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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

CURRENT AND IDEAL PROFESSIONAL ROLES OF NCAA DIVISION I-A SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTORS: ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

By

G. Clayton Stoldt
Norman, Oklahoma
1998

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CURRENT AND IDEAL PROFESSIONAL ROLES
OF NCAA DIVISION I-A SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTORS:
ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
AND POLICY STUDIES

BY

Jerome [illegible]

David L. Tan[illegible]

Trent E Gobert

Linda P. Morton

[illegible]

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suggested taking a look at differences in current and ideal roles. I am deeply indebted to him.

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Clay Stoldt

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ABSTRACT

To examine the perceptions of NCAA Division I-A sports information practitioners regarding their current and ideal professional roles, this project utilized a questionnaire containing a public relations role survey as well as items regarding the practitioners, their institutions and their job satisfaction levels.

The study garnered a 53 percent response rate (n=187) from NCAA I-A members of the College Sports Information Directors of America. Based on their responses, practitioners were classified according to one of four role types--a technician and three management-related roles.

Results indicated that the majority of practitioners view themselves currently as technicians. They also showed significant differences ($p<.05$) existing between technicians and other role types in terms of job title, salary, gender, years of experience, age and job satisfaction. Significant differences were also present between current and ideal primary roles with most practitioners, even those with management-related titles, voicing the desire to engage in management activities more frequently.

Such results may call for high-level athletic managers to reassess the way they are utilizing their resident public relations practitioners. They also indicate that sports information personnel may need to address the issue of role conflict and might consider some new ways to serve their institutions.

I. Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Introduction

The presence of varsity athletics within higher education has been rationalized as benefiting both the student-athletes who play the games and the institutions represented in competition (Chu, 1989). Proponents of intercollegiate sport argue that athletic competition serves participants by building character and enriching the educational experience. They also say that intercollegiate athletics enhance a sense of community on campus and bring economic benefits to colleges and universities. More specifically, advocates of university athletic departments argue that sports programs serve as valuable marketing tools, helping attract new students, donations from alumni and friends and increased appropriations from state legislatures (Leonard, 1988).

The college sports information staff--the public relations department for most university athletic departments--plays an integral part in helping an institution gain those benefits. By publicizing intercollegiate athletics through the mass media, sports information departments build interest in the games and rally support for institutions. Such public

recognition is often seen as being crucial to gaining financial support for colleges (Chu, 1989).

Public relations has been defined as "the planned and organized effort of a company or institution to establish mutually beneficial relationships with its various publics" (Agee, 1988, p. 382). While this definition certainly applies to college sports information work, it is dangerous to assume that all public relations jobs are alike.

> Public relations is an umbrella term that covers at least four dozen careers that have a common thread. The only common thread is that in each the practitioner represents the client to its key publics and vice versa. Practitioners usually have little more than educational background in common... (These) are important jobs with many conceptual similarities but few practical ones (Pasqua, 1990, pp. 204, 206).

One of the conceptual tools which has been utilized to examine various aspects of public relations work focuses on the role of the public relations practitioner. Broom and Smith (1979) developed four role models which may describe public relations practitioners. They are:

1. Expert Prescriber: In this role, the practitioner is seen as an organization's resident expert on public relations matters. The term likens the practitioner to a physician who diagnoses and treats problems for a patient who serves only as a passive recipient throughout the process.

2. Communication Technician: This role is carried out by practitioners who possess specific communication skills such as writing press releases or designing brochures. They

are not involved in policy-making decisions but rather serve by performing specific assignments.

3. Communication Facilitator: Practitioners in this role primarily serve as intermediaries between the organization and its various publics. Their primary task is to promote two-way interaction so the lines of communication remain open.

4. Problem-Solving Process Facilitator: This role model describes practitioners who are part of the management team and who collaborate with other team members in tackling public relations issues. They assist other members of the team in walking through a problem-solving process.

Broom and Smith (1979) noted that most public relations practitioners play a variety of roles in the course of their professional work, but they contended that most all operate out of a dominant role mode. This assertion has received support from other scholars examining public relations roles (Dozier, 1981; Dozier & Gottesman, 1982; Broom & Dozier, 1986).

Broom's survey tool for ascertaining the self-described roles of public relations practitioners has since been tested by researchers at Washington State University and the University of Texas (Reagan, Anderson, Sumner & Hill, 1990). They found that while differentiating among Broom and Smith's four roles made conceptual sense, high correlations among the expert prescriber, communication facilitator and problem-solving process facilitator roles meant that the survey tool only produced two distinct roles.

Likewise, Newsom, Turk and VanSlyke (1993, p. 20) noted that "these self-described roles may be telescoped into only two: manager (who supervises technical staff and participates in planning and policy making as counsel to management) and technician (who performs the technical job skills that public relations demands)."

The majority of the written material regarding college sports information practitioners has focused on the technical tasks relating to the job (Jolesh, 1976; Davis, 1978). However, the sports information job has also been discussed in a broader context. Helitzer (1996) notes that a sports organization's publicist may be a member of management's inner cabinet, and as such, may have numerous functions.

Purpose Statement

Since much of what has been written regarding college sports information practitioners has been anecdotal in nature (Helitzer, 1996; Davis, 1978), the purpose of this study was to take the first step in building a theory base relating specifically to the sports information profession. In order to accomplish this task, collegiate sports information practitioners were surveyed regarding several topics. The survey sought responses regarding their characteristics and those of the organizations which they serve, the roles they play within their organizations, what roles they would ideally play and how satisfied they are with their jobs.

Research Questions

Specifically, this study addressed five research questions. First, what were the self-described current roles of sports information practitioners? Second, what characteristics of sports information practitioners and their institutions were related to the current roles they play? Third, what differences existed between the self-described roles which sports information practitioners reported they currently play and the roles they would ideally play? Fourth, how did the current roles relate to job satisfaction? Fifth, how did the discrepancies which may exist between current and ideal roles relate to job satisfaction?

Definition of Terms

Two terms utilized in the research questions warrant additional definition. The more vague of the two is the term "role." Katz and Kahn (1966, p. 37) noted, "Roles describe specific forms of behavior associated with given tasks; they develop originally from task requirements. In their pure or organizational form, roles are standardized patterns of behavior required of all persons playing a part in a given functional relationship."

Ferguson (1979, p. 4) examined several perspectives on the nature of roles, and in regard to public relations work, concluded, "A public relations role is defined as the pattern of behaviors which constitute a meaningful unit and are expected of and considered appropriate for public relations practitioners."

A second term in need of additional definition is "sports information practitioners." Davis (1978) noted that sports information personnel are individuals whose mission is to promote and publicize the intercollegiate athletic program at their institution or organization. Watkins (1991, p. 280) observes that the mission of such practitioners is to "enhance communication between the organization and the outside world and manage impressions about the organization.... It is a career serving multiple constituencies."

Delimitation of the Study

This proposed study was delimited in one significant way. It focused only on NCAA Division I-A institutions. More than 2,000 colleges and universities field intercollegiate athletic teams. These programs may be members of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) or the National Junior Collegiate Athletic Association (NJCAA) and may compete within different divisions of the NCAA or the NAIA. In 1996-97, only 108 athletic programs competed at the Division I-A level of the NCAA, the highest level of intercollegiate competition. The 1996-97 College Sports Information Directors of America directory listed 352 sports information practitioners working at those universities.

Assumptions of the Study

Given that the study utilized a survey to gather data from sports information practitioners, the project was based on several assumptions. For instance, it assumed that respondents answered questions in an honest manner and that they devoted the time necessary to respond in an accurate manner.

Importance of the Problem

The development of theory in sport management has not significantly extended into the area of sport public relations. A strong theory base in public relations role theory currently exists and should logically serve as the basis for beginning to address theoretical questions regarding sport public relations in higher education institutions.

Since this study moved into relatively unexplored territory, it did not rest on the assumption that only the two major roles of manager and technician apply to sports information practitioners. Instead, the study utilized the four-role typology developed by Broom and Smith (1979). The relationships among the three management roles--expert prescriber, communication facilitator and problem-solving process facilitator--were tested to see if they were correlated within the public relations specialty known as college sports information. A high positive correlation among the three could be an indicator that indeed only two roles--manager and technician--distinctly exist in the sports information population as well.

The basis for this idea is the work of Dozier (1981) who used Broom's work as a foundation and found four roles which described the work of one set of public relations practitioners. Two of the roles were identical to Broom's two primary roles--manager and technician. Dozier also found two additional roles which applied to the group he studied which was from the San Diego, California area. The first additional role was a media relations role which described those practitioners who primarily worked to promote their organizations through the mass media. The second additional role was a communication liaison role describing those public relations professionals who focused on interpersonal activities and served as advisers in the problem-solving process.

Subsequent research by Dozier failed to produce the two additional roles in different samples from the population of public relations practitioners (Broom & Dozier, 1986). However, Dozier's work did seem to indicate that while Broom's typology of roles may be applied to public relations practitioners in general, more detailed typologies may be produced for specific populations of public relations practitioners.

Several factors such as the unique relationships between competing organizations and between athletic programs and their fans make public relations work in athletics unique (Mullin, 1985). It therefore seems likely that sports information practitioners constitute an appropriate group to examine regarding the self-described roles they play. It is also seen as useful to gain an understanding of how those roles relate to variables describing the

practitioners and their institutions and how the roles relate to self-perceived levels of satisfaction.

II. Related Literature

General Literature

As athletic administration has grown into a field of its own, a good deal of information has been generated regarding fund-raising considerations, budgeting concerns, academic services for student-athletes and promotional strategies. One aspect of sport management that has been relatively neglected, however, is the work of sports information practitioners.

This oversight is surprising considering the tasks given sports information practitioners who play a vital role in carrying out many of the missions of the college athletic program. Coakley (1978, p. 179) listed three ways in which college athletics benefit their institutions. While his contentions have not received universal acceptance, they are often cited by advocates of intercollegiate sport. Coakley's points were:

> 1. Schools compete for students and reputable sports programs help generate applications for admission--hence, sports serve as an advertising vehicle.
> 2. Since funding is variable, it is important to have the school recognized by the state legislators, the business community, the foundation administrators and the alumni--sport is a publicity device.
> 3. Sport is a source of spirit and tradition that helps make the program of the school viable.

In order for those benefits to be realized, relationships with the groups Coakley listed must be carefully cultivated. The link between the college athletic department and its various publics, or "any group that has an actual or potential interest in or impact on a company's ability to achieve its objectives" (Kotler, 1988, p. 141) is very often the college sports information department.

As previously mentioned, scholars have noted that public relations practitioners are a diverse lot, operating in a variety of environments. Perhaps no setting is as unique as the environment in which sports information personnel work--a world which blends the one-of-a-kind terrains of sport and higher education.

Mullin (1985) wrote extensively about the unique aspects of the world of sport. All in all, Mullin listed 16 factors which relate exclusively to the field. All 16 affect university sports information practitioners, but six seem particularly relevant. First, sports organizations exist in unique relation to one another, competing for fan support, revenue sources, prospective student-athletes and publicity while also cooperating in scheduling contests, promoting the games and reaping the rewards of their work. Second, sports organizations serve a large group of consumers who consider themselves experts regarding the product. In fact, for many sports fans, talking about the games and expressing opinions may be as exciting as the competitions themselves. A third factor is that many sports consumers personally identify with their favorite teams. This attachment may or may not extend to the larger institution which the team represents, prompting one administrator to

state. "For whatever reason, athletics is what people pay attention to. This is strange and difficult for a provost to accept, but it's true" (Oberlander, 1988, p. A33).

A fourth factor, according to Mullin (1985) is that the appeal of sport reaches beyond most socioeconomic and psychographic descriptors. Fifth, most athletic programs are not expected to operate in the black. Varsity athletics may generate funds for institutions in a variety of ways such as ticket sales, corporate sponsorships and media rights fees, but very few programs are self-supporting (Blum, 1994). Finally, sport and the mass media are interdependent. "The media constitute one of the major social processes affecting and affected by sport, and the relationship between sport and media is symbiotic, meaning that each needs the other for survival." (Leonard, 1988, p. 413).

As if the factors cited above were not enough to make for a unique environment, the university sports information department also exists within a higher education institution. This reality brings still more variables to the equation. For one, "organizationally the university is, in fact, one of the most complex structures in modern society" (Perkins, 1973, p. 3). While often stated in simple terms, the university's objectives, structures and inner workings are enormously complicated. This complexity leads to ambiguities and uncertainties. In general, "Colleges and universities are...weakened by current confusion over goals" (Boyer, 1990, p. xii).

More specifically, higher education scholars seem perplexed about the role intercollegiate athletics should play on campus. They wonder "whether and to what extent

(sports') increasing importance complements or corrupts the academic missions of their host universities" and whether college athletics has become "a huge commercial entertainment conglomerate with operating methods and objectives totally separate from, and mainly opposed to, the educational aims of the schools that house its franchises" (Sperber, 1990, p. xi). Likewise, Gerdy (1995) noted college athletics administrators are making a careful examination of the role varsity sports programs play in the larger campus community. Gerdy's suggestion was that in the face of confusion regarding the educational value of intercollegiate sport, a stronger emphasis should be placed on community service.

Figler and Whitaker (1991) note that the American system of joining amateur sport and formal education is unique compared to other national sport systems. It is then little wonder that difficult questions follow regarding the marriage between the two.

The point in describing this unique environment for university sports information work is to say that it is seemingly in a world of its own. To dismiss sports information as standard public relations work is to fail to understand its intricacies.

Sports Information Literature

In light of the importance of the sports information department's work and the wide array of factors with which sports information practitioners must contend, it is somewhat surprising that little scholarly attention has been devoted to public relations work in college athletics. The lion's share of information available about the college sports information

department is of an anecdotal nature. *The Dream Job: $port$ Publicity, Promotion and Public Relations* (Helitzer, 1996), a comprehensive text relating to sports information work, covers business considerations, job descriptions and publicity devices ranging from the basic news release to staging press conferences and promotional techniques. Helitzer drew from numerous sources including professional sports administrators, popular newspapers and magazines and general texts on public relations. However, he made no references to scholarly work that specifically deals with sports public relations work.

Davis' text, *Basic Concepts of Sports Information* (1978), is also a good resource for the sports information professional. It covers a wide range of topics, including office administration, news releases, hometown features, photography, publicity forms, publications, athletic contests, statistics, feature stories, special promotions for athletes, national rankings, media luncheons, promoting special events, and problems in the profession. The information conveyed is based upon the author's considerable experience in the field, but it does little to bring a variety of perspectives to its readers. In similar fashion, Steedman (1987) addressed computers and how they can be utilized in sports information. This too is basically a training manual, dealing with everything from terminology to hardware and software options.

Parkhouse (1991) surveyed numerous aspects of sport administration in the text, *The Management of Sport: Its Foundation and Application.* A contributing author is Watkins, who considered the work of sports information personnel in his examination of

communication in sport. As previously mentioned, Watkins described the sports information function as well as listing specific assignments which sports information personnel may undertake. Watkins also listed qualities which are beneficial to sports information practitioners (Watkins, 1991).

Williams (1985) wrote of the work of the sports information department in one of many topics addressed in *Successful Sport Management.* Williams stressed the importance of addressing publics within the organization as well as those outside it while providing suggestions for building strong relationships with members of the media and for handling damage control in crisis situations.

The specific area of sports information was one of many addressed by Parks (Parks & Zanger, 1990), who considered it as one of many career options within the field of sport and fitness management. Parks also discussed the importance of developing professional skills and placed the field within the context of 20th century American culture.

Some professional publications provide articles regarding sports information work as an ongoing feature. For example, *College Athletic Management* has a "Promotion and Publicity" feature in every issue. Specific topics vary from issue to issue. For instance, Schuttrow (1990) described how to make a one-person department work while Boeh (1989) provided suggestions on how to sell ads in game programs. It is good information from people working within the field, but hardly a scholarly examination of the issues confronting sports information personnel.

Sports Information Research

If published research is used to gauge the amount of study devoted to the sports information department within the university environment, then one is forced to conclude that little attention has been given the subject. The research that has been conducted has been relatively simple but useful. It is, at least, a starting point.

Winn (1995) reported on a survey of 83 NCAA Division I-A institutions regarding budgets, staffing and salaries. The results of this descriptive study provided valuable information to sports information practitioners, but the project did not generate theory in the sports information field.

In similar fashion, Jolesh (1976) wrote about his survey of a group of sports information directors at the NCAA Division I, Division II and Division III levels in an attempt to gather the basic information needed to set up a new university sports information department. Jolesh presented data regarding office area, budget and salary, printing and publishing of brochures and programs, job duties, press box services and statistical services. While addressing public relations work for both men's and women's athletics, Jolesh (1976) gave additional consideration to the unique needs of women's programs. As is often the case, the findings presented by Jolesh (1976) brought up as many questions as answers. "Perhaps the key question...is why try to set up a sports information office. Is it to achieve greater recognition for an athletic program or is another

incentive involved? What are the objectives of the program? Is the (sports information director) to be an arm of the overall public relations program at the college or the promotions arm of the athletic department?" (Jolesh, 1976).

Computers and their application in the sports information field were the focus of a 1993 study commissioned by the College Sports Information Directors of America. Although the sampling technique failed to yield a representative group, Powers (1993) presented results which at least listed some of the possibilities regarding computer usage. Data relating to hardware, software and amount of use was presented. Powers (1993) also shared the respondents' self-described level of computer expertise.

Gender equity in sports information seems to be the only topic within the field which has received at least a minimum amount of scholarly attention. Cody (1985) described an investigation of employment options open to women in sport over a period of more than 10 years. The sports information director's position was among those covered. Cody (1985) reported decreasing employment opportunities for women in areas other than athletic training while also discussing possible causes of the trend and recommendations for change.

Chrietzberg (1988) presented data regarding the views of women in sports leadership positions on gender equity in athletic programs at a variety of levels. Females working in sports information were among those surveyed. Respondents generally favored equal

funding and equal promotion of women's sports regardless of public interest, revenue potential and media demand (Chrietzberg, 1988).

Kast (1992) tested the perceptions of college athletic directors regarding the hireability of a hypothetical male or female sports information candidate based on the same letter of application, resume and writing sample. Findings indicated no gender bias against women existed in the the first phase of the hiring process. In fact, the reverse proved true based on some of the criteria Kast included in the hireability questionnaire.

Public Relations Roles Research

It may be argued that while little attention has been devoted to studying the sports information field specifically, a significant amount of research has been conducted within the larger context of public relations. A number of scholars have examined public relations work by considering the roles which public relations practitioners play.

A good starting point in the discussion of self-described public relations roles is the work of Broom and Smith (1979) who developed a typology of roles in an effort to examine client satisfaction as it relates to the role played by consulting public relations practitioners. In structuring their study, Broom and Smith developed five practitioner role models related to the tasks in which practitioners may engage and the behaviors they may exhibit. The fifth role model was ultimately dropped because of its problematic vagaries. The models were gleaned from the literature relating to the roles which public relations

practitioners may play in given situations. Though four of the five models were introduced in chapter I. more information on all the models is offered here. They are:

1. Expert Prescriber: This model was defined as "one in which the consultant operates as an authority on both the public relations problem and the solution which should be implemented" (Broom and Smith, 1979, p. 49). The role may be played by an organization's resident experts on public relations, individuals so credible in their area of expertise that management delegates all responsibility for public relations matters to them.

2. Technical Services Provider: Practitioners in this role were described as "consultants who handled the technical aspects of producing the finished product while the clients analyzed the available information and the problem content decisions" (Broom and Smith, 1979, p. 50). These practitioners possess special skills which may include writing, photography, graphic design, broadcast production, publication production, research, event management and fund-raising. They are not involved in making public relations policy decisions, but often are the ones who carry out the plan.

3. Communication Facilitator: This role model "describes those aspects of public relations work in which the practitioner operates as a 'go-between' or information mediator. This role involves maintaining a continuous two-way flow of information" between the organization and its constituent groups" (Broom and Smith, 1979, p. 50).

4. Problem-Solving Process Facilitator: This role places the practitioner in "a collaborative relationship in which the consultant helps the client apply a systematic problem-solving

process"(Broom and Smith, 1979, p. 51). Practitioners playing this role walk management through the process of defining problems and implementing solutions. They rely on management's expertise in regard to the organization and its publics, while management depends on the practitioner to keep them on track in following the plan.

5. Acceptant Legitimizer: This is "a nondirective, supportive role" (Broom and Smith, 1979, p. 53). Practitioners operating in this role are neither involved in making public relations decisions nor are they consulted for any expertise they may have to offer. Their function is to back whatever policy decisions are made by others.

As previously mentioned, the acceptant legitimizer role was not included in Broom's ongoing work, and it was not utilized by others conducting research relating to practitioner roles. A primary reason for this omission was that the acceptant legitimizer role "neither intervenes in the relationship between the organization and its environment, nor does it provide communication skills" (Johnson & Acharya, 1982). In other words, so few specific acts relate to the role of the "yes-man" that the role was deemed insignificant for additional investigation.

Broom and Smith (1979) noted that most public relations practitioners play a variety of roles in the course of their professional work, but they contended that nearly all operate out of a dominant role model. Others have since agreed with his assessment (Dozier, 1981; Dozier & Gottesman, 1982; Broom & Dozier, 1986). Specifically, Broom and Dozier (1986, p. 39) noted:

> A practitioner plays all four roles in varying degrees. Therefore, each practitioner's 'role profile' can be described in terms of the activities making up the four roles. The office of a public relations practitioner incorporates multiple organizational roles. Each practitioner, however, plays one role with greater frequency than any of the other roles. As a result, each practitioner is classified in terms of a dominant role.

Broom continued his research on organizational roles played by public relations practitioners by developing a test which gauged practitioner behaviors. Specifically, the questionnaire dealt with specific tasks in which public relations practitioners may engage. The tasks listed on the questionnaire related directly to the roles which practitioners may play within their organizations. The tool was derived in collaboration with public relations practitioners at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. After a successful pretest, the test underwent additional modification at the 1978 Midwest Public Relations Conference in Madison. A final pretest produced only minor changes. The test allowed Broom to survey practitioners and, based on their responses, describe them as playing one of four roles--expert prescriber, communication technician, communication facilitator or problem-solving process facilitator.

Although the primary intent of Broom's follow-up work was to compare the self-described roles of male and female public relations practitioners, the data generated an interesting finding independent of the gender issue. Broom (1982) found a high correlation among the expert prescriber, communication facilitator and problem-solving process facilitator roles. In other words, the practitioners practically thought of themselves in terms of only two models--the communication technician or a combination of the other three

roles. As mentioned in chapter I, this conclusion received support from others (Dozier, 1981; Reagan, Anderson, Sumner & Hill, 1990).

One scholar who endorsed Broom's idea that only two roles--manager and technician--may apply to all public relations practitioners was Dozier (1981) who continued research on practitioner roles by providing additional analysis of Broom's data. Dozier applied factor analysis to preexisting data in order to derive organizational roles. He found four factors, the first two of which were similar to Broom's role typology. They were:

1. Communication Manager: This role was "one of solving problems, of proactive and systematic planning. What distinguishes this role as a management role is the emphasis on decision-making and accountability" (Dozier, 1981, p. 11).

2. Communication Technician: "Practitioners playing the communication technician role are emersed in the mechanics of producing brochures, pamphlets, news releases, publications of all kinds, photographs and graphics. They are performing a relatively technical task, implementing communication decisions and plans made by others" (Dozier, 1981, p. 13).

3. Media Relations: This role describes the practitioner who "is skilled in relations with the mass media and serves as a conduit back to the organization about mass media coverage" (Dozier, 1981, p. 14).

4. Communication Liaison: This role "stresses interpersonal activities. Further, the communication liaison role appears related to the problem-solving process in an advisory

capacity" (Dozier, 1981, p. 14-15). However, practitioners in this role neither make decisions nor are they held accountable for the outcomes of those decisions.

Subsequent work by Dozier on different populations failed to produce the four roles originally described based on his analysis of Broom's data (Broom & Dozier, 1986). Neither the media relations role nor the communication liaison role held up in examinations of other groups of public relations practitioners. However, the communication manager and the communication technician roles did prove to be stable across populations. This finding was consistent with the conclusions drawn by Broom in his ongoing work on roles (Broom, 1982).

Broom's survey tool and resulting role typology was also tested by researchers at Washington State University and the University of Texas (Reagan, Anderson, Sumner & Hill, 1990). They applied Broom's role scale questionnaire to a population of practitioners in the state of Washington in an attempt to determine if the tool would produce the four roles first described by Broom and Smith (1979). Results of their tests did not produce a four-role typology. Like Broom (1982), they found high correlation among the expert prescriber, communication facilitator and problem-solving process facilitator roles. While the quartet of researchers did find a three-factor solution possible, they noted the third factor explained little variance. The data did produce a two-factor solution which clearly differentiated between a managerial role and a technician role. The authors suggested that unless refinements were made in Broom's survey tool, then it could only be counted on to

test for two different roles across a variety of populations (Reagan. Anderson. Sumner & Hill, 1990).

While the studies described thus far have been primary in the development of public relations role theory, it should be noted that other scholars have utilized the concept of practitioner roles in their studies of other aspects of public relations work. As previously noted, researchers related public relations roles to gender differences among practitioners (Broom, 1982). A great deal of work has been done in other areas.

In regard to the relationship of role to client satisfaction, Broom and Smith (1979) reported that the problem-solving process facilitator received the highest rating. The expert prescriber and technical services provider were both ranked higher than the communication facilitator, and the acceptant legitimizer was rated lowest in client satisfaction.

Dozier and Gottesman (1982) considered the relationship between practitioners' roles within their organizations and their individual belief systems regarding their profession. They correlated Dozier's four roles--communication technician, communication manager, communication liaison and media relations specialist--with four practitioner types. They reported that practitioners who value spontaneity, distrust management and believe public relations is an artistic endeavor and not a scientific one positively correlated with the communication technician role. They also discovered that practitioners with a high commitment to their organization and to improving their profession through a proactive

approach of research and management positively correlated with the communication manager and communication liaison roles.

Practitioner roles as they relate to decision-making within the organization was the subject of research conducted by Johnson and Acharya (1982). Using the roles developed by Broom and Smith, they examined the degree to which practitioners were involved in making various decisions for their organizations. Significant findings were that decision making at the problem identification and policy levels positively correlated with the problem-solving process facilitator role, while a negative correlation existed between policy decisions and the technician role.

Broom and Dozier (1986) continued their work on public relations roles by conducting a follow-up survey of the practitioners first examined by Broom in 1979. Their purpose was to track career advancement to see how it related to role changes, salary changes, participation in management and job satisfaction. They also compared data for men and women. Broom and Dozier reported four findings. First, they noted that significant differences existed between the salaries for men and women, even when they played the same roles and had similar backgrounds. They also reported income differences based on roles with managers earning significantly higher salaries than technicians. Third, those practitioners who moved from the technician role into the manager role increased in job satisfaction, while those who remained in the technician role were not necessarily dissatisfied. No managers shifted to the technician role. Finally, the authors noted that

"annual income and participation in management decision-making increase when practitioners change from the technician role to the managerial role and that this change occurs most frequently for men" (Broom & Dozier, 1986, p. 55).

Judd (1987) noted two ways of examining the activities of public relations practitioners and their organizations. The first focused on the roles of practitioners while the second dealt with a typology of organizations. In seeking to find how practitioner role and organization type related to the use of formal research, Judd reported two findings. One was that practitioners who described themselves as managers were much more likely to utilize formal research than those who described themselves as technicians. The second was that managers were more likely to be found working in organizations which maintained a two-way pattern of communication with their various publics while technicians were more often found in organizations utilizing a one-way pattern of communication with their stakeholder groups.

An organization's environment may be described in ways other than communication patterns. Variables such as threat and certainty have also been related to practitioner roles (Acharya, 1983). Roles research "does not explain why and under what conditions behaviors associated with the role models occur," observed Acharya (1983, p. 1). In an attempt to address that problem, Acharya surveyed practitioners to ascertain their roles and the variables they used to describe their environment. The notions of "threat" and "stability" were associated with practitioner roles. "Threat" dealt with the number of factors in the

environment which mandated consideration during public relations decision-making. "Stability" dealt with the degree in which those factors fluctuated. The author described the communication technician as being most likely to be found in environments which are stable and non-threatening; the communication facilitator in dynamic yet non-threatening settings; the problem-solving process facilitator in stable and threatening environments; and the expert prescriber in dynamic, threatening situations.

Culbertson (1985) addressed the question of how practitioner roles were related to educators at higher education institutions in terms of the way they taught their public relations students. Educators were surveyed regarding the degree to which they emphasized preparation for various public relations tasks in the teaching of their classes. Factor analysis of the data revealed that the primary role which educators were preparing their students to play was a management position which combined elements of the expert prescriber, communication facilitator and problem-solving process facilitator models. Educators were also found to perceive two separate technician models, one narrow in its exclusive focus on the technical demands of producing messages and the other broad in its emphasis on writing, publication production and media relations skills.

Turk and Russell (1991) also considered the process by which future public relations practitioners are educated. Their survey of Public Relations Society of America members noted that managers stressed the importance of problem-solving skills for managers. The authors recommended that while public relations curriculums should continue to stress the

basic mass communication skills which allow students to get entry-level jobs in the field. the education process should also devote significant attention to problem solving, planning and people management skills.

The problem of encroachment on the public relations function by other sectors of an organization, particularly fund-raisers, was the topic of a study by Kelly (1992). Findings indicated that while such intrusion was not uncommon, it was less likely to take place in settings where public relations practitioners operated primarily out of the manager role. In other words, public relations types who were part of the management team were better able to protect their turf.

All of the studies previously described utilized at least the two dominant roles developed by Broom. While many used the roles questionnaire developed by Broom, some did not. Ryan (1987) equated the roles developed by Broom and Smith to jobs at specific levels on the corporate ladder, surveying those in managerial, technical and vice presidential positions. Judd (1987) classified practitioners in roles based on their responses to just two questions. Acharya (1983) used just one question to classify practitioners according to role. Others have departed from the Broom model in their examinations of public relations practitioners' roles.

For instance, researchers from several Midwestern universities developed 19 "global task descriptors" to serve as the basis for questions asked of senior communication executives throughout the region (Cottone, Wakefield, Cottone & North, 1985). Analysis

of their surveys revealed six factors which described the major functions of the executives. They were: large-scale events, communication with publics, management, media/community relations, logistics and client relations.

Ferguson (1979) developed eight roles for public relations practitioners based on her survey of business communicators. Her survey instrument listed 45 tasks, and factor analysis of her data revealed the following roles: problem-solver manager, journalist/technical communicator, researcher, staff manager, good will ambassador, meeting organizer, personnel/industrial relations and public/community relations.

In spite of these exceptions, this study utilized the models and tool developed by Broom and Smith, who are recognized as being at the forefront in the development of public relations practitioner role models (Newsom, Scott & VanSlyke, 1993; Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1985; Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

Summary

The development of theory in sport management has not significantly extended into the area of sport public relations. Many factors make the work of the college or university sports information director unique (Mullin, 1985), but little scholarly attention has been devoted to the subject. A strong theory base in public relations role theory served as the basis for beginning to address questions regarding sport public relations in higher education institutions.

III. Research Methods

This study sought to answer five questions. They were:

Research Question 1: *What were the self-described current roles of sports information practitioners?*

Research Question 2: *What characteristics of sports information practitioners and their institutions were related to the current roles they play?*

Research Question 3: *What differences existed between the self-described roles which sports information practitioners reported they currently play and the roles they would ideally play?*

Research Question 4: *How did the current roles relate to job satisfaction?*

Research Question 5: *How did the discrepancies which existed between current and ideal roles relate to job satisfaction?*

Design

This descriptive study utilized a survey to garner responses from sports information practitioners at NCAA Division I-A institutions regarding the topics of interest. Details on questionnaire content and mailing procedures follow in ensuing subsections.

Since this project concerned itself with the self-described roles of its respondents, utilization of a questionnaire was an appropriate method. It was less expensive than other methods of data gathering and was uniform in its presentation of questions. A questionnaire also gave subjects the opportunity to respond in an anonymous fashion (Selltiz, 1976).

As mentioned previously, the foundation for this project was the role typology developed by Broom, who made extensive use of questionnaires to test practitioners regarding their self-described roles (Broom & Dozier, 1986; Broom, 1982). This study was structured to follow a similar approach.

The Instrument

The questionnaire to be utilized in this study contained three sections.

The first section contained 10 questions pertaining to the practitioners and the institutions where they work. These questions asked about the practitioner's job title, related experience, educational background, gender, age and salary. The items relating to institutional characteristics concerned enrollment, number of varsity sports offered, sports

information budget, size of sports information staff and institution type (public. private or public/private).

The second section of the questionnaire was an adapted version of Broom's roles survey. Its purpose was to question sports information practitioners regarding their current roles and the roles they would prefer to play. The 27 items all had to do with specific tasks in which the practitioners may have engaged. Each task related to a specific role. Eight items described tasks conducted by technicians. Nineteen described management tasks with seven specifically relating to the expert prescriber role, six relating specifically to the communication facilitator role and six relating to the problem-solving process facilitator role.

Dozier and Broom (1995) noted that a survey approach was appropriate because roles are task-driven. Managers engage in management tasks more often than technical tasks. Technicians engage in technical tasks more frequently than managerial tasks. Given this method of deducing role, it is logical that the Broom questionnaire and this survey utilized a Likert-type response scale. For each item listed, respondents were asked to circle an answer which best represented the frequency in which they engaged in the task listed. The minimum response, "1," indicated never. The maximum response, "7," indicated always.

The Broom survey was adapted in a limited way to make it specific to sports information directors. For instance, the Broom item "I make the public relations policy decisions." was revised to read "I make the sports information policy decisions."

Since the theoretical basis of this project was largely Broom's four-role typology. Dr. Broom was contacted in January 1995 to obtain permission to use the roles survey. Preliminary permission was granted on January 23, 1995. Professor Broom was later contacted with specific details of the project and final permission to adapt the survey was granted on February 21, 1997.

The final section of the questionnaire contained five questions relating to practitioner satisfaction. Each took a different approach to the notion of satisfaction, questioning respondents regarding the degree to which they enjoyed their work, felt their work challenged them, gained a sense of accomplishment from their work, felt their work was important and found their work personally satisfying. All five items were taken from the work of Broom and Dozier (1986), and all five utilized a Likert-type response scale with "1" being the least and "7" being the most.

Pilot Work

The instrument to be employed in this project was new in the sense that its component parts had never been combined in quite this fashion or with these revisions. Since the survey tool was an adaptation, a pilot study was conducted in an attempt to gain a sense of the questionnaire's validity and reliability.

While examinations for content validity are limited in that they offer no statistical evidence (Thomas & Nelson, 1985), it seemed important to ask Broom what he thought of

the revised survey. He graciously agreed to take a look. In a telephone conversation on February 21, 1997, Broom indicated that he believed that both the roles portion and satisfaction section of the survey were fine and needed no revision. He did, however, suggest changing several questions in the first section. Questions relating to experience, age, salary, enrollment, number of varsity sports and sports information budget were originally multiple choice with a variety of categories listed as possible responses. Broom suggested making those questions open to allow for more sophisticated methods of analysis, and that recommendation was implemented in both the surveys which went to the pilot group and the test population.

Once Broom's recommendations had been incorporated, the tool was ready to be sent to a pilot group. While few problems in testing for reliability were anticipated, it seemed desirable to play it safe and protect the project's sample of NCAA Division I-A sports information practitioners from premature exposure to the survey. Therefore, the pilot study was sent to NCAA Division II sports information directors in the South Central region of the United States. While these individuals differed from the ultimate survey population in terms of level of competition and geographic dispersion, they were similar enough to serve as a pilot group because they are public relations practitioners serving in a sport-specific environment. The pilot group consisted of 38 sports information practitioners, a number roughly equivalent to 10% of the ultimate test population.

Reliability may be established by administering the questionnaire to a pilot group and then retesting the same group (Thomas & Nelson, 1985). Data from the test and the retest may be compared to see if significant differences exist in the pilot group's set of responses. In this case, the questionnaire was first sent to the pilot group March 15, 1997, along with a cover letter indicating that this was the first step in a preliminary study and asking that they respond promptly. The survey was sent to the same group again March 29, 1997, along with a cover letter asking that they respond even if they had already filled out and returned the first questionnaire. Surveys in both mailings were coded to allow for matching when analyzing results.

Response was somewhat encouraging. The first mailing generated 17 responses for a 45% rate of return. The second mailing netted 11 responses for a 29% return rate. Four practitioners filled out and returned surveys from both the first and second mailings. Overall, 24 of the 38 pilot subjects responded, yielding a 63% rate of return.

Unfortunately, test-retest correlation proved to be of little value given that only four pairs of responses were available for analysis. While not always statistically significant at the .05 level, 23 of the 54 (27 items, current and ideal responses) could be categorized as showing high positive correlation (.70-.90) to very high positive correlates (>.90), according to rough guide proposed by Guilford (1956). Several items yielded low correlation and a couple produced negative correlation; however, given the low number of

pairs available for analysis, greater stock was placed in the Cronbach alpha coefficient of reliability analysis.

The Cronbach alpha coefficient of reliability is a measure of internal consistency which indicates the proportion of observed-score variance which may be attributed to non-error variance. The Cronbach alpha is also useful because "other things being equal, a less accurate score is less valid" (Cronbach, 1970, pp. 165-166).

The pilot project yielded acceptable coefficient alpha scores. For those items which related to the current frequency in which practitioners engaged in various tasks, Cronbach alpha coefficients by role were: expert prescriber, .785; communication technician, .662; communication facilitator, .765; and problem-solving process facilitator, .901. Items relating to the frequency with which practitioners would ideally engage in various tasks yielded the following Cronbach alpha coefficients by role: expert prescriber, .611; communication technician, .422; communication process facilitator, .854; and problem-solving process facilitator, .909.

As promised in the cover letter, a summary of results was sent to the pilot study respondents June 3, 1997.

Some Additional Revisions

While no changes were made in the questions following the completion of the pilot study, several changes were made in the questionnaire's format. Dillman (1978) offered a

variety of suggestions regarding the way in which a mail questionnaire may be constructed. The first revision was based on Dillman's recommendation that questions be ordered according to their usefulness. In this case, that meant placing the role items section first. followed by the satisfaction section and then the descriptive characteristics section. The order of the questions within the sections remained unchanged. Questions asked in the role and satisfaction sections were left in the same order that Broom had used (Broom & Dozier, 1986; Broom, 1982).

A second recommendation made by Dillman (1978) which was incorporated had to do with the design of the front page. Dillman recommended an attractive design which incorporates not only directions but a title. Those changes were made as well.

A final change in the survey's construction came as a result of a June 4, 1997, conversation with Northern Illinois University's Keith Lambrecht, who has utilized surveys extensively in his work with those in athletic management. Lambrecht suggested shifting to a booklet without staples format in order to avoid the intimidation that may come from seeing a stack of pages stapled together and the accidental skipping of pages. Therefore, the survey sent to the test population was copied on 11 inch X 17 inch sheets of paper and folded to make four-page booklets.

The Subjects

As noted earlier, this study was delimited in that its focus was sports information practitioners working at NCAA Division I-A institutions. These individuals are involved with intercollegiate sport at its highest level and are relatively easy to contact given their membership in professional organizations.

Specifically, the survey population consisted of 352 NCAA I-A sports information practitioners. They were members of the College Sports Information Directors of America in 1996-97 and represented the vast majority of sports information professionals working at that level.

Procedures

The survey was staged in a three-stage, two-week process that included the sending of an advance card, the mailing of the questionnaire and the mailing of a follow-up card. Morton (1995) has utilized the three-step process effectively, and Dillman (1978) has recommended spacing out multiple mailings by at least a week. Accordingly, the first stage of the process was the mailing of a preview card, advising the survey subjects that the questionnaire would be sent in a week and encouraging them to respond to the survey in a timely manner. The advance cards were mailed on June 18, 1997. A copy of the advance card may be found in Appendix A.

The second stage of the process was a mailer which included the questionnaire, a cover letter and a self-addressed stamped envelope in which to return the completed questionnaire. The mailer was sent to the subjects on June 25, 1997, one week after the sending of the preview information. The cover letter to all respondents briefly described the project and its importance, and guaranteed the confidentiality of their responses. It also asked the potential respondents to fill out the questionnaire and return it within five days of receiving the mailer. A copy of the cover letter is in Appendix B, and the survey is in Appendix C.

The third and final stage in the process was the mailing of a follow-up card on July 2, 1997. This card served as an urgent reminder to the survey respondents that if they had not already responded to the survey, then they were requested to do so immediately. A copy of the follow-up card may be found in Appendix D.

Statistical Treatment

Research Question 1: What were the self-described current roles of sports information practitioners?

The starting point in the analysis of data was to see what roles were played by the responding sports information practitioners. The procedure for determining a practitioner's

primary role was relatively simple. Scores for each task on the survey were grouped according to the roles with which they corresponded. Mean scores for each role was then calculated. The highest mean score indicated the practitioner's primary role. (Broom and Dozier, 1986; Broom, 1982) For instance, if the mean score for the items relating to the technician role was a 5.2 while the means for the communication facilitator, problem-solving process facilitator and expert prescribers roles were 4.1, 4.3 and 4.6 respectively, then the technician role was considered primary.

Following the determination of primary roles, correlation techniques were utilized to examine the relationships among the role scales. The Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation assesses the relationship between pairs of measurements with each score coming from one unit within the sample (Harris, 1985). In this case, the ability of all four mean role scores were examined in regard to the way they varied together either positively or negatively (Williams, 1992). Based on past research which indicates that only two primary roles (manager and technician) exist, it was anticipated that high positive correlations among the communication facilitator, problem-solving process facilitator and expert prescriber roles would be found. (Reagan, Anderson, Sumner & Hill, 1990; Broom, 1982).

Research Question 2: What characteristics of sports information practitioners and their institutions were related to the current roles they play?

The relationship between primary role and the various individual and institutional characteristics was examined by utilizing the Student's *t* test and single factor analysis of variance. The *t* test evaluates the significance of two independent sample means (Harris, 1985) and was utilized to analyze dichotomies such as male vs. female. Analysis of variance differs from the *t* test in that it deals with more than two levels of the independent variable (Williams, 1992). ANOVA was conducted to compare group means in categories with three or more variables such as job title.

Research Question 3: What differences existed between the self-described roles which sports information practitioners reported they currently play and the roles they would ideally play?

The relationship between current self-described roles and preferred roles was explored by utilizing the Student's *t* test. As previously mentioned, the *t* test evaluates the significance of two independent sample means (Harris, 1985). In this case, the difference in means between self-described and preferred roles was assessed.

Research Question 4: How did the current roles relate to job satisfaction?

The relationship between current and relative job satisfaction was to be explored by utilizing analysis of covariance. The ANCOVA treatment is like analysis of variance in that it compares the measure of the variance of the survey sample means with an indirect estimate of how the means would be expected to vary in a normally-distributed random sample. However, it also controls for additional variables which may affect the relationship between the dependent and independent variable (Williams, 1992). Specifically, the relationships between current self-described role and satisfaction could have been affected by demographic variables such as experience or income, although as chapter IV details, that proved to not be the case. Analysis of covariance provides a method for making adjustments to offset those additional considerations when necessary. When ANCOVA isn't necessary, ANOVA may be utilized to test for differences among two or more groups.

Based on past research, it was anticipated that relative satisfaction would be higher for practitioners operating out of the management roles or out of the problem-solving process facilitator, communication facilitator and the expert prescriber roles than for those in the technician role.

Research Question 5: How did the discrepancies which existed between current and ideal roles relate to job satisfaction?

Differences between current and ideal roles were calculated by subtracting the current role score from the ideal role score for each practitioner. Correlation techniques were then utilized to determine the relationship between the gaps for each role and the items relating to job satisfaction.

IV. Data Analysis

Response rate to the survey was strong. Of the 352 surveys sent to the sports information practitioners, 187 were completed and returned for a 53.1% rate of return. An additional six surveys were returned because the addressee was no longer working at the address listed on the envelope. If those subjects are removed from the pool, the response rate was calculated at 54.0%.

It should also be noted that 105 of the 187 surveys returned were not completed in their entirety. In most instances, only one question was left unanswered, that being the one regarding the sports information budget. Those omissions were relatively easy to handle. However, 20 practitioners left blank at least one task item relating to their current professional role and seven more left blank at least one item relating to their ideal role. In such cases some calculations were made, but there was no attempt to complete the full roles analysis for those individuals. For example, if a respondent answered all the task item questions except one relating to the expert prescriber role, neither a mean score for the

expert prescriber role was calculated nor was there an attempt to ascertain which professional role was dominant for that individual.

Descriptive data relating to the respondents are detailed in the following table.

Table 1.
Characteristics of Sports Information Practitioners and their Institutions

Variable	Percent	*n*
Title		187
Assistant Athletic Director	15.0	28
Sports Information Director	20.9	39
Associate Sports Information Director	14.4	27
Assistant Sports Information Director	40.6	76
Other	9.1	17
Gender		187
Female	29.9	56
Male	70.1	131
Education Level		187
High School	0.5	1
College Bachelor's	63.1	118
College Master's	36.4	68
Type of Institution		187
Public	83.4	156
Private	15.0	28
Public/Private	1.6	3

Variable	*M*	Range	*n*
Age	34.90	24-57	187
Years of Experience	11.71	2-32	186
Salary	$35,633	$16,000-69,700	182
Number of Varsity Sports	19.39	6-33	187
Staff Size	4.62	1-14	185
Sports Information Budget	$330,241	$70,000-$3,350,000	92

The remainder of the chapter is organized based on the five research questions listed in chapters I and III. A .05 significance level was utilized in determining statistical significance.

Research Question 1: What were the self-described roles of sports information practitioners?

Alpha coefficients for the current role items were acceptable. Specifically, they were communication facilitator, .732; expert prescriber, .884; problem-solving process facilitator, .859; and technician, .6332.

Based on Broom's four-role typology and related task items, 56.1% (n=105) of the respondents were classified as predominantly playing the technician role. Expert prescriber was the primary classification for an additional 21.4% (n=40) while problem-solving process facilitator and communication process facilitator were the primary roles for an additional 8.0% (n=15) and 3.2% (n=6) respectively.

Unfortunately, 11.2% of the respondents could not be classified because of missing data. If that group which did not fully complete the task items is omitted, 63.3% may be classified as technicians, 24.1% expert prescribers, 9.0% problem-solving process facilitators and 3.6% communication process facilitators.

As discussed earlier, it has been noted that the four-role typology may be condensed into two--manager and technician (Dozier, 1981; Broom, 1982; Reagan, Anderson,

Sumner & Hill, 1990). Results of this survey utilizing the Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation indicated that a significant positive correlation existed between all the pairings of the four roles. Results are summarized in the following table.

Table 2.
Correlation Between Role Scores

	Communication Facilitator	Expert Prescriber	Problem Solving Facilitator	Technician
Communication Facilitator	--- ---	r=.7680** n=178	r=.8261** n=174	r=.2000** n=175
Expert Prescriber		--- ---	r=.8348** n=178	r=.1604* n=179
Problem Solving Facilitator			--- ---	r=.1527* n=174
Technician				--- ---

Note. $*p < .05$ $**p < .01$

Given those somewhat unexpected findings, additional analysis was employed in an attempt to determine if there were indeed significant statistical differences among the four roles. The statistical tool utilized was analysis of variance since it is able to test for differences among two or more means (Williams, 1992).

One-way ANOVA was utilized to test for differences in role scores among the primary role groups. For instance, were there differences in the technician role scores based on practitioners' classifications into primary role groups? Table 3 summarizes the data which address that question.

Table 3.
Differences in Role Scores Based on Primary Role

Role	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*
Communication Facilitator				
Between Groups	3	79.24	26.41	40.99**
Within Groups	162	104.37	.64	
Total	165	183.61		
Expert Prescriber				
Between Groups	3	123.24	41.08	40.73**
Within Groups	162	163.40	1.01	
Total	165	286.64		
Problem Solving Facilitator				
Between Groups	3	117.91	39.30	32.9190**
Within Groups	162	193.42	1.19	
Total	165	311.33		
Technician				
Between Groups	3	8.35	2.78	5.1362**
Within Groups	162	87.76	.54	
Total	165	96.11		

Note. $^{**}p < .01$

As indicated above, one-way ANOVA revealed significant differences existed in all four scores based on primary role. Post-hoc analysis utilizing the Bonferroni multiple comparison test yielded additional findings. The Bonferroni method tests for differences between all combination of groups while accounting for the number of comparisons being made (Norusis, 1995).

A post-hoc test on expert prescriber scores found significant differences between technicians and the three management-related roles--communication facilitators. expert prescribers and problem-solving process facilitators. Likewise, the Bonferroni test on the communication process facilitator scores indicated significant differences between the technicians and the three management-related roles. It also found significant differences between expert prescribers and communication process facilitators.

In the case of the problem-solving process facilitator scores, post-hoc analysis utilizing the Bonferroni test found significant differences existing between the technician and all three management-related roles. As for technician scores, a post-hoc test found differences existing between those practitioners classified as technicians and those classified as expert prescribers.

Based on these findings, subsequent data analysis was based on Broom's four-role typology--communication facilitator, expert prescriber, problem-solving process facilitator and technician.

Research Question 2: What characteristics of sports information practitioners and their institutions were related to the current roles they play?

The final section of the questionnaire asked six questions relating to the practitioners' characteristics and five questions relating to their institutions or their athletic programs. In regard to the practitioners' characteristics, the variable of job title produced several

significant findings. The following table indicates distribution of practitioners by primary role in each job.

Table 4.
Distribution of Practitioners by Primary Role in Various Job Titles

Role	Assistant Athletic Director	Sports Info. Director	Associate Sports Info. Director	Assistant Sports Info. Director	Other	Total
Communication Facilitator	1	0	0	4	1	6
(%)	(0.6)	(0)	(0)	(2.4)	(0.6)	(3.6)
Expert Prescriber	12	16	2	3	7	40
(%)	(7.2)	(9.6)	(1.2)	(1.8)	(4.2)	(24.1)
Problem Solving Facilitator	4	5	2	2	2	15
(%)	(2.4)	(3.0)	(2.4)	(2.4)	(2.4)	(9.0)
Technician	9	14	20	56	6	105
(%)	(5.4)	(8.4)	(12.0)	(33.7)	(3.6)	(63.3)
Total	26	35	24	65	16	166
(%)	(15.7)	(21.1)	(14.5)	(39.2)	(9.6)	(100.0)

As for differences in role scores by title, one-way analysis of variance indicated no significant differences in the technician role scores based on the five categories of titles. However, significant differences were found for each of the three management-related role scores. Table 5 summarizes these findings.

Table 5.
Differences in Role Scores Based on Job Title

Role	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*
Communication Facilitator				
Between Groups	4	48.4955	12.1239	13.8814**
Within Groups	175	152.8430	.8734	
Total	179	201.3385		
Expert Prescriber				
Between Groups	4	96.5100	24.1275	19.1482**
Within Groups	179	225.5467	1.2600	
Total	183	322.0567		
Problem Solving Facilitator				
Between Groups	4	103.9959	25.9990	19.7650**
Within Groups	174	228.8805	1.3154	
Total	178	332.8765		
Technician				
Between Groups	4	1.5881	.3970	.7112
Within Groups	176	98.2476	.5582	
Total	180	99.8356		

Note. $^{**}p < .01$

In the case of communication process facilitator scores, a Bonferroni post-hoc test indicated that significant differences existed between the mean role score for assistant sports information directors and three other groups--associate sports information directors, others and assistant athletic directors. A significant difference also existed between the mean score for associate sports information directors and assistant athletic directors.

As for the expert prescriber role, post-hoc tests utilizing the Bonferroni method found significant differences between assistant sports information directors and all four other groups of title holders and between associate sports information directors and assistant athletic directors.

Finally, in looking at problem-solving process facilitator role scores based on job title, post-hoc tests utilizing the Bonferroni method found significant differences between assistant sports information directors and all four other groups and between associate sports information directors and assistant athletic directors.

As stated in chapter III, an independent sample *t*-test was utilized to check for differences in role scores based on gender. Results indicated that mean role scores for men in the three management-related roles were significantly higher than those for women. Specifically, men posted higher means for the communication facilitator role (t=-2.51, df=178, p=.013), the expert prescriber role (t=-2.57, df=182, p=.011) and the problem-solving process facilitator role (t=-2.96, df=177, p=.003). While the mean score for the technician score was slightly higher for women than men, no statistically significant difference was found.

One-way ANOVA indicated there were no differences in any of the role scores based on highest level of education obtained.

Correlation techniques were utilized to examine the relationships between the role scores and variables such as age, years of sports information experience and salary. Age

was significantly positively correlated with all three management-related roles--the communication facilitator (r=.3276, n=180, p<.001), the expert prescriber (r=.3217, n=184, p<.001) and the problem-solving process facilitator role (r=.3872, n=179, p<.001). Age was significantly negatively correlated with the technician role (r=-.2607, n=818, p<.001).

Years of full-time sports information experience were significantly correlated with all four role scores. It was positively correlated with the communication facilitator role (r=.3375, n= 179, p<.001), the expert prescriber role (r=.3485, n=183, p<.001) and the problem-solving process facilitator role (r=.4085, n=178, p<.001). Years of experience were negatively correlated with the technician role (r=-.2679, n=180, p<.001).

As for salary, it showed a significant negative correlation with technician roles scores (r=-.2804, n=176, p<.001) and a positive correlation with all three management-related roles--communication facilitator (r=.4276, n=175, p<.001), expert prescriber (r=.5164, n=179, p<.001) and problem-solving process facilitator (r=.5211, n=174, p<.001).

Looking at institutional and athletic program-related characteristics, one-way ANOVA yielded no significant differences in role scores based on the type of institution in which the practitioners worked.

Correlation techniques found no significant correlation between enrollment and any of the three management-related role scores. However, enrollment was found to have a significant negative relationship with technician role scores (r=-.1572, n=181, p=.035).

As for athletic-program related variables, there were no significant correlations between number of sports offered and any of the four role scores, nor were there any significant correlations between number of full-time members on the sports information staff and any of the role scores. Finally, there were no significant correlations between amount of the annual sports information budget and any of the four role scores.

Research Question 3: What differences existed between the self-described roles which sports information practitioners reported they currently play and the roles they would ideally play?

Paired-sample *t* tests were used to gauge differences between self-described and ideal roles and significant differences were found in three of the four roles. First, the mean score for the frequency in which practitioners would ideally engage in communication facilitator activities was significantly higher than the mean in which they currently engage in those types of activities (t=16.61, df=170, p<.001). Likewise, the ideal score for expert prescriber was significantly higher than that for the current expert prescriber (t=14.28, df=175, p<.001). Finally, the score for the ideal level of problem-solving process facilitator activity was significantly higher than the score for the current frequency of that activity (t=16.32, df=171, p<.001).

There was no statistical difference between the ideal and current technician role scores for the population as a whole, and additional analysis dividing the respondents by primary

role revealed similar findings. These results, based on paired-samples *t* tests, are summarized in table 6.

Table 6.
Differences in Current and Ideal Role Scores Based on Primary Group

Primary Role: Communication Facilitator (n=6)			
Role	Ideal *M*	Current *M*	*t*
Communication Facilitator	5.889	5.806	0.25
Expert Prescriber	5.762	5.286	1.81
Problem Solving Facilitator	5.917	5.333	2.33
Technician	4.771	5.042	-1.37
Primary Role: Expert Prescriber (n=38)			
Role	Ideal *M*	Current *M*	*t*
Communication Facilitator	5.531	4.390	10.95**
Expert Prescriber	6.132	5.786	4.36**
Problem Solving Facilitator	5.969	4.904	10.16**
Technician	4.878	4.711	1.99
Primary Role: Problem-Solving Process Facilitator (n=12)			
Role	Ideal *M*	Current *M*	*t*
Communication Facilitator	5.750	4.958	5.20**
Expert Prescriber	5.988	5.369	5.35**
Problem Solving Facilitator	6.347	5.917	2.98*
Technician	5.041	4.948	0.57
Primary Role: Technician (n=103)			
Role	Ideal *M*	Current *M*	*t*
Communication. Facilitator	4.539	3.299	13.11**
Expert Prescriber	5.029	3.823	14.11**
Problem Solving Facilitator	4.978	3.482	13.72**
Technician	5.196	5.250	1.20

Note. $*p < .05$ $**p < .01$

As indicated in the table, no significant differences in the current and ideal levels of technical activities were found for any of the groups.

Whereas no significant findings of any kind can be reported for those whose primary role is communication facilitator, practitioners in each of the three other groups yielded significant gaps between ideal and current levels of management-related activities. It is also important to note that data analysis of the communication facilitator and problem-solving process facilitator groups may be suspect given the low number of practitioners in each group.

Research Question 4: How did the current roles relate to job satisfaction?

Before addressing this question, it is important to note that neither years of experience nor salary was significantly correlated with any of the five measures of job satisfaction. Therefore, neither variable was controlled for when conducting job satisfaction-related calculations.

Also, as a reference tool, it may also be helpful to once more state the exact questions which relate to each job satisfaction item. They are:

Item 28 -- How would you rate the degree to which you enjoy your work?

Item 29 -- How would you rate the degree to which your work allows you to do the things of which you are most capable?

Item 30 -- How would you rate the degree to which your work gives you a sense of accomplishment?

Item 31 -- How would you rate the degree to which your work is important to the organization?

Item 32 -- How would you rate the degree to which your work is personally satisfying?

Analysis utilizing the Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation found that the mean score for task items relating to the technician role was not significantly correlated with any of the five measures of job satisfaction. However, mean scores for each of the three management-related roles--communication facilitator, expert prescriber and problem-solving process facilitator--were significantly positively correlated with each of the five measures of job satisfaction. These results are shown in table 7.

Table 7.
Correlation Between Role Scores and Satisfaction Scores

	Item 28	Item 29	Item 30	Item 31	Item 32
Communication Facilitator (n= 180)	r=.3365**	r=.2437**	r=.2873**	r=.1766*	r=.3305**
Expert Prescriber (n= 184)	r=.2988**	r=.1723*	r=.2830**	r=.1878*	r=.2903**
Problem Solving Facilitator (n= 179)	r=.3230**	r=.1699*	r=.2830**	r=.1500*	r=.3274**
Technician (n= 181)	r=.0953	r=-.0080	r=.0431	r=-.0038	r=.1205

Note. *$p < .05$ **$p < .01$

Additionally, one-way ANOVA indicated that significant differences existed among satisfaction scores based on primary role for three of the five items. Item 29 is one such item. One-way ANOVA found significant differences in scores on item 29 based on the four-role typology (F=3.7386, df=3/162, p=.0124). Post-hoc analysis utilizing the Bonferroni test found that technicians had a significantly lower mean score than expert prescribers.

Similar results were found on items 30 and 31. One-way ANOVA found significant differences in item 30 satisfaction scores among the four role groups (F=4.629, df=3/162, p=.0039) with a Bonferroni test showing technicians have significantly lower means than expert prescribers. It also found significant differences in item 31 satisfaction scores (F=3.202, df=3/162, p=.0249) with technicians lower than expert prescribers.

Research Question 5: How did the discrepancies which existed between current and ideal roles relate to job satisfaction?

In assessing the relationship between job satisfaction and the discrepancies between ideal and current role scores, a variety of findings were significant. Results are summarized in the following table.

Table 8.
Correlation Between Gaps Between Ideal and Current Role Scores and Satisfaction Scores

	Item 28	Item 29	Item 30	Item 31	Item 32
Communication Facilitator (n= 171)	r=-.2561**	r=-.3678**	r=-.2324**	r=-.1231	r=-.2713**
Expert Prescriber (n= 176)	r=-.2168**	r=-.2444**	r=-.1692*	r=-.0979	r=-.2121**
Problem Solving Facilitator (n= 172)	r=-.2580**	r=-.2514**	r=-.2349**	r=-.0918	r=-.2719**
Technician (n= 173)	r=.0889	r=-.1804*	r=.1103	r=-.1607*	r=.0567

Note. *$p < .05$ **$p < .01$

As noted above, differences between ideal and current roles scores for each of the three management-related roles posted negative correlations with four of the five measures of job satisfaction. That is to say, the greater the difference between the ideal scores and

current scores for the communication facilitator, expert prescriber and problem-solving process facilitator, the lower the job satisfaction scores for items 28, 29, 30 and 32.

Differences in ideal and current technician scores were also significantly negatively correlated with job satisfaction items 29 and 31. That is, the greater the gap between the ideal and the current, the lower the satisfaction scores.

V. Discussion and Conclusions

Discussion of the results generated in this project is organized according to the research questions which drive the study.

Research Question 1: What were the self-described current roles of sports information practitioners?

The majority of sports information practitioners viewed themselves as being primarily technicians (63.3%) while smaller numbers described themselves as expert prescribers (24.1%), problem-solving process facilitators (9.0%) and communication facilitators (3.6%). This may not be particularly surprising. After all, not everyone within an organization has management status.

Research Question 2: What characteristics of sports information practitioners and their institutions were related to the current roles they play?

Most of the findings regarding practitioner or institutional characteristics and their relationship to primary roles were to be expected. While no statistically significant

difference existed in the frequency with which practitioners of various titles engaged in technical tasks, assistant sports information directors were less likely to engage in management-related activities than those with other titles--assistant athletic directors, sports information directors, associate sports information directors and others (a catch all category that included a variety of responses). Associate sports information directors engaged in management activities with less frequency than assistant athletic directors. The picture which emerges is one of practitioners accepting greater management responsibilities as they move up the ladder from assistant sports information director to associate sports information director and then on to sports information director or assistant athletic director.

Along those same lines, significant relationships were also found relating to the variables of age, experience and salary. The technician role was the only one which posted significant negative correlations to age, experience and salary. Each of three management-related roles was significantly positively correlated to age and years of experience. The salary variable posted significant negative correlations with technician role scores and significant positive correlations with all three management-related role scores. The *r* values are low here, but it seems that based on these findings and those in a previous study (Broom & Dozier, 1986), it is relatively safe to say that younger, less experienced people are more likely to be technicians and to receive lower salaries. As they age, gain experience and are possibly promoted, they assume additional management responsibilities and garner salary increases.

It may be interesting to note that no significant differences were found in role scores based on highest level of education completed. Only one respondent had less than a bachelor's degree in educational background, so it seems logical to say that once the bachelor's degree has been gained, graduate degrees are not yet a prerequisite for those who want to assume management responsibilities. Whether graduate degrees are of value to sport public relations practitioners is unknown.

In regard to gender, men are more likely than women to engage in management activities. Males had significantly higher scores for the three management-related roles than females. Women had slightly higher technician scores than men, but the difference was not statistically significant.

Virtually no relationships existed between institutional or program-related variables and current role scores. The one statistically significant relationship which was found was a negative correlation between enrollment and the technician role score. This finding may be enlightening. Top administrators at smaller institutions may assume the lion's share of management tasks, leaving predominantly technical tasks for their sport public relations practitioners. However, no significant relationships existed between number of sports offered, an indicator of athletic program breadth, and any of the role scores. Given that, and given that the *r* value for enrollment and technician scores is low (-.1572), it seems reasonable to minimize the importance of this finding until more substantial explanations are proposed.

Research Question 3: What differences existed between the self-described roles which sports information practitioners reported they currently play and the roles they would ideally play?

As a whole, NCAA Division I-A sports information practitioners may not be looking to engage in technical tasks with less frequency, but they certainly would prefer to engage in management-related tasks more often. This is true not only for the survey population as a whole, but two of the subgroups--expert prescribers and technicians. As for the third and fourth groups, the small sample size of communication facilitators (n=6) and problem-solving process facilitators (n=12) made the search for significant findings a difficult one.

Research Question 4: How did the current roles relate to job satisfaction?

Significant positive correlations existed between current management-related roles scores and all five measures of job satisfaction. There were no significant correlations between the technician role score and any of the job satisfaction responses.

Caution may be prudent in interpreting these correlations. Despite being statistically significant at the .05 level and lower, the r values for the management-related scores and five measures of job satisfaction are relatively low. The highest of the scores, an r value of .34, translates into a coefficient of determination of .12. In other words, only 12 percent of the variance between the two scores is shared. Williams (1992, p.137) notes "statistical

significance only puts researchers in a position to interpret the magnitude of the correlation: it does not do the job for them."

The data does indicate that those in management-related roles report greater job satisfaction that technicians. One-way ANOVA bears this out, with significant differences among the four role groups being found on three of the five satisfaction items. Specifically, the Bonferroni post-hoc tests found significant differences existing between technicians and expert prescribers. None of this is to say technicians are dissatisfied. Only two of the correlation scores between the technician role scores and a job satisfaction item were negative, and neither was statistically significant.

Research Question 5: *How did the discrepancies which existed between current and ideal roles relate to job satisfaction?*

The gaps which existed between current and ideal roles also relate to job satisfaction. Significant negative correlations existed between the difference in current and ideal management-related role scores and job satisfaction scores on four of the five items. This indicates that a high difference in the desired level of management activity relates to lower job satisfaction and vice versa. In other words, the more a practitioner wants to move into management-related tasks, the lower the job satisfaction.

As for the technician scores, significant negative correlations between differences in current and ideal role scores and job satisfaction scores were found on two items. The

items related to work allowing practitioners to do the things of which they are most capable and work that was important to the organization. Again, the evidence indicates the greater the difference between the ideal and current levels of technical activity, the lower the satisfaction relating to these items.

Here again, caution must be exercised because of low *r* values. Most of the statistically significant correlation values were in the .20 to .30 range. This indicates some relationship exists, but it is best to be careful in interpreting the magnitude of the relationship. It seems to be limited.

Conclusions

Broom's four-role typology has been widely recognized as having value in making theoretical distinctions and as being a useful tool in analyzing the work of public relations practitioners. In this case, the results seem mixed. High correlations among all four role scores indicate that each role is not necessarily distinct from the others.

Nonetheless, theoretical and statistical distinctions do exist among the four roles, even for sports information practitioners. Based upon primary role classification, statistically significant differences do exist among practitioner role scores. That is to say there is a statistical difference among technician role scores based upon a practitioner's primary classification of being a technician, a problem-solving process facilitator, a communication

facilitator or an expert prescriber. The same is true for the other three role scores based upon primary classification.

Reconciling this apparent contradiction is not easy; however, these two findings are not necessarily contradictory. Why? Correlation techniques analyze the relationship between two variables, specifically the way in which they vary together (Williams, 1992). In this case, the correlation analysis may be more an indicator of other factors rather than true distinctions in self-described roles. Those individuals most inclined to respond with relatively high values to items relating to one role may also tend to respond with relatively high values to items relating to another role. It is also important to note that the *r* values for correlations between technician scores and the three management-related roles are statistically significant yet low.

The ANOVA, on the other hand, specifically tests for differences between sample means within multiple groups (Williams, 1992). The correlation test looks for relatedness in the way scores vary, and in this group of respondents, they are related. The ANOVA looks for differences among scores, and they are also different.

As for the breakdown of primary roles among sports information practitioners, it may speak highly of the survey respondents that nearly one in four believes he or she is respected enough and relied upon to a sufficient degree that they are self-described expert prescribers, resident "go to" people concerning public relations concerns. Whether others

within the administration would agree with their assessments or not, these sports information practitioners believe they are having an impact on the organizations they serve.

It may be of equal concern that the smallest percentage of practitioners described themselves as being communication facilitators. In looking at the history of the public relations industry in general, it has been noted that the industry has evolved from one primarily concerned with gaining favorable publicity for organizations to one more concerned with building mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its key publics. (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1985). The contemporary public relations model implies dialogue between organizations and their publics. It may be important for athletic directors and other managers to ask themselves several questions. Does my organization have a mechanism in place to gain input from its publics? If the individuals who are assigned such tasks are not the sports information personnel, then who are they? Do we manage our organizations in such a way that input from constituent groups is an important consideration? The answers to such questions may go a long way in revealing the degree to which the public relations function has evolved within their organizations.

The study showed that the respondents on the whole indicated they want to engage in management-related tasks with more frequency. They do not, however, necessarily want to engage in technical tasks less often.

Regarding this, three comments seem appropriate. The first is that the gaps themselves could be indicative of role conflict. "Role conflict can occur when the job does not meet

expectations. ... (It) arises when a disparity exists in job requirements or between the job's demand and the employee's values and expectations" (Schultz, 1994, p. 415). Role conflict could exist in situations in which sports information practitioners are held accountable for public reactions, or more specifically media reactions, to the athletic department's actions. Yet while being held accountable for the reactions, the sports information practitioner had relatively little input into the decisions which elicited those very reactions.

Schultz (1994) noted that role conflict may also be present in cases of work overload. One survey respondent, a manager at one of the most prestigious institutions in NCAA I-A, included an insightful three-page letter which detailed additional thoughts regarding the questionnaire. The respondent noted that, given an environment brimming with increased media coverage and greater demands brought on by Title IX, it is not surprising to find sports information practitioners pulled in multiple directions. The practitioner notes:

> Our profession is filled with some of the greatest people around. They will try to do anything anyone asks. And that might be the problem. The quickest way to get yourself in trouble is attempt to do everything for everyone. Then, you won't get done what really needs to get done. You will not please anybody.

The second comment regarding the implications of these gaps is on a more positive note. The gaps may indicate a high power motive on the part of sports information practitioners. McClelland (1976) described three variables which relate to motivation. They are the need for power, the need to achieve and the need to be well-liked. McClelland argued that the best managers are the ones motivated more by the need for power than for

personal achievement or affiliation with colleagues. If the need for power is mixed with maturity and self-control, the makings are present for an effective manager. McClelland noted.

If the gaps found in this study are indicative of a high power motive, then the stage could be set for sports information practitioners to gain greater influence within their organizations. This study does not address the other variables in the management equation, but it does indicate that the respondents seem willing to assume additional responsibility. If they are enabled by receiving the opportunity to engage more frequently in management tasks, then a public relations emphasis could become an increasingly important component in the decision-making processes within college athletic departments.

The final comment regarding gaps is that the practitioners' desire to increase the frequency with which they engage in management-related tasks while maintaining their load of technical tasks seems unrealistic. A high achievement motive may be commendable at times, but if it is not tempered with realism, it becomes a prescription for failure. Schultz (1994) notes the importance of management clearly defining what it expects of employees and placing its employees in settings in which they can succeed. Sports information practitioners are likely doing themselves no favors when they ask for more work in one area without relinquishing responsibilities in another.

As for job satisfaction, the findings in this project seem to line up with those of previous studies. Broom and Dozier (1986) also found that those practitioners whose

primary role was management-related posted higher job satisfaction scores than technicians. These sports information professionals do not differ from other public relations practitioners in this respect.

Recommendations for Future Study

Additional work in differentiating role typologies for sports information practitioners could be of significant value. This seems to be the essence of what sport management research is all about--taking theory from disciplines which serve as foundations and applying them to a sport-specific environment. Thus, this project may serve as a useful starting point in the examination of sport public relations practitioners; however, it is only the first step. The next step to take in the research process would be to develop a role typology specifically for NCAA Division I-A sports information practitioners. Following such development, the next step would be to see how the typology applies to sport public relations practitioners in other settings such as professional sports or college athletics at other levels of competition.

Regarding the relationship between primary role and practitioner characteristics, it seems clear some sort of inequity exists between men and women. It could indicate that outright discrimination against women continues to be widespread (Kast, 1992), even at the NCAA Division I-A level; however, there does not appear to be enough data to come to that conclusion. College athletics have made progress in moving toward greater gender

equity in the last 25 years (Lumpkin, Stoll & Beller, 1994). It may be argued that similar progress is also being made in sport public relations, but it is recent enough that women haven't yet had time to assume the same level of management responsibilities as men. The "glass ceiling" may or may not be in place. Either way, this issue is in need of additional examination.

Because neither the institution nor program-related variables significantly related to role scores does not necessarily mean that the individual traits are the sole determinants of primary role. This questionnaire was certainly not exhaustive in its questions, and other factors which influence practitioner roles may well exist. One such variable which no doubt bears greater examination is the environment in which the athletic program operates. Acharya's (1983) notions of "threat" and "stability" may be key ingredients to the equation in college sports. Neither item was addressed in this study, and there could be other influential environmental possibilities as well.

It is also important to remember that a variety of factors may contribute to satisfaction (Cascio, 1995). This likely applies to these sports information directors even though factors such as salary were not significantly correlated to job satisfaction scores in this sample. For instance, the excitement that comes from working with big-time college athletics may be a major contributor to satisfaction. This study offers no data to support that claim, but the subject is important enough to warrant additional investigation.

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Appendix A

Text of the advance card sent to the survey population follows.

June 18, 1997

Next week a questionnaire attempting to ascertain what roles sports information practitioners play within athletic departments and what roles they would ideally play will be mailed to you. If you choose to respond, the survey should take no more than 20 to 25 minutes of your time.

The questionnaire will be sent only to sports information practitioners at NCAA Division I-A institutions, so your response will be important to the project's success. Thank you in advance for your consideration. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at (405) 521-5304.

Sincerely,

Clay Stoldt
Sports Information Director, Oklahoma City University
Doctor of Education Candidate, University of Oklahoma

Appendix B

A copy of the cover letter which was sent to the survey population follows.

OKLAHOMA CITY UNIVERSITY
SPORTS INFORMATION
2501 NORTH BLACKWELDER
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA. 73106-9981
PHONE: (405) 521-5304
FAX: (405) 521-5816
HOTLINE: (405) 521-5400

June 24, 1997

Dear Colleague,

Having worked in the sports information field for eight years, I have been surprised at the relative lack of research that has been devoted to sport public relations. In an attempt to begin addressing that problem, I am asking for your help.

The purpose of my research project is to ascertain what roles sports information practitioners play within athletic departments and what roles they would ideally play. I will also attempt to relate those current and ideal roles to various descriptive characteristics and to the idea of job satisfaction.

Included in this packet is a survey I would like for you to complete. If you choose to respond, the survey should take no more than 20 to 25 minutes of your time.

Once you have filled out the survey, please return it to me in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope. Please mail the questionnaire to me within five days of your receiving it. Your prompt response will get this request off your desk quickly and allow me to begin data analysis in a timely manner.

The project is serving as my doctoral dissertation at the University of Oklahoma-Norman. While I am the primary investigator, my work is being supervised by five faculty members serving on my doctoral committee.

Let me assure you that your responses to the questionnaire will be anonymous and confidential. None of the questions allows for easy identification of the respondent's identity, and no attempt will be made to identify individual respondents. *Results will be summarized and reported only for groups.* In no instance will the responses of individuals be reported. There is therefore no foreseeable risk to you by participating in this project.

It is my hope that this study will benefit sports information and other university administrators by providing insights regarding what roles sports information practitioners play and what they think about those roles.

Your response is an important part of the project. Thank you in advance for your consideration. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (405) 521-5304.

Sincerely,

Clay Stoldt

Clay Stoldt
Sports Information Director, Oklahoma City University
Doctor of Education Candidate, University of Oklahoma

Appendix C

A copy of the survey which was sent to the survey population follows.

SPORTS INFORMATION PRACTITIONERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Your responses to this questionnaire are intended to be confidential, and you are encouraged to respond thoughtfully and candidly. The results will be summarized and reported only for groups. In no instance will the responses of individuals be reported.

The following statements relate to the frequency in which you engage in particular tasks during your work. Please circle the number that most accurately represents your experience currently and the number which would represent your experience ideally.

1. I make the sports information policy decisions.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

2. I am the person who writes sports information material.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

3. I keep athletic management informed of public reactions to organizational policies, procedures and/or actions.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

4. In meetings with athletic management, I point out the need to follow a systematic public relations planning process.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

5. I diagnose public relations problems.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

6. I explain public relations problems to other athletic administrators.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

7. I edit and/or rewrite for grammar and spelling the materials written by others in the athletic department.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

8. I report public opinion survey results to keep athletic management aware of the opinions of various publics.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

9. I work with athletic department personnel to increase their skills in solving and/or avoiding public relations problems.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

10. I plan and recommend courses of action for solving public relations problems.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

11. I handle the technical aspects of producing sports information materials.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

12. I create opportunities for management to hear the views of various internal and external publics.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

13. I solicit athletic management participation when making the important public relations decisions.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

14. I take responsibility for the success or failure of my athletic department's public relations programs.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

15. I produce brochures, pamphlets and other publications promoting athletic teams.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

16. I keep others in the athletic department informed of what the media report about our program and important issues facing the program.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

17. I keep athletic management actively involved in every phase of the public relations program.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

18. Because of my experience and training, others in the athletic department consider me to be the department's expert in solving public relations problems.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

19. I do photography for athletic department materials.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

20. I do graphics for athletic department materials.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

21. I conduct communication audits to identify communication problems between the athletic department and its publics.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

22. I operate as a catalyst in management's decision-making.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

23. I observe that others in the athletic department hold me responsible for the success or failure of public relations programs.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

24. I maintain media contacts.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

25. I place sports news releases.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

26. I represent the institution at athletics-related events and meetings.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

27. When working with athletic managers on public relations issues, I outline alternative approaches to solving problems.

Currently:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)
Ideally:	(Never) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (Always)

The following statements relate to the degree to which you are satisfied with the tasks you undertake. Please circle the number which most accurately represents your thoughts.

28. How would you rate the degree to which you enjoy your work?
(Least) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (Most)

29. How would you rate the degree to which your work allows you to do the things of which you are most capable?
(Least) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (Most)

30. How would you rate the degree to which your work gives you a sense of accomplishment?
(Least) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (Most)

31. How would you rate the degree to which your work is important to the organization?
(Least) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (Most)

32. How would you rate the degree to which your work is personally satisfying?
(Least) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (Most)

Please check one response to each question.

33. What is your current title?
___ Assistant Athletic Director
___ Sports Information Director
___ Associate Sports Information Director
___ Assistant Sports Information Director
___ Other:_____

34. Which describes the highest level of education you have completed?
___ high school
___ college bachelor's
___ college master's
___ college doctorate

35. What is your gender?
___ female
___ male

36. Which category best describes your institution?
___ public
___ private
___ public/private

37. What is your present age? _____

38. What is your salary? _____

39. What is the current enrollment at your institution? _____

40. How many years of experience do you have in sports information work? _____

41. How many varsity sports does your institution sponsor? _____

42. What is your annual sports information budget, including salaries? _____

43. How many full-time staff members serve on the sports information staff, including yourself? _____

Your contribution to this effort is appreciated. Thank you!

Appendix D

A copy of the text from the follow-up card sent to the survey population follows.

July 2, 1997

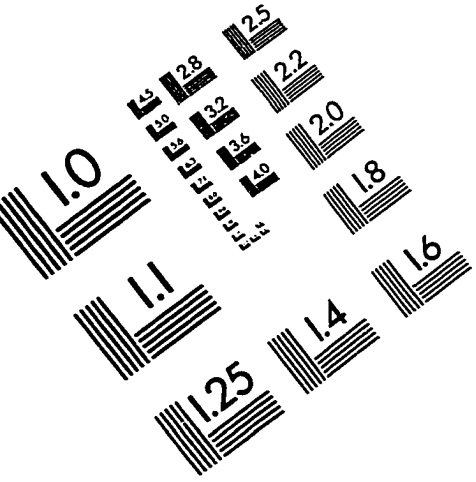
Last week a questionnaire attempting to ascertain what roles sports information practitioners play within athletic departments and what roles they would ideally play was mailed to you. If you have already completed and returned the survey, please accept my thanks. If not, please do so today. It should take no more than 20 to 25 minutes of your time.

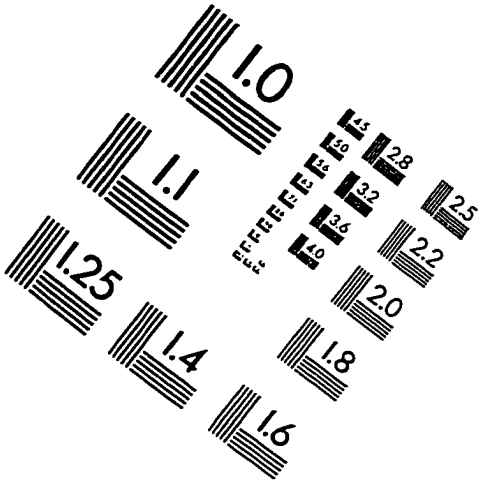
Your response is important to the project's success. Thank you again for your consideration. If you have questions or need another copy of the survey, please contact me at (405) 521-5304.

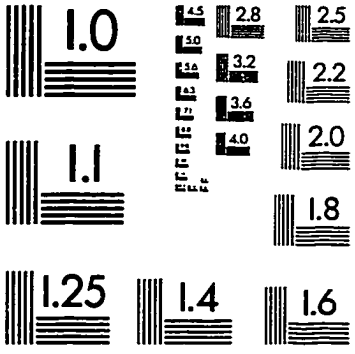
Sincerely,

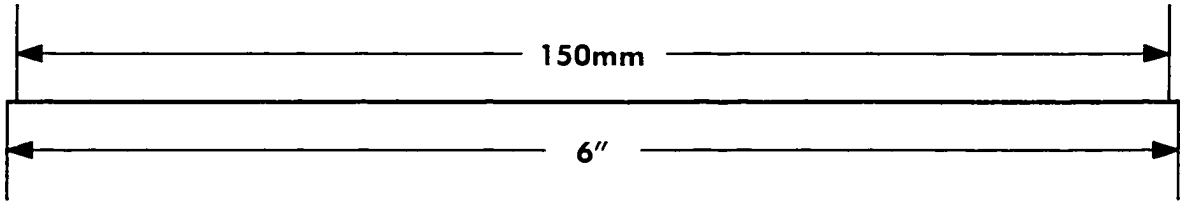
Clay Stoldt
Sports Information Director, Oklahoma City University
Doctor of Education Candidate, University of Oklahoma

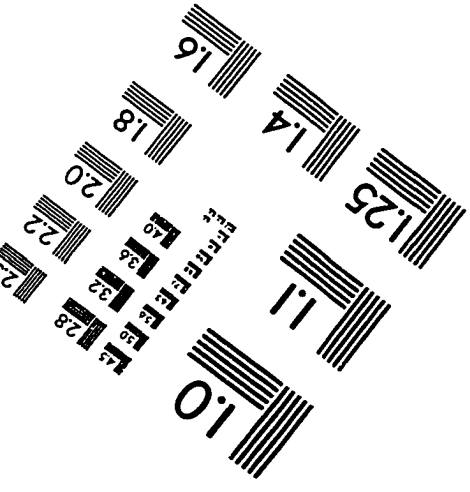
IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)

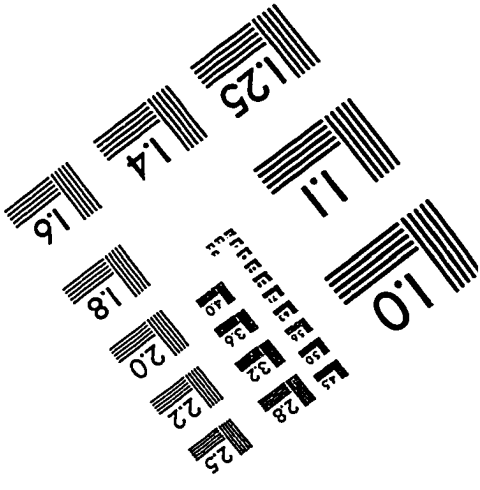












APPLIED IMAGE, Inc
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989

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