

## **University Communications/Relations Committee**

**April 13, 2015**

### **Minutes submitted to Faculty Congress**

The meeting of the University Communication and University Relations committees focused on three areas: external relations, alumni relations, and the communication challenged Villanova faces with the change to the Doctoral/Research Carnegie category.

First, there was a presentation on the work of the University Relations Committee. Chris Kovolski, the Associate Vice President for Government Relations and External Affairs presented the organizational chart and summarized the activities of his office, which include taking a proactive approach to creating and maintaining relationships at the local, regional, state, and federal levels of government. At the local level, this includes the Friends of Villanova Program (which allows our neighbors access to facilities), event participation and sponsorship, resource sharing, community service initiatives (like the Day of Service), and regular meetings to encourage communication with Villanova's neighbors (which has since led to the approval of Villanova's Lancaster expansion). Similarly, at the regional level, Villanova's involvement in the World Meeting of Families, with the area Chambers of Commerce, and with the City of Philadelphia Mayor's Office of Education are examples of the ongoing work of the office. At the state and federal levels, the Office is working to build relationships to the alumni working in working in government as elected officials, as aids and support staff, and in policy and non-profit sectors.

The second agenda item was a presentation by George Kolb, Associate Vice President for Alumni Relations. Besides discussing the usual alumni events, Kolb discussed the One Book Villanova program and the efforts of a task force to better engage and maintain connections with alumni of color. It was tacitly acknowledged that this will play a role in the University's effort to attract and retain a more diverse student body, which is a key component of the University's strategic plan.

The final item was a presentation from Anne Diebold, Vice President for University Communication. The main point of discussion was Villanova's reclassification to the "Doctoral/Research" category. Diebold predicted Villanova would premier in this category somewhere in the 45-55 range when the various media rankings (e.g U.S. News and World Report) are published. Diebold stated that communication challenge concerns distinguishing ourselves from competitors and managing the kinds of comparisons and other messaging problems to which this new ranking will give rise. She noted that we had gotten by on the "#1" messaging for a long time, but now we face the challenge of thinking more carefully about communicating our distinctive value in the marketplace of perceptions. The committee's discussion of Diebold's presentation was primarily focused on outrage about the coming ranking change and concern over the impact it will have on the way alumni, parents, potential students, and supporters perceive Villanova, rather than focusing on the looming messaging challenge Diebold was reporting.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted: Gordon Coonfield (Communication), Sarah Vaughan- Brakman  
(Philoso)

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