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ABSTRACT

Perhaps the most important course in an advertising curriculum is the student-run agency. This paper describes a program instituted and carried out at Oregon State University from 1985 to 1989 which provided students with experiential training resulting in valuable real-client contact and strong portfolios, making students "hot commodities" on the job market. The agency was set up to offer course credit to student participants in two categories, one for account executives and their staff members, and the other for photographers, copy writers, and designers. In undertaking this kind of project, an initial decision requires the selection of a governance policy which determines how closely the agency is monitored by the instructor; in this area, a middle course may be the most effective. Operations logistics, including which students should be assigned as account executives, how long it should take to form teams of students, and the whole question of client relationships, also require careful planning. Staff meetings, consisting of weekly classroom contact with all of the students, became important times of fellowship, cheerleading, and practical review of progress. Overall, the agency program had few problems with client satisfaction. If the program had continued, the next step would have been to stay in more constant touch with actual agencies in order to stay current with agency trends, systems, and perhaps to secure internships and job-placement opportunities. (Twenty-one notes are included.) (HB)

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The Oregon State University Experience**

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## A Case Study of a Student-Run Advertising/Public Relations Agency: The Oregon State University Experience

### Overview and General Information

After initiating and supervising Oregon State University's SWAT Team program in Spring 1985 until its demise in June 1989 (the journalism department was terminated in June 1992), I strongly underscore Marra's view (1990) that perhaps the most important course in an advertising curriculum is the student-run agency. As he put it:

**Student competition, student ad clubs and courses such as advertising campaigns provide students with simulated real-world experiences. But those experiences lack totality and remain incomplete. Further, they may represent a warp of what the real world means for a large percentage of students about to graduate and encounter the frustrating experience of finding a job in the field. To counter these problems, a student-run ad agency provides students with a total learning experience on a small advertising agency scale more in line with what they are likely to experience in their first jobs.<sup>1</sup>**

The Oregon State University experience demonstrated all the advantages listed by Marra (1990) and others in terms of students' marketability in advertising, public relations, corporate communications and an array of other allied fields.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, many have had an edge over others who had extensive advertising and public relations course work largely because they had real-client experience and strong portfolios.

The program's name--The SWAT Team--came from charter members who borrowed it from the emergency squad of the Los Angeles Police Department. They felt it would be mastered by clients and symbolize that the student-run agency would provide immediate simple and short-term aid on a door-to-door basis.

The OSU SWAT Team program involved 242 students divided into three-person teams (an account executive, designer, copywriter--plus photographers who floated from team to team) working with 173 campus/non-campus clients ranging from the Governor's office to the Minnesota Hospital Association. Yet we were a small department (200 majors) with no budget or facilities. Nor did we know any other programs existed.

OSU's journalism program had only a theory course apiece for advertising and public relations, plus my class in corporate communications (where agitation for an agency began from business, journalism and art majors who had to produce a comprehensive for a real client--many of whom then wanted to use the student projects).

After 12 students from the corporate class declared they needed such a class to build career portfolios and would indeed enroll, the chair agreed to set up the class under the Special Projects course designator; it initially offered six credits for account executives (who soon discovered they were putting in 20-30 hours per week), and three credits for designers, copywriters, and photographers; eventually, the credits were five and three, respectively. For those teaching those two theory classes, the SWAT program was used as an inducement for students to excel so they would be eligible for teams.

The SWAT Team program was to be solely an agency-operation course, with the instructor acting as the agency director; any design or copywriting skills were taught by the account executives (AEs) to their teams. Initial accounts were not elaborate campaigns, but, generally, flyers, simple brochures, and posters that could be quickly completed in the 10-week term; this and our door-to-door full-service efforts delighted campus clients who did not need the full-dress services of a professional agency or printing firm.

It was the first time that the journalism department really could offer stewardship to OSU's 13 colleges. As the chair wrote to the faculty committee for the 1987 Burlington-Northern awards:

**This is the best training ground for advertising students (it also attracts art and business students now) in the state in that each team (she started with three and this quarter has seven) serves five clients. Although they have begun to take off-campus accounts--one winter term was the State of Oregon's Tourism Office, another Good Samaritan Hospital--the primary clientele is the university. Since the SWAT teams began operations in 1985, her program has served at least 40 OSU clients. Advertising agencies from throughout the Northwest are familiar with this program, thanks to a page-one treatment in the profession's publication, *Monthly*, last summer. She holds a rigorous management program for the account executives and they, in turn, gain invaluable training in direct supervision of their teams; SWAT team on resumes is proving to be of great value.<sup>3</sup>**

Students went to job interviews with portfolio materials from real clients that ranged from flyers and other print projects to public relations and direct-marketing efforts--including the "busted" jobs so familiar to the nation's agencies.

To those who fear territorial difficulties with, say, an Art Department, or who believe that students cannot be trusted with real clients, or who dread the slightest outside complaint--our experience and those of student-run agencies cited by Marra on Foskitt & Wolter (1990) provide ample evidence of how to circumnavigate such shoals.<sup>4</sup> That there are only two dozen programs in the nation would seem to reflect these concerns. But the ultimate benefit--mostly satisfied clients and students hired by agencies--outweighs such difficulties. We had only six dissatisfied clients out of 173, a percentage any agency would envy.

As Nelson (1990) commented about the SWAT Team program, any agency also would love to have the 37 unsolicited testimonials from clients and those from dozens of SWAT Team alumni.<sup>5</sup>

One of those client testimonials was:

**The students came to my office appropriately prepared for their assignments, treated me as though they were professionals attempting to develop a client relationship, and were prepared to follow through with the project I had proposed...My reaction at the time and it has continued was that the SWAT Team approach was an innovative approach to teaching journalism, was labor intensive, but that on balance, it was a positive experience and worth the effort so long as a faculty member was willing to make that extensive an effort in educating students.<sup>6</sup>**

And two graduates wrote:

**Thanks to you and the SWAT Team class, I am now the communications director for the Apartment Owners Association of California. I will be in charge of all phases of production and design for a 46-page business magazine! I will also be in charge of producing brochures.<sup>7</sup>**

**I handle contract accounts—about 75 active, 130 total. Most of my accounts are realtors or property management companies. Also, quite a few casinos...I owe so much to you and to SWAT Team. If it hadn't been for that experience, I might have never discovered this field!<sup>8</sup>**

Alumni generally have had a competitive edge because of the close-to-the-client experience on SWAT Teams. One student was in the final pool of 22 candidates (out of 1100 applicants) for a post with the London branch of J. Walter Thompson agency, largely because of being the AE who directed a full-service campaign to save the Corvallis bus system in a levy. This instance was not singular, for students came from the crucible of serving such an array of clients as the chemistry department, College of Veterinary Medicine, the three ROTC programs, engineering, music, and anthropology as well as the Ninth Street Texaco, the Benton County Mental Health Commission, Oregon's Department of Parole, United Way, Congregation Nevah Shalom, the state's tourism office, or Mom's Pantry.

When I sent out a self-report questionnaire to the nearly 60 SWAT alumni two years into the program, over 50 percent of 30 respondents reported they were working at agencies. Two AEs who had listened to my admonition that direct marketing eventually would have the largest share of the advertising dollar, won scholarships to the Direct Marketing Association's week-long national institute and added this experience to portfolios; one of them is now an assistant AE at Chicago's Kobs, Gregory and Passavant, and pointed out that by 1995, direct marketing could have nearly 70 percent of the ad dollar (DMA officials in 1989 told her it was 61 percent). SWAT team experience got her into another Chicago agency, and the institute scholarship into her present job. As she said recently:

**Spread the news! Going to a collegiate Direct Marketing institute can lead to a job in the future!<sup>9</sup>**

Many art majors signed on to gain such experience and to fill their portfolios. One benefit to them was an early initiation to the frustrating dilemma of matching extremely high standards from the Art Department with those of clients who wanted audience "draw" rather than design awards. Where an art professor might be disdainful of ads for, say, Radio Shack, Sears, or Safeway, students in our "agency" learned to balance art training with "street" experience.

### **Literature Review**

Marra (1990) has indicated the paucity of information about student-run agencies in the literature.<sup>10</sup> Most began in the mid-1980s. Outside of the seminal work by Foskitt & Wolter (1990), Marra noted that programs have been described only by Doerner (1984), Morris & Isire (1986), and England (1987). When Marra surveyed seven of the largest university advertising programs in 1990, he found none with a student-run agency.<sup>11</sup>

### **A History of the Program**

As noted above, the SWAT team program started in Spring term 1985 at the urging of students in my corporate communication class who emerged from that class with enthusiasm and the basics of design, typography, copywriting, corporate photography, and management of a publication department. In addition, six teams from my Introduction to the Media class had done mock public relations campaigns for a sporting-goods shop, a bookstore, a fraternity accused of stealing 2000 pumpkins, and the Computer Science department. So I knew we had student potential for creative and practical ideas, and productivity--all spurred by real clients.

The first SWAT team had 12 students. They were divided into four teams. Obviously, they could not assume the many roles of the traditional agency staff (media buyer, traffic head, creative director, etc.). So they became account executives (AE), copywriters, and designers. Photographers served all teams. At our peak enrollment (23 students) one term, seven teams were fielded. Each team served five accounts on an eight-week basis--sufficient when projects were as basic as flyers and posters; if one client evaporated, the AE was required to find a replacement--a stipulation that introduced her/him to the vital art of prospecting, experience an agency internship is not likely to include.

SWAT Teams had no facilities or furnishings beyond unused classrooms, my office, the journalism library, and their own quarters. Nor were we funded by the department beyond minimal use of a copier; I taught on overload, traditional in many departments when unfamiliar waters are being charted. AEs met Fridays from 7 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. in my office; they set their three weekly staff meetings in

places of their choosing. As is customary in many agencies, I as the director met only with AEs, giving them the experience of managing their staffs.

We had no computers, no programs, and no laser printer. Instead, SWAT Teams used MacIntosh/IBM computers and the latest software in the computer laboratories at OSU's 13 colleges. The most popular spot was the library where a 24-hour lab with 100 microcomputers and an array of software kept teams at state-of-the-art status for graphics and type. Art was done on student drawingboards and desks, or the OSU library.

Clients underwrote all supplies as well as mileage and meals when teams traveled to Salem, Portland, or coastal towns. Because our students were students, our services were free. However, three clients did pay fees, one amounting to \$1000. Any expense was more than offset by the enrollment FTE that should have reimbursed the department.

### **Governance**

Nelson (1990) indicated that when student efforts are extended to the public, three governance pathways are possible.<sup>12</sup> The first is more suited to high school settings because students are monitored so closely that the instructor does almost all of the work; learning, creativity, and enthusiasm are choked off, and the wise and talented generally abandon the enterprise. By contrast, the second path is absentee governance with the guidance emanating only from the syllabus; such direction requires superbly talented and disciplined students, most with agency experience.

I took a middle course, one built on Japanese management systems with the loose-tight properties espoused by Peters and Waterman (1982).<sup>13</sup> This policy requires intensive and extensive training of AEs in management and then trusting them to guide subordinates to meet course accountabilities. Moreover, the corporate communications course used the Peters and Waterman book as a text and as a guide to management philosophy; thus, I could hardly espouse Peters and Waterman precepts in one class and revert, in the SWAT Team program, to the close monitoring so familiar to many non-trusting high school journalism instructors.

This decision is one of the most difficult that any department faces when inaugurating such a program; I have never regretted my decision to trust my AEs, for the 55 of them truly learned the management skills vital to agencies--or any operation.

Trust was the keystone on which the productivity and esprit des corps of SWAT Teams were built. Peters and Waterman note it is a given in the American workplace that three to eight percent of employees cheat management; but if management behaves as if everyone is cheating, it is not long before such suspicion and negativity

ensure that almost everyone does cheat.<sup>14</sup> I trusted my teams, and out of the 55 SWAT Teams, only three proved to be untrustworthy.

Creativity and dedication in advertising or public relations cannot exist if this long leash of trust--coupled with the collar of accountability--is not offered. "Ownership" of an operation and autonomy were essential workings in those "loose-tight" properties for SWAT Teams.

Top-down governance meant I had to demonstrate total support to the AE in all things--quarrels with subordinates, good and bad decisionmaking, and staff policies--and be tolerant of failures. A department faculty that explores setting up an agency guided by this governance philosophy needs to decide if it is truly willing to do such things. In exchange, most AEs responded with candor, willingness to admit faults, innovation, and fairness.

All SWAT Team members were told at the first class that I would not join team meetings nor undercut AE authority. Before a staffer complained to me, s/he would have had to exhaust all remedies with the AE--in keeping with a corporate chain of command. The AE, meantime, would have reported the situation fully at the Friday AE meeting and gathered documentation worthy of a university grievance hearing.

Only six students ever complained about the grades recommended (and exhaustively documented) by their AEs--out of the nearly 250 students who served on teams; mostly, it was to relieve resentments. One with a long record of absenteeism and non-performance sought repeal of an F first in vain from me, and then with the department chair; unfortunately, she stood him up too--but, amazingly, a year later rejoined the program because she wanted more portfolio materials.

I played the role of the demanding agency head who constantly tightened deadlines and issued fresh directives on reviewed projects, telling AEs to use this as a management goad. AEs often used this "us-against-the-prof" dynamic to drive staffs to early closings.

AEs, in turn, were admonished to teach agency skills, undergirding them with positive philosophies. Heavy emphasis was laid upon mentoring personnel and upon grooming some as AE replacements for next term; many became AEs because of that technique.

What kind of AE leadership came from such governance?

All AEs had enjoyed the positive reinforcement of performances in the corporate class, and applauded the views of Peters and Waterman who correlated this management style to excellent companies.<sup>15</sup> AE training involved heavy discussions of this and other modalities, however, for few on this proving ground of real-world experience felt trust and positive reinforcement would work for them.

Most loved praise (one of the reasons they liked the Peters and Waterman philosophy when it was applied to them), but seemed to dispense it sparingly. I saw many management styles: tyranny, passive-aggressiveness, hypercriticism, existentialism, indecisiveness, fear,

and the "mystery" technique so effective with many bosses who keep staffs guessing. When staffs were faced with martinets, the AE got mixed results: mutiny or obedience. Passive-aggressives seemed to drive teams to such exasperation that they either became self-starters or passive-aggressives themselves. Hypercriticism was tolerated only if the AE was an older-than-average student or had agency intern experience.

Several tenderhearted AEs were razed or scolded at Friday meetings by colleagues because they shrank from getting tough with team malingerers; one AE fired a designer moments before a presentation because of a track record of defiance and non-production; another tough-as-nails AE stood firm before an onslaught of tears and temper from a super-theatrical non-performer, fired her--and then burst into tears herself in my office ("this is the hardest thing I ever had to do," she wailed). Some AEs gave on-the-spot mini-awards for meeting deadlines; one sprang for pizzas, while another staged staff meetings at a major coffee house. One insisted on having her staff evaluate her at mid-term and went into a depression at the results, something many professors could have predicted.

One success story involved the talented, self-reliant art major who had worked in an agency and wound up with a team that had a "bluffer" and one with no self-confidence. Said she:

*I learned never to pick up a pencil in team sessions. I just prodded and poked and cheered and scolded and then they caught fire somehow. We just clicked, especially in client presentations.<sup>16</sup>*

There also was the unusual case of a former creative director of a St. Louis agency who emerged from a seven-year "burnout retirement" by signing on as a designer. Though she was not the AE, she was the mainspring of a team, cheerleading them into a superb presentation before a state department; based on this stint, she re-entered agency life and today is eventually took a job with a firm where she's deeply involved with direct-marketing promotions. ("The SWAT Teams woke me up," she said.)

Whatever the management style, AEs were instructed to measure staff in the first week of operation by performance, not alibis. Anyone who missed the orientation workshop or began skipping meetings and missing deadlines was urged to withdraw from the class. This taught them the valuable lesson of cutting their losses where "creative types" are concerned.

A basic lesson constantly emphasized and illustrated by team conduct was that an AE ultimately could control no one's behavior--especially someone creative--even with the considerable clout they held. This is street-corner wisdom, a bit of reality that runs counter to most management precepts built as they are on psychologically based motivational techniques. Those manipulative skills rarely work for long, however. As AEs always learned, it was project love and some unearthly source that powered creativity, energy, and responsible acts.

A business-like management demeanor also was underscored as being helpful to SWAT Team leadership. If an AE started sessions late, s/he could expect teams to arrive late. If an AE missed a team session, the door was opened for absenteeism. Allowing a deadline to slide by set the stage for procrastination. To get timesheets, it was necessary for AEs to stick to definite periods during the week for their delivery. Because of varying schedules for students, each team had an envelope outside my office used to drop off work and to pick up assignments; AEs learned to be strict about the rule that team members had to check the envelopes daily.

Another aspect of governance was requesting and implementing team feedback at quarter's end on how to fine-tune the SWAT Team program. Decisions on everything from mandatory timesheets and earning three to five credits to grading criteria and scheduling systems grew out of such input. Each change strengthened and improved the program.

### Operations

Marra's model agency operates on a semester system with six weeks spent gearing up for operations.<sup>17</sup> The SWAT program's gear-up time was prior to the term's start, for operations could last only eight weeks out of 10-week term.

Near term's end in the corporate class, I would circulate a signup sheet asking prospective members to designate a team position. All had to have shadowed a team that quarter for a week to be eligible. That rule came from AE feedback and resulted in weeding out those whose interest and energies would have been minimal; some "shadows" (students exploring the program) learned they were unsuited for advertising and public relations; for others, "shadowing" a team was the start of a career.

My decision on who would become an AE was based chiefly upon class performance or from art or agency backgrounds. Each member then received a packet of operational materials, including the announcement of the orientation meeting and Saturday short course for the following term. All received a welcoming letter outlining the program's history and rationale along with course expectations. Also included were a syllabus, grading information, a resume with SWAT credentials, articles about SWAT Teams, a weekly timesheet, and materials for a comprehensive and ad copy.

The AE packets contained management handouts--one from the *Harvard Business Review*--typography specimen lists, a compositor's spec sheets and instructions, written feedback from previous AEs, university publications regulations, and a list of prospective clients. There also were sample letters explaining work practices to clients and a "Dear John" letter dispatched by AEs whenever clients missed three appointments. Teams "cut their losses" too.

When I took calls from prospects, I would explain that teams were comprised of students and were not professional advertising or

public relations staff members. That teams would work for eight weeks only. If projects were not completed, another term's team would close them. An AE would telephone before the first class day to work out appointment scheduling and to get initial research.

Operations officially began a week before the term's start with a three-hour AE session during which they drafted clients and staffs and heard my lecture. Because each had client project lists and were reminded of the advantage of a good mix of clients and projects, AEs generally were primed for the "draw;" they could swap clients at session's end. If we lacked clients--as was the case in the first two years of operations--AEs would sign up for prospects from the campus list to prevent duplicate visits by other AEs. Each had to have five clients in place--and research completed--when they met their staffs.

When AEs drew for staff members, they turned back names if there was a conflict of interest or a friend. They heard war stories about conflicts and were told that friendships ended when an AE had to give orders to someone s/he knew. They swapped staffers at the end of the drawing.

My lecture would review the program's history and include many specific examples about client-staff relationships. Peters (1984) points out that positive value of sharing such stories and myths.<sup>18</sup>

Their first assignment was to contact clients that afternoon, to present the letter spelling out the conditions of performance and to reinforce them with an oral explanation of services. AEs also did preliminary research so they could have a schedule and research in place when they met their staffs. Clients also were given a meeting schedule--a tangible that committed time for team appointments.

Scarcely an AE came unprepared to the first class (a Friday 7 a.m. event) when all SWAT Team members spent two hours learning about operations and convening as groups. Most AEs were nervous about taking command, but certainly resembled executives as they took charge following my half-hour lecture on SWAT history and class expectations.

The next morning all students were required to attend the half-day Saturday short course on copywriting, designing and AE leadership. Lectures were delivered by alumni, university printers and--after 1987--our compositor. AE alums came from Portland and Salem, often at their own request, to share their experiences.

Then, the teams plunged into the real-world of agency professionals.

Most teams visited clients early in the following week of class to clarify all needs about a project and to complete research. Copywriters learned that first drafts faced the "approval system" that would evolve into dozens of revisions. Designers learned that clients were less interested in art than matter. They confronted clients changing their minds or postponing appointments, suffered creative blocks, balanced other classes with assignments, prepared comprehensives, endured staff disputes and exhaustion. Most students truly earned their credit hours.

My only classroom contact was the 7-8:30 a.m. Friday meeting of AEs which went on even when the university was closed for two of the few times in history (a bombing and a silver-thaw). In the bombing, AEs calmly picked up portfolios and briefcases and continued client and project reviews as we adjourned to a stairwell in another building.

Fellowship and cheerleading almost always developed at those Friday meetings as AEs sipped coffee, munched pastry, and waited their turns to update accounts. Each rundown was followed by feedback from me and other AEs. They would show work in progress or I would sign off on finished projects, sometimes returning them for additional work. AEs learned to share deadline and production problems, and to offer solutions on dealing with difficult clients and temperamental staffers.

They also were required to update staff performances so that fires could be built before firings became necessary. Many tribulations served as examples for future teams. They learned that threats of firing were more conducive to obtaining productivity and cooperation than grade threats. Unusual agency-like situations also surfaced. Like the client who insisted an AE date him. Or the out-of-state client who operated via Federal Express and changed designs nine times within the quarter. Or the male AE whose all-male staff dropped the course, but was quickly replaced by an all-women group of "shadows" who served not just the required week, but the entire term. Or a doublecross from a client's deputy who misdirected a team and let them undergo a dressing-down from the client.

Sometimes clients suffered extraordinary budget cuts that cancelled projects, but they did not have the heart to tell their teams. Kills and postponements were not unusual; a 1986 team still awaits a project that "will run any day now;" a 1988 team received copies of a color brochure in Spring 1991 and were pleased because two were interviewing at agencies and welcomed project materials. Such frustrations provided a wealth of experience in the ad/pr world.

I always made announcements and gave mini-lessons about news/gossip from the industry in general and Portland in particular to link them to career networks. Several joined the Portland chapters of the Public Relations Society of America, Ad-2, and International Association of Business Communicators. When a principal of a noted agency resigned, she was startled to get a call that afternoon from an AE about joining her new agency.

Another commonplace was project devotion. Even though the term grades might be on the books and the term long over, dedicated teams sometimes stuck with projects until they were completed, sometimes months later. One team bird-dogged a handsome brochure for a year; another AE called for four years about a job that has been shelved. Such was the power of ownership and a portfolio project.

AEs were coached on professional presentations. Many were informal sessions on rough drafts and yet-another copy revision. The most formal "dog-and-pony" show was made to a 22-member hospital

board, perhaps the most unnerving experience endured. The team prepared until 2 in the morning and put on their "blue suits" for a 9 a.m. presentation. Enroute, however, the copywriter suddenly had a brainstorm for a new slogan and approach. They "caboozed" the concept to their boards and presentation and were stunned to find that idea accepted by the board.

### Recommendations

Marra points out that one major difficulty encountered-- also cited by Foskitt and Wolter--is that:

**...inexperienced work from students simply won't endear the students, the instructors, and perhaps the advertising program and university to clients and the outside world. That is why organized and continual monitoring of that work needs to occur.<sup>19</sup>**

The SWAT Team had few problems with client satisfaction. All but a handful were delighted to get free help in public relations and advertising--and to give students a career boost into the bargain. The "outside world" for us involved the director of the university's Publication Department, two art professors, the journalism professor who taught photography and typography, and a 1985 client who mistrusted and was totally uncooperative with her team from the outset. One caveat for those taking the helm of a student-run agency is that it is bound to arouse action from jealous and "internal assassins--" possibly in your own department.

Most projects were simple and always driven by client dictation. Because university rules mandated Publication Department review for most print projects, however, many clients were startled to see marked changes in designs. The result: students learned what happens when one agency takes over the accounts of another; but 95 percent of the work was completed for the printing department and, too, this OSU unit got dozens of accounts--without soliciting them--to add to their records. Ultimately, these five individuals persuaded outgoing chair to shut down the program in June 1989. Almost immediately, the Art Department launched the same program, triggering Nelson's wry comment in his review of the SWAT Team program about "territorial" conflicts faced by student agencies."<sup>20</sup>

Had we continued operations, I would have increased my visitations--I spent three days observing Portland's Borders Perrin & Norrander--to stay current in agency trends, systems, and to elicit internship and job-placement opportunities. I also would have instituted staff evaluations of AEs, to monitor morale and skills mastered. And I would have done another graduate survey to measure how team experience helped careers and to evince suggestions.

Although I tried regularly to develop interest and rapport from the Publications Department, my departmental colleague, and the Art Department--with no success--I would have continued that effort; after

the program's demise, I still sent the art chair referral leads and outside mail materials for student-run agencies.

Turf jealousies are an insoluble reality of campus life and, ultimately, can and have destroyed programs; it may be one of the reasons why only two dozen programs exist among the nation's more than 400 journalism and mass communication departments.

But when the overriding benefits of a student-run agency are considered, both Marra and I agree that such a program is necessary for the 1990s because it is perhaps the strongest career preparation that can be given to advertising/public relations majors.<sup>21</sup> Such benefits outweigh adverse experiences. Each time I get a letter from alumni--and I get them now at McNeese State University--telling me that a SWAT Team project or experience was instrumental in getting an agency position, I become more and more convinced of how vital a student agency is to career preparation.

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1 James L. Marra, "A Necessary Course for the 1990s: The Student-Run Agency," paper for Advertising Division, convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 1990, *passim*.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Fred C. Zwahlen, letter to the OSU Burlington-Northern committee, April 21, 1987.

4 Marra, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

5 Roy Paul Nelson, professor of advertising at the University of Oregon, letter to OSU Journalism chair Jon Franklin, October 29, 1990.

6 J. Ronald Miner, director of Oregon State University's International Agriculture division, letter to OSU Journalism chair Jon Franklin, July 19, 1990.

7 Michael Blinkhorn, personal communication, October 23, 1990.

8 Stacey Perry, personal communication, October 8, 1990.

9 Janet Ovall, personal communication, Mzy 20, 1992.

10 Marra, *op. cit.*, p. 4

11 Marra, *Ibid.*

12 Nelson, *op. cit.*

13 Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, Jr. (1982). *In Search of Excellence; Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies*, New York: Warner Books, pp. 318-236.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 236.

15 *Ibid.*, pp. 67-73, 123-124.

16 Kerrie Tatone, statement to SWAT account executives, January 15, 1987.

17 Marra, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

18 Thomas J. Peters and Nancy Austin. (198). *A Passion for Excellence: The Leadership Difference*, New York: Warner Books, pp. 326-331.

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- 19 Marra, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
  - 20 Nelson, *op. cit.*
  - 21 James L. Marra, personal communication, December 15, 1990.