

Office of the Director

April 10, 1970

TO: University administrators, regents, and interested individuals

FROM: Duane Scribner, Director, Department of University Relations
Nancy Pirsig, Director, University News Service

SUBJECT: "The Image of the University of Minnesota in Minnesota Outstate
and Suburban Newspapers"

The enclosed report, a study of how the University of Minnesota shows up in articles in Minnesota newspapers other than the Twin Cities dailies, may be of some interest to you. It's the first systematic attempt I've seen to evaluate the effects of some of our efforts in the Department of University Relations--and the first I've seen, as a matter of fact, anywhere in Central Administration, although I'm sure other evaluation studies must exist.

An evaluation study, obviously, should be the first step in initiating changes in ways of doing things and changes in overall direction and expenditure of effort. Some changes have already occurred in the News Service, based on Miss Vick's recommendations--for example, news releases are now being sent directly to the outstate weeklies and dailies rather than being a part of the Minnesota Newspaper Association's weekly packet. Other changes are being contemplated and your comments on the report or its subject matter would be welcomed as additional information on which to base such decisions.

We think, for instance, that a good deal of additional effort and money could well be spent in backgrounding outstate editors and providing them with hometown stories about students at the U of M--but we must, of course, ask whether the effort would be worthwhile in relation to other ways in which we could (and do) spend our money.

Duane C. Scribner
Nancy A. Pirsig

THE IMAGE
OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
IN

MINNESOTA
OUTSTATE AND SUBURBAN
NEWSPAPERS

Judy Vick
University News Service
March 1970

INTRODUCTION

This report is based primarily on clippings from Minnesota newspapers received by the University of Minnesota News Service for the months of May and September, 1969.

Since the facts and opinions expressed herein are based chiefly on only these two months, they are refutable. A more accurate reflection of the attitudes of outstate newspaper editors could be drawn from a survey of clippings from a period of one to five years. Nevertheless, the trends shown in these two months are clearly indicative of the image of the University of Minnesota that is projected through outstate and suburban newspapers.

No newspapers published in Minneapolis, St. Paul or Duluth or any newspapers appealing to special interest groups are included in this survey.

Articles included in this report are all those received from the News Service's clipping service which mentioned the University of Minnesota in any but simply a passing manner. The article was included even if only one of a number of persons mentioned was identified as a University faculty member or student. However, most of the articles included were primarily about the University or an individual connected with the University. (Note: the clipping service does not send articles dealing with athletics, with any phase of the Institute of Agriculture's activities or with coordinate campuses.)

In May there were 148 articles published in 59 outstate newspapers and 88 articles published in 30 suburban newspapers. In September, there were 72 articles published in 32 outstate newspapers and 42 articles published in 20 suburban newspapers.

DAILY NEWSPAPERS

Honors for the best overall coverage of the University of Minnesota among Minnesota daily newspapers go to the Rochester Post-Bulletin and the Faribault Daily News.

(The Duluth newspapers are not included. Since there were a large number of Duluth clippings in September and only one in May, it is assumed that the clipping service was not clipping the Duluth papers in May.)

In the two-month period surveyed, Rochester used about 35 stories related to the University, totalling about 400 inches. Although the Medical School was the single area of the University receiving the largest amount of coverage--all areas of the University which made news during that period were covered--Wilson Library dedication, Project Newgate, Afro-American studies, etc. The turndown of the Students for a Democratic Society national convention rated four separate stories. The stories originated in various ways--News Service releases, the wire services, and some apparently written on the initiative of the Bulletin staff. The Post-Bulletin has the largest circulation of any daily newspaper outside Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth.

The Faribault Daily News printed 18 stories in this period, totalling about 150 inches. Thirteen of these stories originated with the University of Minnesota News Service and were, in most cases, printed in their entirety as they were released. Faribault is one of two dailies on the News Service's A-5 distribution list which receives almost all releases put out by the News Service.

In second place, among the dailies, are the newspapers published in Austin and Virginia.

The Austin Daily Herald published a total of 13 stories, about 150 inches, during the two-month period. Seven of the stories originated with the University News Service, although some of these were printed with a wire service designation. Receiving the largest amount of space (34) was a study by the Bureau of Field Studies relating to the Austin area and carried in two separate articles.

The Mesabi Daily News--Virginia printed 12 stories, about 150 inches. Five of these stories came directly from the University News Service and one was directed especially to them because the new faculty member (John Brandl) is married to a former Virginia resident. The local alumni chapter received two stories, totalling 59 inches.

Of the 19 remaining dailies, nine printed between five and eight stories related to the University during the two-month period.

The Brainerd Daily Dispatch printed five stories, totalling 101 inches, in May and no stories in September. Four stories (two related to the Afro-American studies program) were received on the wires. The largest story, with a photograph, was the coverage of a local speech by Walter Heller.

All stories printed in the Crookston Daily Times during this period were related to the Regents. (The Regents met in Crookston in September.)

The St. Cloud Times printed seven stories in May and no stories in September. Three of the stories originated with the News Service but were received and printed as wire service stories. One story, Project Newgate, related directly to the St. Cloud area. Two of the stories were about the election of new Regents and one was about a local scholarship winner.

The Waseca Journal printed five stories, totalling 30 inches. Two of these originated with the News Service, others were locally related.

The Winona Daily News printed four stories in May and no stories in September. In addition, they also printed the University News Service's column on earthquakes. Two of the four stories were written from University News Service releases; one of the stories was about the newly elected Regents.

The Worthington Daily Globe printed five stories, totalling 76 inches, in May and no stories in September. Two of the stories originated locally and three were received from the wire services. They printed no releases directly from the University News Service.

The Hibbing Daily Tribune printed seven stories, totalling 75 inches, in May and one story, four inches, in September. Of the seven stories, two were about the newly elected Regents and three were wire service stories which originated with the University News Service. Two were written directly from News Service releases.

The Mankato Free Press printed five stories, totalling 100 inches, in May and no stories in September. The major story was on the Grand Rapids Arts Center (65 inches), a cooperative effort of the News Service and an outside public relations agency. Two of the stories were on the Wilson Library dedication and two were locally related.

The Owatonna Daily People's Press printed four stories, totalling 25 inches, in May and one story, four inches, in September. All stories were written from News Service releases, with the exception of one story on the newly elected Regents.

Although the Little Falls Daily Transcript printed only four stories, totalling 48 inches, in May and no stories in September, they deserve special recognition because one of the stories (22 inches) was an account of Cap and Gown Day with a list of local residents honored. One story was on the newly elected Regents and the other two were locally related--a faculty member speaking at the local high school graduation and a local group backing the Health Sciences Committee.

The Albert Lea Tribune and the Fergus Falls Daily Journal each printed four stories during the two-month period, totalling about 30 inches for each paper. Neither printed any stories directly from News Service releases. Included in the Fergus Falls total is a column written in opposition to the coeducational sleeping arrangements at Freshman Camp; an editorial supporting Regent Hartl; announcement of a speech by Malcolm Moos, and a story about the newly elected Regents. Included in the Albert Lea total are two locally related stories and two wire service stories which originated with the News Service.

In spite of its proximity to the University, the Stillwater Evening Gazette printed only three University stories in the two-month period. They were about organ donor cards at the University Hospitals, a resident who attended a conference at the University, and the newly elected Regents. This is one of two dailies on the A-5 list which receives almost all News Service releases.

Newspapers in International Falls, New Ulm, Red Wing and Willmar printed three stories each in the two-month period. Of the total of 12 stories, four were locally related and the others were wire service stories, about half of which originated with the News Service.

The editors of the Fairmont Daily Sentinel and the Bemidji Daily Pioneer know the University exists, but apparently wish it didn't. In the two-month period Bemidji printed one story--about the Teacher Corps recruiting on the campus--and the Daily Sentinel printed a story about the local alumni chapter (seven inches) and an editorial opposing the appointment of Arthur Naftalin to the University faculty.

OUTSTATE WEEKLY AND SEMI-WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

Of the 351 semi-weekly and weekly outstate and suburban newspapers published in Minnesota, a total of 86 printed any mention of the University of Minnesota during the months of May and September, 1969.

Of these 86 newspapers, 56 may be considered outside the metropolitan area of Minneapolis and St. Paul and are therefore referred to as "outstate" newspapers.

The largest number of stories related to the University were printed by the semi-weekly Thief River Falls Times, one of the largest circulating newspapers in this category, and the Warren Sheaf, a weekly: each printed five stories during the two-month period. The Thief River Falls paper printed a University News Service column on the General College; a story about John Hoyt's regional development plan; announcement of a local alumni chapter meeting; and the announcement and follow-up of speeches by two University faculty members--totalling more than 50 inches.

The Warren paper included an article on John Hoyt's regional development plan; a story about a Newfolden premature infant at the University Hospitals; an announcement of the Regents' meeting in Crookston; and coverage of a League of Municipalities meeting--totalling about 50 inches.

There were five weekly and semi-weekly newspapers that carried three or four stories during the two-month period.

The Tracy Headlight-Herald ran a total of 25 inches--a speech by a faculty member, a report from the High School Press Association Conference and a story on the Hoyt report.

The Two Harbors Chronicle and Times ran 48 inches including two stories on a bear and wolf study being conducted by a faculty member and the story of a retired faculty member with local ties.

The Williams Northern Light ran some 20 inches--the News Service column on ecology, a report of faculty members appointed to a statewide board, and a story on commencement featuring a photograph of a local resident who received his degree.

The Wheaton Gazette also ran about 20 inches--two stories on local residents, one who received a teaching assistantship at the University; the News Service column on ecology, and an editorial favoring medical scholarships.

The Cottonwood County Citizen of Windom had about 30 inches--a story on the John Hoyt report, announcement of a speech by a faculty member, and an editorial opposing obscenity in the Minnesota Daily, distributed by the WCCO radio news department.

There were seven newspapers in this category that ran two stories during the two-month period.

The Alexandria newspaper ran an editorial opposing the coeducational sleeping arrangements at Freshman Camp and a story on the moon rock samples.

The Crow Wing County Review of Brainerd ran a story on a new heart device from a News Service release and a story about the local Lions Club support of University Hospitals.

The Grand Rapids Herald-Review ran two stories on the Grand Rapids Art Center.

The Redwood Gazette of Redwood Falls ran an editorial opposing the appointment of Arthur Naftalin to the University faculty and an announcement of a planning session for the arts festival sponsored by the General Extension Division.

The Tyler Journal-Herald had the WCCO editorial opposing obscenity in the Daily and a story of a local resident who received a kidney transplant.

The West Concord Enterprise ran a total of seven inches--an announcement of a speech by an exchange student at the University and a story on medical scholarships.

The Stewartville Star ran a story on the individualized teaching symposium sponsored by the General Extension Division and a report on John Hoyt's regional development program.

The remaining 45 newspapers in this category ran only one story each in the two-month period covered by the survey.

In seven of these the only story was about a local group endorsing the Minnesota Health Sciences Committee--Argyle, Askov, Balaton, Breckenridge, Buffalo, Plainview and Waverly.

In four newspapers the only story related to the University was a negative editorial--Ogilvie (Afro-American Studies program useless), Long Prairie (get rid of the black militants at the University), Wilmont (WCCO editorial against obscenity in the Daily), and Winthrop (WCCO editorial against obscenity in the Daily).

In one newspaper the only item was a positive editorial supporting scholarships for University Medical School students--Slayton.

Four newspapers carried only a University News Service column: Pierz (General College), Rush City (experimental city), Hector (earthquakes) and Welcome (earthquakes).

Four newspapers carried stories on the election of new Regents--Chisholm, Eveleth, Hallock and Houston.

The Pipestone County Star carried only a photograph of a painting titled "Pipestone" by a University faculty member which was sent to it by the News Service.

Two newspapers carried announcements of speeches by faculty members and five carried stories of local residents involved with the University in some way. In two newspapers there were announcements of alumni club activities and in one the announcement of the University's Dental Program in that community. The remaining newspapers carried a variety of News Service releases--often for no apparent reason directly tied to the community.

SUBURBAN NEWSPAPERS

There are 30 weekly and semi-weekly suburban newspapers that carried articles about the University of Minnesota in May and September, 1969. Of the total, 17 are owned by Sun Newspapers, Inc.

The Shakopee Valley News and the St. Louis Park Sun printed the largest number of stories about the University of Minnesota in the two-month time period. Each ran eight stories. The Shakopee paper based all its stories on University News Service releases and, in most cases, they were word-for-word reprints of the releases. The St. Louis Park paper carried three stories based on University News Service releases about General Extension Division activities. Two of their stories were major features on Regent John Yngve and Roy Larsen, a supporter of the University; one story announced a speech by a faculty member; another was a photo of a sorority's gift to the University, and another was a photo of Professor Hubert Humphrey with people from the Sun newspapers.

The Sun newspapers of Edina, Golden Valley, Hopkins and Robbinsdale each printed seven stories about the University during the two-month period. The Columbia Heights Sun printed six. The largest amount of space was given to the report by faculty member Otto Domian on the Edina school system (three stories). Eight of the stories announced speeches to be given by faculty members. Four stories were written from University News Service releases about the General Extension Division and four were written from other News Service releases. Three were photos of Hubert Humphrey with the Sun people and three were photos of the sorority's gift to the University. (Articles and photos used in individual Sun newspapers are available to all Sun newspaper editors.)

The Sun newspapers in Blaine, Roseville and St. Anthony ran five stories each. In the Blaine paper the largest story (14 inches) was a report of a speech criticizing the University's action in the Morrill hall incident. All three carried the Sun editorial on the University's budget. Other stories were about the General Extension Division, the Library, children's art classes and local residents connected with the University.

The Minnesota Valley Sun and the New Hope-Plymouth paper carried four and three stories, respectively. The Minnesota Valley paper included two stories written from News Service releases about the General Extension Division and two stories written from News Service releases about the extension of University Library hours and the publication of a book on "Racial Policies" by the University Press. The Bloomington Sun carried three stories--the sorority's gift to the University, a General Extension Division (University News Service) and local scholarship winners.

Newspapers in the following suburban communities carried only two stories during the two-month period--New Prague (an editorial supporting the SDS turn-down and the announcement of a General Extension Division course written from a News Service release); North St. Paul (announcement of Ralph Nader's speech written from a News Service release and news of a local resident appointed to the Health Sciences Committee); and Northfield (two stories directly connected to local residents).

Those papers which printed only one story during the two-month period are in Osseo, Richfield, Norwood, South St. Paul, West St. Paul, Chaska, Circle Pines, Coon Rapids, Fridley, Excelsior, Maplewood, Monticello and New Brighton. These stories included two editorials on the University budget, one editorial opposing the University's action in the Morrill hall incident (Coon Rapids), four stories written from News Service releases on Nader, a new heart device, the Encore Film Club and the nuclear power symposium (Monticello), the News Service column on General College and stories on local residents connected with the University.

WHAT MAKES NEWS

In May, 1969, Minnesota newspapers devoted the largest amount of news space to the following stories related to the University:

AFRO-AMERICAN STUDIES DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED
SENATOR MCCARTHY VISITS THE UNIVERSITY
GRAND RAPIDS TO HOST ART CENTER
WILSON LIBRARY DEDICATED
NEW REGENTS ELECTED
MOOS TURNS DOWN NATIONAL SDS CONVENTION
UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS (including medical expansion, heart device, speeches, etc.)

In September, 1969, Minnesota newspapers devoted the largest amount of news space to the following stories related to the University:

COEDUCATIONAL SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS AT FRESHMAN CAMP
JOHN HOYT REPORTS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Of the nine major stories, five and a half (University Hospitals stories about half of the time) were initially announced by the University News Service. Hoyt is a member of the St. Paul campus faculty and the announcement of new Regents came from the Governor's office.

The News Service did work on relations with the press regarding the coeducational camp sleeping arrangements after it became an issue in the Twin Cities press.

In all Minnesota newspapers surveyed, news about local residents involved with the University received attention, when this information was supplied by either the News Service or the individual.

Speeches and individual actions by University faculty members also contribute significantly to the University's reputation throughout the state.

Editorially, the outstate newspapers voiced their strong opposition to the establishment of the Afro-American Studies department, the coeducational sleeping arrangements at Freshman Camp, obscenity in the Minnesota Daily, the University's handling of militant black students and the appointment of Arthur Naftalin to the University faculty. Although the events which provoked these editorials took place over a period of more than a year, editorials on the topics appeared in the two-month period. During this time period there were 15 negative editorials, two positive editorials supporting medical scholarships and the SDS turndown, and seven neutral editorials about the University's budget (which might be considered favorable).

CONCLUSIONS

The University of Minnesota image as projected by Minnesota outstate and suburban newspapers can be improved.

At its best, the University is pictured as a vital institution--meeting the needs of the people of the state and the needs of a changing society with new programs, increased services and a teaching faculty of experts.

At its worst, the image of the University projected by outstate newspapers is that of a tax-gobbling, vast unstructured mass--run by bearded, long-haired, and often black youth who smoke pot, practice free love in the dormitories and are brain-washed by the Communist faculty.

Somewhere, apart from all this, are the life-saving University Hospitals.

The dailies tend to project the first image; the weeklies tend to project the second.

Neither the daily nor weekly newspapers in outstate and suburban areas, however, project a true image of the University of Minnesota. The emphasis is placed on what the conservative citizens consider the less favorable aspects of the University.

The major problem appears to be that people in the outstate areas do not identify with the University of Minnesota. They do not feel that it is their University. They do, however, resent the financial support they are forced to provide as taxpayers.

The University News Service is the single source of most positive information about the University received by the outstate editors. Only the Rochester Post-Bulletin demonstrated initiative in gathering its own news about the University. The wire services, Associated Press and United Press International, play an important role in disseminating News Service information to the daily papers. The weekly papers, however, are almost totally dependent on mailings from the News Service and information received from local citizens.

The strongest negative attitude toward the University was detected in the Fairmont Daily Sentinel. It ran only two items in the two-month period--one announcing a meeting of the local alumni chapter meeting (indicating there are people in town who would be interested in University news) and an editorial strongly opposing the appointment of Arthur Naftalin. No one from the Fairmont newspaper attended LEB Day in 1969 and the editor did not pass on the tickets, a usual practice. The Sentinel and New Ulm Daily Journal are listed in the MNA book for 1969 as published by Walter Mickelson, Jr., a supporter of the late Sen. Joe McCarthy. However, the papers (with the Austin Herald) are now owned by Lord Thompson of Fleet, who owns the London Times and some small papers in the colonies. The actual attitude of those who determine the editorial policy and the reasons for this attitude should be determined through further study of the newspaper and personal contact.

The Stillwater Evening Gazette should also be the subject of further study and personal contact with the editor. Although they receive almost all University News Service releases, they printed only three University stories in the two-month period. Since they are within the metropolitan area, it seems likely that many of their readers would be interested in University events.

Although the only daily newspapers in the state that are doing what can be considered an adequate job of covering the University are the Rochester Post-Bulletin and the Faribault Daily News, there are a few additional dailies that should receive priority for further study and personal contact, primarily because of their seeming lack of awareness of the University. They are the newspapers in Bemidji, Albert Lea, Fergus Falls, Worthington, Mankato and New Ulm. Secondary consideration should be given to the newspapers in International Falls, Red Wing and Willmar.

The daily newspapers should receive primary attention because each paper reaches more people than each weekly paper. Circulation of the dailies in Minnesota varies from 3,700 (Stillwater) to 31,500 (Rochester). Circulation of the weeklies varies from 265 (Okabena Press) to 13,139 (South Suburban Minneapolis zone of Sun Newspapers, Inc.)

With only 86 of a total of 351 weekly and semi-weekly suburban and outstate newspapers printing anything about the University in a two-month period, it is evident that these newspapers have been neglected.

Plans to alleviate this situation, however, have been initiated. The practice of sending mailings directly to the newspapers from the University, rather than through the Minnesota Newspaper Association, should result in an overall increase in the amount of News Service releases used by the weekly papers.

A questionnaire directed to all weekly editors could provide preliminary information for personal contact with selected editors.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Personal contact with editors of Minnesota daily newspapers.
2. Personal contact with editors of Minnesota suburban newspapers.
3. A mail survey of the editors of weekly and semi-weekly newspapers to be followed by personal contact with selected editors.
4. Regular mailings (at least one five-page mailing per month) to editors of outstate newspapers previously included in the Minnesota Newspaper Association mailings.
5. Localized stories provided for individual newspapers. These stories are used by the newspapers when presented in an attractive format and they should increase the realization that their people are involved with the University, and that it actually is their University. A real attempt should be made to do this on a regular and frequent basis.
6. Study of the problem of closing the gap between the more liberal and progressive University and the more conservative citizens of the state-- to aid the citizens in reaching an understanding, if not wholehearted acceptance, of the University.