but a small part of what it takes to be a journalist. Journalism researchers and newspaper executives are just beginning to recognize the importance of viewing gatekeepers - both reporters and editors - as a social-psychological phenomenon; that is, as something more than a collection of occupational skills and professional orientations.⁵⁷

In a paper presented to the Association for Education in Journalism in 1967, Richard W. Budd and Malcolm MacLean commented:

Though we pay lip service to the need for liberalizing influences, we often seem to act as though the most important purpose of a student's journalism education is to please the boss on his or her first job. Our students learn today's formulas rather than the communication theories that might bridge them into the future.⁵⁸

With the exponential curve of technological change showing no signs of leveling off, it becomes increasingly difficult to predict the future of communication or any other field. A school concentrating on providing merely entrance-level print journalism skills will find its program almost instantly and hopelessly outdated. Conversely, a school concentrating on a generic communication approach may find that its graduates, while exposed to the wide range of human activities that can be classified as "communication," have no marketable skills.

While cautioning that "Far too much emphasis has been placed on the tactics of accomplishing specific entry-level skills at the cost of preparing students for the changes

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that are already upon us," The Oregon Report calls for a balanced approach in curriculum design:

New knowledge must be monitored and integrated into the curriculum. New technology must be addressed. In the midst of what has been called a communication revolution, journalism teachers must give their students utilitarian information about the state of the art in technology that will affect communications, both from the standpoint of its social impact and practical "hands-on" experience. Finally, the communication industries needs for educated personnel as well as society's needs for educated citizens who know and understand mass communication must be recognized and dealt with.⁶⁰

Acquisition and operation of The Cache Citizen is a major portion of the department's efforts to upgrade its skills component through providing an outlet for student work and professional experience.

The Role of The Cache Citizen

As can be seen by the complexity of the foregoing discussion, a laboratory newspaper is not a comprehensive solution to the problem of curriculum design in journalism education. Indeed, as will be illustrated in the Analysis section of this thesis, the effort of maintaining a commercial newspaper operation has the potential of draining resources, both human and financial, of a university department to the point where other aspects of the program suffer.

However, if properly managed, a lab paper can serve as

a major component of the program, and address many of the problems identified by editors cited in this review by providing students with professional experience under faculty supervision while they are still in school.

It could be argued that a more traditional arrangement, such as the department operating the school paper, would provide the same experience. However, student reporters would have little contact with the community at large, and would remain largely isolated on the university campus.

The Citizen also provides a natural area of specialization for the department - the weekly newspaper. On a weekly, reporters are frequently asked to perform additional functions, such as photography, layout, and paste-up. Plans for the Citizen initiated in the fall of 1985 call for students to receive training in these additional areas, with instruction to be integrated with classroom lectures. This should give USU graduates an edge in obtaining employment on a weekly, as most community newspaper owners do not have the time or inclination to provide on-the-job training, despite the arguments of Good and Serafini.

Aside from development of specific mechanical skills, experience on a laboratory newspaper also exposes students to aspects of professional journalism that are harder to define but no less real, such as deadline pressure. The

ability to perform under deadline pressure is essential to the journalist, yet, in traditional educational settings, the exposure to deadline pressure is highly artificial, being limited to arbitrary time constraints in classroom exercises. While of some use in introducing students to the concept, a classroom exercise does not carry the same weight of responsibility as a story destined for publication in a commercial newspaper. A student can begin to appreciate the need to write quickly and accurately more effectively when confronted by editors and production staff members waiting impatiently for a story to fill a news hole on the front page.

The Citizen will also assist in the development of a professionally-oriented graduate program, for professionals who wish to return to school to receive management training. Placed in management positions, graduate students with reporting experience can provide needed supervision for undergraduate writers, while themselves learning the skills required for advancement. As the paper is operating in a commercial market, instruction in ad sales and circulation can also be provided.

In developing the proper niche for the Citizen, it might be appropriate to review the traditional threefold role of the university; to provide instruction, research and service. The latter two categories, which are more

closely tied than might be thought on first glance, could also be well served by a commercial laboratory newspaper.

Due to extreme time limitations forced by deadline pressure and the need for a paper to make a profit, most publishers would be unwilling to permit "tampering" with their operation by researchers. This limits the researcher largely to non-intrusive surveys. Editors and publishers are likely to balk at manipulation of variables when one of the variables may include or affect profit margins.

A laboratory newspaper, on the other hand, with the benefits of a large staff and guaranteed physical plant, can afford to experiment with the product itself. This experimentation could include design and editorial content changes, along with marketing and distribution research. Such testing in the field would be of value to the industry, particularly weekly papers nationwide now struggling for existence in a market splintered by total market coverage and direct mail advertising publications. This research, done under the direction of experienced faculty members, would also provide the opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students to become familiar with research techniques. The first such study involving The Cache Citizen was a readership survey during the spring of 1985, done by an undergraduate research class taught by Dr. Black. The study (detailed in the Analysis) provided both valuable information to the paper's staff and research

experience for the students.

The literature indicates that The Cache Citizen can provide a wide range of opportunities in both instruction and research, as long as the proper perspective on the role of the paper, that of a tool in a system, is maintained. As the program develops, faculty members and students can continue to participate in the debate concerning what structure journalism education should take to deal with rapid changes in the field.

METHODOLOGY

The unique features of this study, including its ongoing nature, the relative lack of precedents, the author's involvement with the subject, and the need to establish a basic historical record, encourages the use of a combination of historical and journalistic collection techniques. The methodology selected is designed to insure the most accurate and complete record possible.

History and Journalism Compared

Journalism has been frequently called the rough draft of history. This rough draft is subject to stresses and limitations dictated by the nature of the work. Unlike historians, journalists must operate under deadline pressure that routinely reaches extreme levels. Mistakes and misinterpretations under this kind of pressure are more likely than if the writer had time for reflection and gathering additional evidence before committing to publication. The emphasis on speed of production and reliance upon different kinds of sources is, indeed, what differentiates the journalist from the historian. It is traditional among historians to criticize journalists for rushing into print information which may be inaccurate or sensational.

The historian, on the other hand, must deal with problems that arise paradoxically from the luxury of time: distance from the subject matter. Each day that passes between an event and its preservation in an historical publication increases the likelihood that valuable information will be lost, destroyed or distorted. Thus, the journalist has a surfeit of sources of various levels of quality, but little time for judgment, while the historian has ample time for judgment but access to a limited number of first-hand sources that decreases with time. At the same time, the historian can use the distance imposed to place the subject in a greater context.

Despite protests from each field, which paint the image of the cynical, cigar-chewing, hard-drinking reporter anxious for a sensationalistic scoop squaring off against the bespectacled, elitist, egghead historian barricaded securely in an ivory tower, both use similar methods to reach the most accurate possible reproduction of an event, epoch or life.

Both, whether instant or considered, rely on evidence obtained from sources. In each case the source and the information are subject to scrutiny to guarantee the greatest possible accuracy. Any form of reporting, whether historical or topical, is filtered through an intervening agency, the human mind. Even if a historian or reporter

were energetic enough, resourceful enough, and psychic to the extent that he or she could witness every event to be described, the event would still have to be sifted through the consciousness of the writer. The reproduction would be accurate only to the extent of the writer's understanding of accuracy. Given the obvious limitations, a capable historian or reporter can more accurately reproduce an event than an incompetent eyewitness.

The judgment of the writer becomes an inseparable part of the historic statement. The question then arises whether there is one best way to conduct an historic examination.

Marwick's Hierarchy

Citing Arthur Marwick in The Nature of History, Paul Thompson lists the traditional "accepted hierarchy" of sources as contemporary letters, informers' reports, depositions; parliamentary and press reports; social inquiries; diaries and autobiographies. The list¹ emphasizes the traditional reliance of historians on documents. Only comparatively recently has oral history become an accepted method of gathering evidence, although the tradition of oral history dates to ancient Greece, when participant accounts of politics and warfare were² collected.

Using Marwick's list as a guide, it appears the ideal historical summary would include contemporary documents and

oral statements by participants, collected shortly after the events described. Such an approach was used successfully in June and July of 1972 by the South Dakota Oral History Project to document a major flood in Rapid City.³ Similar collection methods used in the current study, while appropriate to the subject, indicate caution should be exercised, by researcher and reader alike.

The information collected for the Chronology and the Analysis was obtained from documents and through interviews. Wherever possible, the events described were corroborated by more than one source, thus the acquisition combined the elements of traditional historic method (documents), oral history (interviews), and journalism (interview segments combined with information from documents). However, it should be frankly acknowledged that the author was a participant in many of the events involving the transfer to and operation of The Cache Citizen by the USU Department of Communication. It is human nature that one would like to believe that his or her efforts are in a worthy cause. Therefore, it is possible the researcher's prejudice in favor of the project may have some effect on the report. This is least likely in the Chronology section, most likely in the Analysis. The Chronology is a basic, ordered listing of events concerning the transfer, each confirmed by more than one source. The

Analysis deals with the more human side of the project, describing problems encountered by the participants, their reaction to the problems, and suggestions for how the difficulties could have been handled.

While some caution is advisable, it should be stressed that the opinions and feelings of those involved have concrete reality, in that emotions and individual interpretations affect actions and therefore, outcomes. To deny these opinions would remove the human and ultimately causative elements from the thesis, making it a relatively simple and useless recitation of the 1985 calendar. Dividing the description into two sections, one event-, the other participant-oriented, allows the reader to reach his or her own conclusions, while providing a complete description of the transfer.

Due to the focus of the study on a process, rather than a single person or event, a modified version of oral history methodology was used. Rather than including a complete transcript of each interview, quotes and paraphrases are used in combination with documentation to permit ordering in the Chronology section and comparison in the Analysis section. This arrangement permits issues to be developed individually, with maximum clarity.

External and Internal Criticism

Using the model of Robert Jones Shafer,⁴ there is little chance for argument concerning external criticism, which deals with authentication of evidence, in the study. This reflects the advantage of journalistic and oral history techniques, in that confirmation of documents and statements can be made by the participants. In addition, the short elapsed time between the transfer and the study insure the greatest possible availability of documentation, assuming all major sources have been identified.

Internal criticism, however, raises several points of concern that could affect the accuracy of the report.

According to Shafer:

The historian is interested in lies as well as truth, but he must be able to distinguish between them. This is the task of internal criticism: to determine the credibility of evidence. It thus deals with statements about specific things or ideas or customs.⁵

Some common sources of error, such as language or cultural differences, can be safely ignored. All participants in the project are members of the same culture (North American, late 20th Century, English-speaking) and, due again to the brief period of time between process and report, no difficulties involving the formal use of language exist. There are several areas, however, where

the use of language must be questioned, based on the intent of the communicator.

Internal criticism in historical method deals with the difficult problem of deciding what was in the participant's mind at the time of the event being studied or at the time he or she was interviewed. This problem is compounded by the necessity for correlating the state of mind of the researcher, to identify potential sources of bias or distortion. Again, the splitting of the study into a factual, verifiable Chronology with a minimum of analysis, and an Analysis section concentrating on the state of mind of the participants, should reduce the impact of biases from either source.

Particularly in the latter section, attention should be paid to the motivation of the source. With few exceptions, those who participated in or were affected by the project had vested interests, whether financial, personal, or professional. The question of why a document was produced or a statement made must be kept in mind while the evidence is examined. Yet motivation cannot and should not be removed from historical study. In its results, motivation can produce a reality as concrete as a battle or conference, events easily verified beyond doubt.

The intended audience of a statement or document should also be scrutinized. In the case of The Cache Citizen transfer, few of the significant documents were

prepared for general circulation. In most cases, at the time of production, the study had not yet been proposed. Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that content was slanted for publication. However, correspondence, reports, and letters can be designed to persuade, as well as inform. The accuracy of documents varies from source to source, and must be subjected to analysis.

Interviews for both the Chronology and Analysis sections were conducted with the clear understanding that the information was to be used in a thesis. Sources were therefore aware their statements were subject to publication, a fact which may have altered their apparent opinion from that which would have been voiced in a private conversation. This does not necessarily mean the private conversation would include more accurate information, as many of the same factors affecting a more formal statement, such as intended audience, would still be at work. Additionally, people are inclined to be less careful of their facts in a casual conversation, when the information hangs in the air for a moment, and is gone.

Aware that a permanent record is being made, a source may make a good faith effort to be as accurate as possible, out of concern for the historical document being produced. This must be counterbalanced against the possibility the source feels that self-justification for posterity is

necessary. As with documentation, such concerns must be addressed by the historian through analysis, based on the evidence and his or her own experience. As pointed out by Shafer in the preceding quote, even distortions and outright lies can provide valuable information to the researcher, if they are recognized.

Another advantage of the journalistic method, as employed in the study, is the relative freshness of the information. As time progresses, people tend to embellish memories, which are then filed for long-term storage, to be recited as needed by rote. Eventually, the topic becomes a memory of a memory, which is generally not subject to re-examination for accuracy. Such a re-examination would likely result in further error rather than clarification, in any case. With short-term memory intact, a subject can more accurately recall an event, before it becomes a personal legend.

All subjects for interviews were selected for their close proximity to the subject matter. While this helps ensure the most accurate possible reconstruction of events, the process, of necessity, involves those most involved in them. Emotional involvement severely limits, or even eliminates, the possibility of disinterested, yet intimate, witnesses. However, the author has over a decade of experience as a reporter, and is aware of the necessity for maintaining the maximum possible objectivity. The use of

both the Chronology and Analysis section should serve as mutually supportive back-up systems. On examination of the close correlation between documents and interviews, the trade-off appears valid.

CHRONOLOGY

The first issue of The Cache Citizen with editorial content produced by the Communication Department was distributed January 23, 1985. The chronology of events leading to and following the change will help familiarize the reader with the mechanics of the transfer and identify key issues to be discussed in the Analysis section.

Information for the Chronology was obtained through interviews with those involved in the project, and from letters, memos, and other documents in department files. Additional confirmation was provided by news stories appearing in the Logan Herald Journal and the Utah Statesman at the time of the transfer.

According to Prof. Nelson Wadsworth, the possibility of a takeover of the Citizen by the department was first mentioned in a telephone conversation with Glen Curtis, editor of The Tremonton Leader in early October of 1984. The Leader is one of a chain of weekly newspapers, including the Citizen, owned by Wayne Bell and J. Walter Ross of Preston, ID. The Citizen had been in operation for 10 years. Although a suggestion that Wadsworth purchase the troubled paper was discussed by the two men in a joking manner, Wadsworth said he decided to investigate the matter

further. Bell was contacted by Wadsworth, and a meeting was set for Nov. 14. Present at the meeting were Department Head Dr. James Derry, Wadsworth and Dr. Jay Black, representing the department; Bell and Ross. The two owners expressed interest in a proposal to donate the Citizen to the university.

On Nov. 15, the department was visited by Del Brinkman, dean of the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Kansas, and member of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Brinkman's visit was prompted by a request from Derry for review of proposed program changes, including the possibility of operation of a newspaper by the department, leading to eventual ACEJMC certification.

In a letter to USU Provost Peter Wagner dated Nov. 29, 1984, Brinkman stated he felt the department could be certified within three years, provided changes were made in the curriculum and additional faculty members were hired. He added:

All of these curriculum, instruction and facilities improvements can be enhanced and complemented by some innovative changes in laboratory practical experiences. The working relationship with an area community newspaper is an exciting prospect. The university needs to make some decisions in regard to the role that the student newspaper plays in the academic program. I hesitate to make firm recommendations in that area because much of what dictates the direction a university takes with a student newspaper is tied

to local considerations. Generally, I come down in favor of a system which provides for a sound, professional laboratory experience for students. If the paper is to be an integral part of an academic program, it needs to have strong supervision and needs to have a strong working relationship with the academic program.¹

Guidelines Proposed

Proposed preliminary guidelines under discussion by department members at the time provided for students to produce editorial content for the "A" section of the Citizen, while the "B" section, which contained the classified ads, syndicated columns, and TV guide, continued to be produced in Preston and distributed among the four other weeklies in the chain; The Grace Citizen, Grace, Idaho; The Preston Citizen, Preston, Idaho; The News Examiner, Montpelier, Idaho; and The Leader-Garland Times, Tremonton, Utah. The entire paper was to be printed at the Preston plant, an arrangement which continues to the present. Ross and Bell expressed concern over who would serve as editor. At the time, the paper was edited by Susan Shay, who was also a graduate student in the department. Additional editorial content was provided by reporter Pamela O. Kipper. Wadsworth said it was his understanding Shay would continue as editor, while he would serve as faculty adviser.² Graduate students were to fill the position of editors under Shay on a rotating basis, with stories to be produced by undergraduate reporters.

Bell and Ross also suggested that Emerald "Jerry" Jerome, an instructor at Brigham Young University, be hired as business manager.

On Nov. 26, Derry and Wadsworth met with Wayne Paul, publisher of the Logan Herald Journal, to discuss possible options to develop an outlet for student production. According to Derry, Paul turned down proposals for the department to produce a Saturday issue of the Herald Journal, a Sunday magazine section, or several pages of the paper on a regular basis, based on the belief that student reporters were unreliable. Derry and Wadsworth stated that, initially, Paul did not object to the department taking over the Citizen, although he felt that such a development was unlikely. Paul refused to be interviewed for the study.

Also on Nov. 26, Derry, Bell and Ross met with Larry Christensen of the university's development office to discuss the possible transfer of the Citizen. The largest profit made by the paper during its 10-year history was approximately \$30,000, indicating it was, at best, a marginal operation.³

The following day, Derry and Wadsworth traveled to Salt Lake City, to meet with the publishers of the Deseret News and Salt Lake Tribune. The publishers expressed support for the proposal. On Dec. 5, Bell and Ross again

met with Christensen to discuss conditions for the transfer. Derry met Dec. 7 with Randy Hatch, publisher of the Ogden Standard Examiner, and on Dec. 11 with Ernie Ford, managing editor of KSL Channel 5 News in Salt Lake City. Both men endorsed the concept of a department-produced newspaper.

Details of the transfer were discussed in a meeting at Preston on Dec. 12, involving Bell, Ross, their accountant Dennis Winward, Derry, and Kerry Belnap of the university's development office, and Robert C. Ence, planned giving consultant for the university. In a letter to Derry dated Dec. 18, 1984, Ence outlined a proposed series of steps to be taken to permit transfer of the paper to the university.

He stated that stock in the paper could not be transferred to the university, due to the lack of an appraisal value. He suggested instead that the paper simply be given to the university at no cost. He also suggested that some staff be held over to permit a gradual transfer.

In addition, Ence proposed that a change in circulation policy be made, as a revenue-generating measure. At the time of the transfer, the Citizen had a circulation of about 13,000, of which approximately 20 percent were paid subscriptions. He suggested the department set a target of 10,000 paid subscriptions, at a

minimum of \$12 each per year.

Ence agreed with the previous proposal by Bell and Ross that Jerry Jerome be hired as business manager, to increase advertising revenues. Ence estimated the accumulated debt of the Citizen operation at \$13,000 over the preceding several years. He stated that the debt could not be transferred to the university and would have to be written off by the owners. Ence proposed, however, that a five-year profit sharing agreement be created, to provide some consideration for the owners in transferring an operating business to the university. He suggested that 20 percent of any profits from the five years following the transfer, not to exceed \$20,000 a year or a total of \$100,000 over the five-year period, be paid to the former owners. The university would have no obligation to pay during years in which the operation failed to show a profit.

According to Ence's analysis, at the time of the discussion, the Citizen had sales totaling \$259,322, including \$16,444 in subscriptions, \$220,269 in local ad sales, and \$22,609 in other sales. Cost of sales was estimated at \$208,286, resulting in a gross profit of \$51,036. Operating expenses were estimated at \$142,056, resulting in a net loss of \$91,020, or 35 percent.

With subscription sales of \$120,000, local

advertising of \$300,000, and other sales of \$25,000, Ence stated total sales could be raised to \$445,000, to be balanced against an estimated \$210,000 cost of sales, resulting in a gross profit of \$235,000. Based on anticipated adjustments downward to salaries, payroll taxes, health insurance, correspondence costs and travel, Ence estimated operating expenses at \$88,828, which would result in a net profit of \$146,172, or 33 percent, for 1985, if the department took over the operation. He added the minimum acceptable profit for the first years of operation should be no lower than 15 to 20 percent.⁴

Staff Fired

In a telephone conversation on Dec. 19, Derry said, Ross stated he wanted to fire the editorial staff of the Citizen. Derry responded that such a move would be embarrassing to the university, adding he felt the department was not yet prepared to take over the paper. When Derry returned from Christmas vacation on Jan. 3, he met with Black, Wadsworth and Shay. He suggested at the meeting that Wadsworth be named executive editor of the paper, with Shay to work as editor under him. Derry said Wadsworth expressed some reluctance, but Wadsworth stated he ultimately agreed with the proposal. Derry added he would be unable to guarantee Shay her position beyond
⁵
December of 1985.

On Jan. 4, in a telephone conversation with Derry, Ross stated that the university was dragging its feet in the transfer. Ross said the Citizen staff was employed by his company, and the department had no right to interfere. Derry agreed, but stated Shay was employed by the department as an instructor. Also on this date, Robert Hoover, dean of the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, and Provost Wagner gave tentative approval to the Department of Communication to produce the editorial content of The Cache Citizen. On Jan. 7, Derry notified the Preston office that the department would be prepared to produce the Jan. 23 issue. Shay and Kipper were fired by Ross and Bell on Jan. 8.

In an article in the Jan. 23 issue of The Utah Statesman, Bell was quoted as saying the department had nothing to do with the firing of Shay and Kipper. "The journalism department never once suggested that we let Susan or Pam go. It was our (the owners') decision," Bell said.⁶ This assertion was disputed by both former employees in letters to the editor which appeared in the Jan. 25 issue of the Statesman. Both letters contain numerous potentially libelous statements, and will therefore not be reproduced here. However, each implied that department members were involved in the firing⁷ decisions.

Wadsworth, graduate students Nancy Williams, John Morris and William Davis, produced the first department-sponsored issue of the Citizen Monday, Jan. 21. The paper was dated and distributed Jan. 23.

Wadsworth, 55, had over 30 years of experience in journalism when he joined the department faculty in the fall of 1983. He had previously taught for 12 years at Brigham Young University and three years at the University of Utah. Wadsworth was graduated from San Jose State College in 1954 with a degree in journalism. He worked for several California papers, including the Contra Costa Gazette, the Salinas Californian and the Richmond Independent before moving to Salt Lake City where he served as a general assignment reporter for the Deseret News. He later worked as a Utah correspondent for Time and Life magazines, for the National Observer and as a staff reporter for the Salt Lake City bureau of the Associated Press. Wadsworth, a director of the Utah Headliners Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, founded the Utah Journalism Review in 1979, which he continued to edit at the time of the Citizen takeover. He also edited The Rangefinder, a regional magazine for the National Press Photographers Association.

Williams, Morris and Davis, all USU graduates, returned to school in the fall of 1985 to pursue masters degrees in communication. Williams, 39, a native of New

Mexico, worked seven years for the Logan Herald Journal as a reporter, features editor, and editor-in-chief of Valley Magazine. During her graduate program she also served as associate editor of the Journalism Review.

Morris, 41, was graduated from USU in 1965 with a bachelors degree in American studies. He worked as a general assignment reporter and sports editor for the Hemet (Calif.) News before moving to Lake Tahoe in 1969. During 14 years at the Tahoe Daily Tribune, Morris served as sports editor, police and court reporter, features writer, director of the South Lake Tahoe News Service and wire and special projects editor.

Davis, 35, was graduated from USU in the spring of 1973 with a degree in journalism. He worked five years in Colorado for Southeast Denver Graphics as a photographer and graphic camera operator. In 1978, he moved to Moab, Utah, where he served seven years as news editor of The Times Independent. Williams, Morris and Davis were named to the positions of features, copy and news editors, respectively, although duties proved to be interchangeable, as will be discussed in the Analysis section.

For several weeks, production continued at the Preston office, as facilities had not yet been developed at the department. Prior to acquisition of the Citizen, plans to develop production capabilities at the department had

been implemented, to produce The Rangefinder, Journalism Review, Folio (a magazine featuring student work) and the Journal of Mass Media Ethics, a new publication co-edited by Dr. Black.

A Varityper 6400 computer typesetter with digital previewer was ordered Jan. 25, 1985. The unit was delivered Feb. 25. The \$32,043 cost of the unit was covered by a special allocation of \$34,000 from the university to the department. Typesetting was initially done by Wadsworth. A Repromaster 2100 graphic camera with densitometer was delivered Feb. 22, which gave the department halftoning capability. The unit was obtained on a 60-month lease agreement, with a total purchase price of \$5,795. Jan. 25, 1985. A darkroom for the newspaper operation was provided by Wadsworth at his home until work was finished on the communication department darkroom in the basement of the Animal Science Building. As with the other production equipment, the darkroom was designed to enhance the photojournalism program, rather than specifically for the newspaper.

In February, the university approved operation of the paper by the department for a six-month experimental period, beginning with the first issue on Jan. 23. On Feb. 22, Derry, Dean Robert Hoover and Herald Journal Publisher Wayne Paul met to discuss the Citizen. According to Derry, Paul stated he was opposed to the operation of a commercial

newspaper by the university.

Paul also expressed concern over the project during a segment on The Cache Citizen aired on KSL Channel 5, Salt Lake City, done by Keith McCord. McCord said Paul has been "concerned that the Citizen is essentially getting its news stories with free labor - the students - while at the same time going after the same advertising dollar." In an⁸ interview, Paul said:

A competitor is a competitor. If I am competing for the same dollars that they're competing (for), and they have an advantage over me of fewer expenses, then that seems to me unfair competition.⁹

Wadsworth responded:

I have no intention of ever trying to compete with the Herald Journal. I don't want to. I'd scrap the whole thing tomorrow if I thought we were going to compete with the Herald Journal.¹⁰

Foundation Proposed

The issue was discussed again at a meeting of the Institutional Council on June 22, 1985, when the department submitted a request that it be permitted to acquire and operate the Citizen for one year, after which the program would be evaluated. The proposal was presented by USU President Stanford Cazier, who outlined the similar operations at the University of Missouri and University of Arizona. The proposal, prepared by the department, stated:

The assets of The Cache Citizen will be

converted to a not-for-profit foundation with a board of overseers to regulate budget and editorial policies. The foundation will have by-laws acceptable to the University before approval is given for departmental participation. The department will then contract with the foundation to publish The Cache Citizen.¹¹

It was proposed that the foundation board be made up of representatives of the university and the industry. The department also proposed that, to reduce competition with the Herald Journal, the publication date of the Citizen be shifted from Wednesday to Saturday, the only day of the week the Herald Journal does not publish. Free distribution of the Citizen had already been discontinued, cutting the paper's circulation from approximately 11,000 to less than 4,000.

Support for the proposal was expressed by Provost Peter Wagner, who stated that good journalism programs tend to bring brighter-than-average students to the university. He added exposure to a working environment would give students an edge in a competitive job market. Wagner stated that there would be responsible editorial control of the paper and that the operation would not be continued if the paper lost money. Wagner added he did not feel the Citizen would harm the Herald Journal.¹²

During the April, 1985 meeting of the Institutional Council, Tamara Thomas, editor of The Utah Statesman, complained that communication department faculty members were too busy with operation of the paper to give adequate

feedback to students. She also questioned elimination of Communication 100, a class which gave credit to students
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for working on the Statesman. At the June meeting, Wagner reported that two additional faculty members had been hired, along with more teaching assistants. The department also agreed to give internship credit to
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students working for the Statesman, to replace Comm. 100.

Wayne Paul, when asked by the council for his opinion, expressed concern over a public institution competing in the private sector, adding that students should be able to obtain professional experience through the department at the university. He stated he had spoken with Frank Holt, general manager of the Columbia Daily Tribune, a privately-owned daily newspaper in competition with the Missourian. Paul stated Holt felt there was unfair competition, in that the faculty-student-run paper was using the benefits of the university to maintain operating costs, and was therefore able to lower
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advertising costs, which hurt Tribune revenue.

Earlier in the meeting, Wagner had presented an article on the Daily Tribune which appeared in the May, 1985 issue of the Washington Journalism Review, in which author Steve Weinberg stated Tribune Editor and Publisher Henry J. Waters III said competition from the Missourian

encouraged him to spend more money on reporting, to the benefit of local readers.¹⁶ It should be noted that Weinberg is executive director of Investigative Reporters and Editors, a national organization headquartered at the University of Missouri- Columbia School of Journalism.

In response to a question from the council on possible compromises, Paul stated he might be willing to compromise on the issue of Saturday publication, but still felt the Citizen would probably cut into his revenue. Following the discussion, the Institutional Council unanimously approved creation of the foundation and continued operation of the paper, subject to review in one year.¹⁷

The paper continued to operate through the summer months, using copy provided by a reporting class taught by Dr. Black. Teaching assistantship positions for Morris, Williams and Davis were extended from nine to 12 months. Davis continued to serve as news editor through September.

Throughout the summer, a series of meetings was held involving faculty members and graduate students, to design a new curriculum to integrate with the newspaper and anticipated development of a broadcast outlet. It was suggested that student participation in the two outlets be concentrated in the junior year. It was felt the arrangement would permit lower division students to develop necessary basic skills, while seniors could concentrate on

areas of specialization and in-depth theory study during their final year.

In July, the department was visited by Scott Chisholm, a professor at Empire State University of New York, and director of the school's Newspaper Management Institute. Chisholm was in the process of organizing a task force to investigate the possibility of creating two additional institutes - one featuring an undergraduate curriculum in news-editorial and the second, circulation management and advertising sales.

Chisholm proposed that the task force seek \$10 million in funding from the newspaper industry to create and operate the institutes. Under a preliminary proposal, Empire State would continue to operate the Newspaper Management Institute, while the University of Kentucky would be considered for the news-editorial institute, and Utah State, the advertising sales and circulation management institute. The hope was expressed that each of the three involved departments would receive approximately \$3 million in funding.

The department hosted a conference for representatives of the newspaper industry and three universities on Oct. 3 and 4 to discuss the proposal. Those participating included Robert L. Burke, vice president of the Industry and Public Affairs Committee of

the American Newspaper Publishers Association; Jack Butcher, chairman of the board of the International Circulation Managers Association; Dr. Ronald Farrer, chairman of the University of Kentucky Department of Journalism; A. Edward Heins, general manager of the Daily Missourian, University of Missouri School of Journalism; Dr. Thomas Ezell, vice president for development, Empire State College; and Victor Montana, dean of the Tennessee Valley Center at Empire State. It was agreed that Empire State, Utah State and the University of Kentucky would draw up an agreement for creation of the two new institutes, to be completed sometime in early 1986.

Staff Added

In fall quarter of 1985, two additional teaching assistants were hired - Rodney Boam, who served as photo editor, and Cory LaBianca, who took over duties as news editor. Deni Elliott-Boyle, who received a Ph.D. from Harvard in the spring of 1985, was hired as a new faculty member. She took over the reporting class fall quarter. Also hired was Emerald "Jerry" Jerome, a newspaper advertising and business specialist from BYU.

One of Jerome's main functions was to design a program so that the department could take over operation of the business side of the Citizen, including ad sales, billing and distribution. Through the fall of 1985, these

functions continued to be performed by the downtown Citizen office, although now under Jerome's supervision. As with the editorial side, many of the business-related duties were to be performed by students in Jerome's ad sales and media management classes, to give them professional experience. In September, the university allocated \$20,000 to the department for development of a computerized newsroom. An IBM computer with a 10 megabyte hard disk was purchased, to be used as a collection and editing unit for newspaper copy. Five smaller units were purchased, to be hooked into a network with the larger IBM. This unit, in turn, is directly connected with the Varityper unit, eliminating much of the typesetting.

On Nov. 9, 1985, as required by the proposal approved by the Institutional Council, publication of the Citizen shifted from Wednesday to Saturday. LaBianca became special section editor, while Williams' assistantship was expanded to half-time, to allow her to serve as both managing editor and editing instructor. Morris' assistantship was also expanded, allowing him to serve double duty as copy editor and editing instructor. Davis returned to teaching the lab sections of a basic newswriting class, while Boam continued as photo editor and teaching assistant for the photojournalism class. LaBianca also served as teaching assistant for the reporting class

taught by Dr. Elliott-Boyle.

Curriculum Approved

Also in November, the department faculty approved the new curriculum proposal. Two classes were designated specifically for freshmen: Introduction to Mass Communication and Writing for Mass Media (previously known as Journalistic Writing), for a total of six Communication credits. Listed as sophomore courses were Photo and Electronic Journalism, Public Opinion and Persuasion, Broadcast Production, and Reporting, at three credits each, for a total of 12 credits. In a change from previous arrangements, elements of both broadcast and print journalism were to be taught at the opening levels, as indicated by the course titles.

Junior year students were targeted for instruction in department outlets, including The Cache Citizen and "Valley Report" on cable Channel 13. For each of the three quarters of the regular school year, students are required to enroll in a class entitled Community Journalism, for one credit a quarter. The class includes nine two-credit labs. Each student must select four of the labs, with at least one from each list. The "A" list includes Editing and Copy Reading, Reporting Public Affairs, Newspaper Production, Media Advertising Sales, and Advanced Photojournalism. The "B" list includes Television Production, Radio and TV

Performance, Radio Production, and Electronic News.

During the senior year, students are allowed to specialize, and take theory-based classes. The required senior core includes Mass Media and Society, Mass Media Law, and Communication Theory, at three credits each. Remaining classes are divided between "skills" and "theory" courses. Communication majors are required to select nine to 12 hours of credit from the two divisions, as suggested by their advisors. Skills courses at the senior level are open only to majors who have completed the junior labs. Majors and non-majors can register for all theory courses.

Senior skills courses include News and Documentary Writing, Feature Writing, Communication Internship, Editorial Writing, Advertising Copywriting, Commercial and Continuity Writing, Projects in Communication, In-Depth Reporting, and Television Direction. Theory courses are Organizational Communication, Public Relations, Special Topics, Communication Ethics, Symbolic Processes, Literature of Mass Communication, Mass Media Management, International Communications, and Educational Television and Radio.¹⁸ The emphasis of the department's major in speech communication was shifted to organizational communication, using an interdisciplinary approach involving the College of Business (training and marketing, media management) and the Department of Theater Arts

(theater education/speech).

First Foundation Meeting

The first meeting of the paper's non-profit foundation (entitled The Cache Citizen Communication Foundation) board of directors was held Feb. 13, 1986. Derry, Jerome and Wadsworth served as initial incorporators and temporary officers of the board. Prospective board members had been invited to serve by the Communication Department. The invitations were extended by Derry, Wadsworth, and Jerome, who served as temporary officers. Board members include representatives from the industry, the university, and local business community. They are: Jennie May Christensen, news editor of radio station KVNU; Val R. Christensen, vice president of Student Services, USU; Dr. Derry, representing the department; Barbara Fjeldsted, co-owner of the Sportsman sporting goods stores; Ernest Ford, news director of KSL Channel 5, Salt Lake City; A. Edward Heins, general manager of the Daily Missourian; and Brian Mertz, assistant managing editor of the Ogden Standard Examiner. Also present at the meeting were Jerome, Wadsworth, Bell, and Frank Prader, Citizen business manager.

A brief history of the project was presented by Derry, including a review of revisions to the curriculum to take advantage of the Citizen as a laboratory publication.

A budget report was given by Prader. The report indicated net income of \$1,859 for the month of December, 1985, with year-to-date income totaling \$4,144. In response to a question from Val Christensen, on the accuracy of Prader's projected planning budget, Derry said if expense perimeters could be maintained, the paper should make at least \$7,814 annually. Derry commented that the business side of the operation was in a transition phase, with billing and accounting services being purchased from the Preston office by the department. For two months prior to the meeting, the new Citizen business office had been "shadowing" the Preston accounting system, and each was in agreement with the other, permitting final transfer of the business operation in the near future.

Based on anticipated circulation of 6,000, a subscription price of \$10 per year, and 14-page paper, the projected budget anticipated total sales of \$12,200 per month, or \$146,400 per year, considerably below that predicted by Robert Ence in December of 1984. Subtracting printing and circulation costs, the gross margin was estimated at \$109,680. Balanced against anticipated expenses of \$99,984, the net income was projected at \$9,696, somewhat higher than Derry's estimate.

Fjeldsted was selected as president/chairman of the board. Mertz was elected first vice president. Jennie May

Christensen was elected second vice president, and Derry, secretary/treasurer.

Derry reviewed the gift of the paper to the university, adding that the paper will, in turn, be given to the foundation. Following that, a contract to govern the project will be drawn up between the university, the foundation, and the department. He announced incorporation papers would be filed with the state as soon as they had been reviewed by the board.

Acting on a suggestion by Ford, the board agreed to ask Salt Lake City attorney Pat Shea to attend the next meeting, to discuss legal issues concerning the foundation. The next meeting of the board was to be scheduled after Shea had been contacted and the contract drawn up.

Following the end of the first year of operation, editorial content produced by students was eligible for the first time for judging in the Utah Press Association's "Better Newspaper" contest. At the annual UPA convention in St. George on Feb. 22, the Citizen, represented by Williams, received four first place awards, two seconds, and one third in Group III competition. The first place awards included Best Editorial, Best News Story, Best Photojournalism, and Best Front Page. The Citizen took second place for General Excellence, losing to The Park Record by one point. The Citizen also placed second for Best Feature Story, and third for Best Special Section and

Best News Series. In SPJ/SDX Region 9 competition, a photo essay by undergraduate Tim Rasmussen was judged best photofeature.

ANALYSIS

This section will address the major issues concerning the takeover of The Cache Citizen by the department, including those identified by the participants and the author.

First and most obvious is the simple fact of operation of a commercial business by a university department. From the point of view of newspaper owners and university department heads, each is a full-time job. The attempt to combine the two stretched department resources to human and financial limits. Logic would dictate that such a transition would be relatively easy only if faculty and graduate students had an excess of time on their hands. Under any other conditions, the existing staff would have to be expanded, or would be required to take on initial duties. In the case of The Cache Citizen, the latter was required initially, followed by staff expansion.

Quite simply, the department was unprepared for the transfer of the paper at the time it occurred. Previously, only the most general discussions had been held between members of the faculty and administration, indicating the need for an outlet for student work. As indicated in the Chronology, the initial suggestion that the paper be donated to the university was made in a joking manner by

Glen Curtis, editor of The Tremonton Leader.

An indication of the tentativeness with which the proposal was received is reflected in the fact that when Wadsworth and Derry met with Herald Journal Editor Wayne Paul on Nov. 26, the department was still considering other possible outlets. Both Derry and Wadsworth said they felt at the time it was unlikely Bell and Ross would be willing to donate the paper to the university. Wadsworth termed the initial meeting with the publishers "a fishing expedition." ¹ The speed with which the Citizen owners agreed to the proposal came as a surprise to the department, which had only begun considering preliminary arrangements for production. At the time, the department had no production facilities and no arrangements had been made for staffing, although there had been some discussion of using graduate students as editors.

"Actually, we got into it a lot quicker than we wanted to," Wadsworth said. "Wayne Bell came in here one day and said 'Are you ready to do this next week?'" ²

Graduate Student Reaction

The announcement was received with something less than unbridled enthusiasm by the graduate students. Morris, Williams and Davis had, in part, returned to school because they were suffering from "burn out," and wished to escape, for a time at least, the regular deadline pressure

of journalism. Running a weekly paper did not fit into their view of life in academia. Paradoxically, however, the skills they had gained in the profession were the very abilities that made them valuable to the department in the new academic setting. Through the first year of operation, their reactions tended to be an unlikely mix of the "can do" response generated by professional pride, and protestations against the long hours required to produce the paper and lack of organization resulting from the quick turnover.

All three had initially thought they would complete their degrees within four quarters. However, the extensive number of hours required to put out the paper, far above the 10-20 hours a week required by teaching assistant contract, provided the impetus for them to agree to remain for another year. In return, Derry agreed they would receive support for the following year, when they could concentrate more fully on their studies.

The problem was greatly eased during fall quarter 1985, when additional teaching assistants were hired. Although organization continued to be a problem, the individual workload was reduced somewhat from the initial "everybody does everything" approach that made titles on the masthead meaningless. By winter quarter of 1986, workloads were closer to those specified in assistantship

agreements.

The problem of work overload was most critical in the case of Wadsworth, who was responsible for the overall operation of the newspaper. At the time of the takeover, only two of the department's seven faculty members were journalism specialists, thus severely limiting the allocation of paper-related duties. The overloading of Wadsworth with production functions created choke points in the operation.

Initially, all production activities took place in the Preston office. Copy for typesetting would be taken to Preston Saturday by Morris. Last-minute typesetting would be done Monday afternoon and evening by the office typesetters, occasionally assisted by Davis, who also had typesetting experience. Design, layout and pasteup were the primary responsibility of Williams, who also served as news editor during the opening weeks of the project. She was assisted by both Wadsworth and Morris. Davis produced halftones, using Preston's equipment. Wadsworth was also responsible for keeping track of stories produced by his reporting class for the paper.

"We had to go up there and do those things cold," Wadsworth said. "We just flew by the seat of our pants for the first few weeks - actually for the first few months."³

Production usually got underway around 4 p.m., and continued until the flats were finished, usually between 2

and 3 a.m. Tuesday morning. Deadline was 5 a.m. As the staff became more familiar with the system, completion time dropped back to around 1 a.m. However, significant problems remained. Said Wadsworth of the early issues:

It was really traumatic, because none of our classes were geared for it. Our classes were all academically geared - they were not geared to produce anything. Production just ate our lunch every week. And unfortunately, it was a Monday lunch that it ate, so we would kill ourselves on Monday and then Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday we'd recuperate and then we'd start all over again. I found myself over the weekend not being able to relax, because you had that Monday marathon that you had to put up with every week. I'm glad we switched to Saturday publication. I think it's going to work out really well.⁴

Production Shifted from Preston to Logan

In addition to the problems with Monday production, numerous problems were encountered when the operation was shifted from Preston to the department. A typesetter was hired, and she and Wadsworth attended a week-long training session in Salt Lake City conducted by Varityper. Unfortunately, the typesetter resigned midway through the course, leaving Wadsworth the only member of the staff able to operate the new typesetting unit. This proved to be a severe problem, as much of Wadsworth's time was spent setting copy, affecting his ability to interact with students and keep up with his class load. In addition, Wadsworth continued to produce The Rangefinder and The Utah

Journalism Review.

This difficulty was rectified, in part, by the arrival of LaBianca, who had extensive typesetting experience, and was able to fill in on an interim basis until undergraduate students could be hired and trained. During the early phases, however, production time again slipped back to Tuesday morning, occasionally threatening to break the 5 a.m. deadline. There was an obvious increase in staff stress levels during this period.

The graduate student/editors were also plagued by lack of an adequate authority structure. All three were used to working in a professional environment, and experienced difficulties with the "in between" status of the graduate student - neither wholly student or faculty member. The editors were given titles in the paper's table of organization, but no real authority to direct editorial activities. This was particularly noticeable in dealings with undergraduate students, many of whom felt (with more than a little justification) that deadlines could be ignored with impunity. Decisions made by the editors were also frequently overridden from above, giving the graduate students the feeling they "had the responsibility but not the authority." Although some aspects of this problem remain, the situation has improved with the revamping of the curriculum. In general, graduate students now supervise classes corresponding to their editorial duties.

The "in between" status of the editorial staff also resulted in friction with the downtown business office. Sales representatives from the office frequently called in last minute ads on production night, long after the agreed-upon deadline. The editors were powerless to enforce the deadline, as the sales representatives felt they were responsible only to the Preston office. Most of the editorial staff participated at one time or another in shouting matches over the phone, before the problem was solved by inserting Jerome as a negotiator.

Another major continuing problem during the early days of the project was the lack of copy. Using the existing reporting class, undergraduate students were assigned to cover feature and spot news. The students frequently failed to meet deadlines, multiplying production problems. The small number of students in the single class prevented development of a "depth" system, where more stories than needed would be assigned, insuring an adequate amount of copy, even if several students failed to produce. The situation improved during fall quarter of 1986, as additional classes, including public affairs reporting, photojournalism, and in-depth reporting, began using the Citizen as a lab. Elliott-Boyle began teaching the reporting class, which helped reduce Wadsworth's workload. At the present time, at least during quarters, there is an

excess of news stories each week. However, the occasional failure of undergraduate reporters to turn in major, timely stories continues to be a problem.

The problem with lack of copy peaked during the breaks between quarters, becoming critical during the six weeks between the end of summer quarter and the beginning of fall quarter.

Copy generated by Black's summer reporting class (which was held on a shortened schedule) covered most of the summer. However, the operation had to depend upon unpaid undergraduate volunteers to cover breaking stories and provide the volume necessary to fill the paper - an unsatisfactory and unreliable system. Several stories were also produced by the graduate students. In the future, the department plans to provide paid positions for students who wish to work during the breaks.

It had been earlier suggested that the number of issues produced each year be decreased, so that production during the breaks would not be required. This did not coincide with Derry's efforts to prove the paper was a viable project:

The basic policy I was following was to keep right on publishing - keep our heads down as much as we could, and just stay task-oriented. I kept saying to myself, if we can get to the eighth issue we're all right. By then, you start to look like the status quo. . .The basic strategy was to delay any decision, keep putting it off: "Collect more

data - We need more time - We don't know if this will work yet - Give us a chance - We'll know soon enough. . ."5

Derry felt it was crucial that the operation continue on a regular basis, to log a track record before any major decisions on the project were made by the university administration. This was at odds not only with the staff, but with the owners of the Citizen, who wanted the university to take over all phases of the operation, including the business end, as quickly as possible.

The Firing of Shay and Kipper

The desire of Ross and Bell to get rid of the paper was made obvious before the department produced its first issue, when they fired the existing editorial staff, precipitating the quick turnover in January. The firing of editor Susan Shay and reporter Pamela Kipper dragged the university into a needless public controversy at a time when the department had enough problems simply producing the paper each week. Originally, the department had planned to have Shay continue as editor, with her employment shifting from the Preston office to the university. The Jan. 23, 1984 article on the transfer in the Utah Statesman said that such an offer was made to Shay by the department. In the letter to the editor printed in the Jan. 25 issue, Shay denied being offered the position. In a second letter in the same issue, Kipper denied

receiving an offer of continued employment from Bell and Ross, as also reported in the Jan. 23 Statesman.

In the Jan. 23, 1984 issue of the Utah Statesman, Kipper stated that both she and Shay were surprised by the firings. While this may be true in Kipper's case, it runs counter to two conversations Shay had with the author and Williams during fall quarter, where she stated she had personality conflicts with the owners, and expected to quit or be fired in the near future.

The transition, which by its very nature had the potential to cause controversy, was made much more difficult by the dispute involving the department, the paper's owners, and the former editor. Unfortunately, the department had no control over what Ross and Bell chose to do to their employees. There was an apparent lack of communication between Shay and department members which also contributed to the confusion. It would have been more productive had an agreement between Shay and the department been worked out before negotiations for the transfer took place.

Opposition by the Herald Journal

Another major problem, and one that continues to the present, is opposition by the Logan Herald Journal to the operation of a commercial newspaper by a state institution.

The opposition is understandable. As with most areas, the Logan newspaper market appears to be going downhill. This is due, in large part, to inroads made by direct mail advertising. In addition, the market may be too small to successfully support direct mail, a weekly shopper, a weekly newspaper and a daily newspaper, although traditionally, weeklies and dailies in the same area were not regarded as being in competition, due to different readerships.

Opposition to the proposal was expressed most sharply by Cache Valley Publishing Company (owners of the Herald Journal) President Philip E. Swift, in a June 13, 1985 response to a letter from USU President Stanford Cazier explaining the university's position. Concerning competition, Swift said:

In your letter you indicate in several instances that The Cache Citizen would not be competitive to The Herald Journal. A look at the source of newspaper income proves this cannot be true. Nationwide, and Cache Valley is no exception, an average of approximately 80% of community newspaper revenue is derived from advertising. As soon as The Cache Citizen starts selling advertising as a general circulation newspaper it is absorbing a certain part of the advertising budgets of potential advertisers, thus decreasing the potential sales for other media, including The Herald Journal. The fact that you may publish on Saturday does not change this picture in any way.⁶

By this assertion, Swift appears to imply that his paper is entitled to a monopoly on advertising in any market entered by the university, based on the

philosophical position that a state agency should not compete with a privately-owned business. He comments later in the letter that the Citizen could compete with the Herald Journal as long as Bell and Ross retained private ownership. His argument is inconsistent, in that his company has not protested advertising sales by other university publications, such as the Statesman, magazines, programs for art and sporting events, etc. It appears Swift wants to draw a physical boundary for university publications around the border of the campus. His statement that Saturday publication does not reduce the impact of the Citizen, is also arguable, as the Herald Journal has never published a Saturday issue. Again, he appears to imply that his paper is entitled not only to existing advertising revenue, but any potential future revenue.

The rejection of proposed alternatives by the Herald Journal, such as student production of a section, or Saturday edition reflected the paper's position that journalism education should remain on campus, and the department should concentrate on operating the Statesman. This concept had been rejected by Derry in August, when he began his duties as department head. The rejection of alternatives by the Herald Journal also reflected a lack of willingness to compromise. A slight change in this stance was evident in the June Institutional Council meeting, when

Wayne Paul indicated the Herald Journal might be willing to accept the change to a Saturday publication date.

Swift also stated he felt it was unfair for the Citizen to use unpaid student reporters, while the Herald Journal had to pay wages to and provide benefits for its employees. Operation of the Citizen by the department constituted unfair competition, Swift said, because the paper's operating expenses are supported by the university. It should be noted, however, that an attempt is being made to operate the Citizen at at least a "break even" level, due to limited funding for the department. If expenses cannot be controlled, the project will have to be abandoned. Swift is correct in part, in that some of the salaries for staff members come from the department. However, all of the editorial staff members, including Wadsworth and the graduate students, continue normal teaching duties in addition to producing the paper. It would be unfair for their salaries to be totally dependent upon the paper's making a profit.

In response to Cazier's assertion that the Citizen provides benefits in professional training for students, Swift stated:

I think you are overlooking the fact that it is not the existence of a general circulation newspaper as against a student circulation newspaper that has been the prime determinate [sic] in the quality of students produced. Rather it is the quality of instruction that not only produces a solid and practical informational

base but also duplicates in its student circulation laboratory newspaper practical and proven procedures.⁷

It is obvious, as indicated by Swift, that the quality of education is dependent upon the quality of instruction. He also raises the question of the role of The Utah Statesman. At present, the paper is operated by the Associated Students of USU, with no input from the department. The advisor, Jay Walmsley, is not a member of the department faculty. As mentioned in the Chronology, during the 1984-85 school year, the department dropped Comm. 100, a class that gave credit for working on the Statesman. Students now receive internship credit for working on the paper. Under the previous arrangement, no report of progress was made to the department. Under the internship, students must report to a faculty member. Acknowledging that the department might have been able to negotiate for control of the campus newspaper, the question of whether the Citizen or the Statesman provides the better quality of experience must be addressed. In general, prospective employers place much greater emphasis on professional, rather than student publication, experience. The opportunity to acquire professional experience while in school should help attract better quality students and assist them in finding employment once they leave. The paper also provides professional experience for all majors for an extended period of time, unlike an internship

program, where the experience lasts one quarter. Internships also vary in quality from publication to publication.

Access to a professional outlet is also of critical importance to the proposed graduate program. Mid-career journalists who hope to move into management can gain valuable experience operating a weekly newspaper. It is doubtful a journalist with a decade or more of professional experience would gain much from working on a student newspaper. However, he or she could learn a great deal if exposed to the actual circulation, business and management problems of the Citizen.

Given the current poor condition of daily and weekly newspaper markets nationwide, the Citizen can also provide a valuable service in newspaper research, as pointed out in the Literature Review. The Herald Journal could, if it wished, take advantage of these services, in addition to participating in a mutually beneficial internship program.

As the department has no wish or need to engage in intensive competition with the Herald Journal, beyond that necessary for survival, a study entitled "Protecting the Herald Journal's Interest in the Logan, Utah Market," was prepared by Jerome in March of 1985.

Jerome suggested that the Herald Journal participate with the department in a unique industry-academic laboratory newspaper training program. He proposed that

students first learn the basics in the classroom, before progressing to The Cache Citizen. After gaining experience on the Citizen, students could intern at the Herald Journal. Successful interns could then be sent to other newspapers in the Scripps chain. Jerome added:

Even though it has not been done, it has been thought of, and interesting[ly] enough it was suggested by an executive in the Scripps League: A few years ago, Barry Scripps while visiting the Provo market and Brigham Young University entertained the thought of uniting the BYU campus newspaper The Daily Universe with the Provo Herald in such an arrangement. It did not develop at that time.⁸

He also proposed that Paul be made a member of the department's advisory board, which would give him input on the newspaper's operation and keep him apprised of plans for the project. Jerome further suggested that the department, through a cooperative agreement with the daily, provide a continuous training program for the editorial and business staffs of the Herald Journal, through seminars and workshops. Staff members participating in the training would be eligible for college credit through the proposed newspaper management institute. The proposal also called for the two papers to jointly sponsor retail advertising workshops for local merchants and workshops for local residents who contribute news to the media. The proposal pledged that the Citizen sales staff would participate only in "consultant" sales, where the staff member would help advertisers develop an overall advertising program using

local media. Jerome commented that the Herald Journal would be in the position of "choosing its own competitor" by cooperating with the department, in that, unlike other potential competitors that might purchase the Citizen, the department was not seeking the maximum possible profit. This would guarantee the daily a relatively benign and predictable form of competition. As of this writing, no action has been taken on Jerome's report. Swift's June 17 letter to Cazier indicates no interest on the part of the Herald Journal to participate in a joint program with the department, although he did state:

The Herald Journal subscribes completely to your goal expressed in the first sentence of your letter's second paragraph, "We encourage every program at the University to strive for excellence in what it does." We feel in the past The Herald Journal has been a staunch supporter of USU programs. However, I think I would be less than honest with you if I did not express The Herald Journal's feelings relative to the above subject.⁹

Despite the arguments presented above, the university must accept the fact that The Cache Citizen is in a form of competition (albeit benign) with the Herald Journal, in that any ad sales by the Citizen could cut into the Herald Journal's potential market. The university has indicated its willingness to minimize this competition by moving the Citizen to a Saturday publication date. Only two alternatives exist to eliminate it altogether: Give up the project or fund it completely through the university or a

grant, as the Tombstone Epitaph. To do either would cripple the department's ability to turn out journalists qualified for immediate entry in the community newspaper industry, through incomplete exposure to professional training, or no professional experience at all. At the present time, the department budget would be woefully inadequate for supporting the newspaper operation without ad sales. It is doubtful the administration would be able or willing to provide sufficient funding to eliminate the issue of unfair competition. In addition, the elimination of advertising would remove a valuable portion of the management curriculum. Any potential damage to the Herald Journal must be balanced against the benefits to the students, the community and the industry.

All possible steps to mitigate the impact of the Citizen on the Herald Journal should be taken, but university officials may want to balance this point against the potential benefits to the students offered by the Citizen operation. The Daily Missourian frankly admits it is in competition with the Columbia Daily Tribune and has no intention of abandoning the market. This situation is even more intense than that between the Citizen and the Herald Journal, as both Columbia papers are dailies. Both papers have survived, although not without major conflict. The Tribune recently lost a court case against the Missourian, when it argued the university-owned paper was

indulging in unfair competition by operating a weekly TMC (total market coverage) publication.

A summary of concerns of the university administration involving the transfer of the Citizen was provided by Vice Provost Richard M. Swenson, in a Jan. 31, 1985 memo to Cazier and Wagner. Swenson, who urged that further consideration be given before a final decision was reached, stated:

My concern stems from what I believe to be a cardinal principle that a university should not take sides on political issues. Its role should be to provide whatever truth and knowledge it possesses to help the society it serves come to its own decisions. This, to me, is the antithesis to the way a current commercial newspaper operates, i.e., editorial page, investigative reporting, etc.¹⁰

Universities do, to some extent, participate in the political process. University officials, including those in Utah, appear frequently on news programs, particularly when the State Legislature is considering allocations for higher education. Although many such activities take place out of the glare of the publicity spotlight, it is safe to assume that backstage lobbying by administration officials on various university-related subjects is also a frequent occurrence. This argument also discounts the fact that the Statesman frequently takes sides on off-campus political issues without doing any apparent harm to the university's image. Of course, the Statesman is not a general circulation newspaper, but does have off-campus readers.

Since the transfer, the Citizen has carried a disclaimer on the editorial page stating that any opinions expressed are those of the editors, not the university, its administration or faculty. The policy statement for the paper also states that the Citizen will not endorse political candidates. Both investigative reporting, if well done, and a lively, well-written editorial page fulfill valuable public services, by alerting citizens to possible mismanagement or fraud, and by providing a forum for the discussion of issues.

In discussing the possibility of the university becoming involved in political issues, Swenson continued:

It might be countered that the faculty advisor to those students producing the Cache Citizen will prevent such things from happening. If the advisor, Communication Department, or the University exercises such control, would it be interpreted as censorship, and if censorship is exercised, would we indeed be providing a "real world" experience for our students?ll

In discussing the role of "real world" experience, conditions in the field must be considered. Editors on commercial papers exercise complete control over what is printed. Editorial control over the copy of student reporters indeed duplicates conditions in the "real world." In a professional setting, a reporter can argue for his or her story but, in the end, has only the option of quitting to control (to a minor extent) what is printed.

Swenson also pointed out that although professional

experience would be beneficial for all students in all careers, the university does not acquire commercial businesses to provide that experience, but rather participates in co-op programs, summer employment, and part-time work. This is correct, as far as it goes, but the advantages listed above (length and consistency of experience) offered by a laboratory newspaper, should be kept in mind. Should the newspaper prove unworkable, however, Swenson's suggestion should be immediately implemented, through a major effort to develop additional internship positions. Ideally, an effective program would include experience on both the Citizen and an internship. In any case, the internship program should be expanded.

Swenson concluded:

For the above, as well as other reasons, i.e., the University unnecessarily entering into competition with private enterprise, the amount of time, effort, and expense that will be drained from the Communication Department to publish a commercial paper that if not done well will reflect adversely on the University, I recommend that further evaluation of the merits of the project be considered before a final decision is made.¹²

Swenson raises several valid points in his closing paragraph. The university has entered competition with private enterprise. Whether it is necessary is an arguable point. It is the stance of this thesis that the project is necessary. His reference to the drain on department resources has been supported by experience. The newspaper operation has required an extensive investment of

department resources. Continued close monitoring should be done before the project is reviewed by the Institutional Council at the end of the one year experimental period in June of 1986 to determine if the investment is excessive. Concerning Swenson's final caution, the counterpoint can be made that if the paper is done well, it will reflect positively on the university. Again, although early indications are favorable (see summary of readership study below), this should be re-examined in June.

Readership Study

The readership study, done by Prof. Black's communication research class during spring quarter of 1985, is a good example of the research possibilities of a laboratory newspaper, which would benefit both students and the industry. Students were exposed to the mass media research field by actually conducting a survey, under the direction of an experienced faculty member. This facet of the Citizen project could prove especially beneficial to the graduate program by permitting students to design and conduct their own projects using the paper's readers and market. If only one or two surveys were conducted each year, they should not be too onerous for readers. Overexposure to research projects could also be avoided by alternating sources among the readers, subjects of news

stories, and advertisers. The project also provided valuable information to the newspaper staff on how their readers felt about the management change.

The survey confirmed "gut level" reactions on the part of the staff as to what section of the paper interested readers most. On a five-point scale, readers gave the highest rating, 4.39, to feature stories about local residents. This was followed by short items about community activities (3.85), food page (3.51), weddings (3.35), Prism photo page (3.34), Valley Report (3.15), USU news (3.10), letters to the editor (3.10), advertisements (3.02), calendar of valley events (3.01), editorials (2.74), opinion columns on editorial page (2.69), editorial cartoons (2.24), sports (2.12), and television listings (2.01). Although likely to cause consternation among the future journalists on the staff, the low rating given to editorial comments should ease some of the concerns expressed by Swenson. The survey clearly indicated that the staff was on the right track in concentrating on feature stories about local citizens.

The wisdom of continuing wedding listings and the Valley Report (news from towns throughout Cache Valley) was also confirmed. Somewhat surprising to the staff was the relatively high rating given to stories originating from USU. From the outset, the staff was "gun-shy" about running too many USU-related stories, for fear of appearing

to be a university publication. The readers apparently did not share this concern.

Also of major concern to the staff was the credibility of a newspaper containing stories produced by student reporters. In response to the question "You may have noticed that several months ago journalism students at Utah State University began working with The Cache Citizen, writing articles and doing photos and the layout work. What's your general opinion of the paper?" Of those taking the survey, 72.5 percent expressed general approval, while 22 percent had no opinion, indicating the changeover was favorably received, or was of little consequence. Equally significant is the fact that only 2.2 percent had mixed reactions and 3.3 percent expressed disapproval. It appears that much of the controversy over the change was generated from within or by those with a vested interest, feelings not shared by the readership of the paper.

Concerning the quality of the paper, participants in the survey gave the highest rating, 4.18 on a five-point scale, to photography. Also receiving high ratings were writing (3.96), and layout and design (3.80).

Also surprising to the staff was the credibility rating given the Citizen in comparison with the Herald Journal. In response to the question, "If you read conflicting versions of a news event, one in The Cache

Citizen and a different version in the Logan Herald Journal, which one would you be more likely to believe?", 39.6 percent said they would believe the Citizen; 17.6 percent had no opinion; 15.4 percent said it would depend upon the nature of the story and the circumstances; 12.1 percent said they would believe the Herald Journal; 12.1 percent said they would not believe either paper; and 3.3 percent said they would believe a portion of each version and withhold judgment. It should be stressed that this study involved people selected from the Citizen's subscription list, and did not reflect the area's population as a whole, therefore, the credibility rating for a paper one is willing to pay for could be expected to be higher than when judged by a representative sample of area residents.

When asked the reasons why they read newspapers, respondents gave the highest rating (4.37 on a five-point scale) to obtaining local and county news. This was followed by state and regional news (3.75); immediate knowledge of news events (3.69); advertising (3.69); good or positive news about successful people or events (3.51); background information on events the reader had already heard about (3.28); and to help the reader fill time and relax (3.09).

Receiving relatively low ratings were: International and national news (2.99); helping the reader shape opinions

about events or issues (2.99); information on entertainment or recreation possibilities (2.88); uncovering wrongdoings or potential problems (2.13); and helping cope with problems in daily life (2.08). Again, responses to this question made it clear the Citizen should concentrate on covering local news and personalities - the traditional arena of the weekly newspaper.

Faculty and staff members had also expressed concern over the cultural split between the university and the community, the "town and gown gap." Again, it appeared the concern was primarily one-sided. In response to the question, "What kind of a job do you think the journalism students are doing bridging any gaps that might exist between the university and the valley?", 41.8 percent said the students were doing a good job; 22 percent said they hadn't noticed any gap; 19.8 percent did not respond; 12.1 percent gave mixed reviews; and only 4.4 percent said the students were doing a poor job.

Ninety-one respondents were randomly selected for the study from the Citizen's subscription list, and were interviewed by the eight members of the research class. By coincidence, all members of the class were speech communication, rather than journalism majors, thus giving an added measure of objectivity in the conducting of face-to-face interviews. Questions were developed through a

series of focus group interviews with community leaders and input from Citizen editors.

The survey also revealed some interesting demographics concerning the paper's readership. The "average reader," according to the study, was a 50-year-old woman residing in Cache Valley for over 30 years who has read the newspaper for six years. The typical reader completed high school and had attended some college.

The tendency for Citizen readers to be older, long-term valley residents was obvious. Of the 73.6 percent female and 26.4 percent male sampling, 36.7 percent were age 60 or over; 24.2 percent were between 50 and 59; 19.8 percent were between 40 and 49; and only 19.8 percent of the sample were under age 40. Of this total, 48.4 percent had lived in the valley over 30 years. Only 16.5 percent had lived in the valley for 10 years or less. Over half the sample (57.1 percent) lived in valley communities other than Logan, or rural area. A total of 42.9 percent of the respondents were Logan City residents.¹³ This result again stresses the need for the Citizen staff to emphasize coverage of activities and personalities located outside the city limits. It is the natural area of specialization for a weekly paper, particularly one operating in a community served by a local daily.

It would be advisable to repeat this study within one year of the first study, to determine subscribers' reaction

to the redesign of the paper, completed during winter quarter 1986 by Williams. Staff members should pay close attention to the results. As indicated by the study, readers had little interest in sports and editorial comment. The first is likely due to the fact that the Citizen is a weekly, and most area residents receive their sports news from the Herald Journal or local radio stations. The Citizen should emphasize high school sports and sports (such as city recreational leagues) not covered by the daily. A minimum of staff resources should go to this effort.

A lively editorial page has traditionally been the "soul" of a newspaper. However, the study indicates little interest in this section of the Citizen. This by no means indicates that the editorial page should be abandoned. The opinion page is a valuable teaching tool for students, even if not widely read. Students can be exposed to the process of formulating opinion pieces through classroom lectures, then see the finished product in the paper. Future readership studies should review reaction to the op/ed page, to see if interest has increased. A survey form might include questions on what issues most concern valley residents, to help editorial writers select topics.

To obtain a more accurate picture of the Citizen's status in Cache Valley at large, a similar survey using a

randomly-selected sample from the entire population of the valley, both subscribers and non-subscribers, should be conducted. Such a survey could also be beneficial in determining how the paper could better serve the community.

An effort should also be made to implement a regular survey of news sources. The author has produced a sample survey which could be reduced to postcard size for easy distribution. As part of a regular writing assignment, student reporters would be required to mail the postage paid survey card to major sources on their stories. Not only would this help individual writers pinpoint areas of strength or weakness, but it would help faculty members assess teaching methods and indicate to the public a willingness on the part of the paper to accept comments, both positive and negative, on the quality of its reporting. The author plans to develop a pilot program to test this proposal during spring quarter of 1986.

As can be seen by the preceding discussion, much improvement in the operation of The Cache Citizen has been made since the four department representatives arrived in Preston to produce the first issue. Production of a commercial weekly newspaper has placed the USU Department of Communication in an elite position among educational institutions - one of two operating a commercial paper, and the only department to specialize in training for weekly papers. The project also places the department in the

forefront of the debate over the form journalism education should take in the future.

There are good reasons why such an operation is rare. Journalism is a demanding, high pressure field, requiring near total devotion of its practitioners. The addition of an educational function further heightens this pressure. The department and university administration must realize the personal investment asked of staff members, and take care that their most valuable people are not burned out by the experience. The project has grown to the point where it will not die, but it could be killed through such a loss.

Yet the fact remains that a newspaper is vital, dynamic, and can provide rich and varied experience for all students that can be gained in no other way. Graduates will leave the university with an impressive clip file, an ability to begin work immediately without a lengthy on-the-job training program, and, most importantly, the compassion and sense of responsibility required by the field.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Obviously, all aspects of a major project such as The Cache Citizen cannot be covered within the limitations of a masters thesis. Much additional documentation remains to be done.

Chief among these is a record and analysis of the business side of the paper. Many problems have been encountered as the department attempts to take over a commercial business and insure that it at least breaks even. A majority of these problems remain to be solved. Development of the proposed newspaper institute at USU also needs to be closely followed. Projects involving ad sales and newspaper management could provide valuable information to an industry struggling with the impact of new technology and services.

Revision of the graduate program is presently underway, and the integration of graduate study with the Citizen operation should be a rich source for additional research. The paper itself provides virtually limitless research opportunities for graduate students and faculty members who wish to design their own studies. Such studies could include (as mentioned previously) a survey using samples from the entire population of Cache County to determine the paper's perceived status and role in the

community. It would also be extremely interesting to explore student reaction to the new curriculum and experience on the Citizen. Comparison studies of all the above topics could be done with the cooperation of the Daily Missourian and the Tombstone Epitaph, highlighting differences and similarities, strengths and weaknesses. Interested graduate students from other institutions could perform studies of the Citizen to determine if a similar project would be possible at their home school.

An effort should also be made to continue a record of the project's development. During his October, 1985 interview with the author, Ed Heins commented that no such record of the Missourian had been kept, and much of the historical information of the paper's early days has now been lost. This study should provide a foundation for future historians and journalism scholars to follow the growth of The Cache Citizen, as well as preserving the facts surrounding its transfer to the university.

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