

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION - March 16-20, 1966

Summary: Taking advantage of a point in time, the Fifth Anniversary of the period in which the Charter of the Graduate Research Center was issued, this program was designed to promote the objectives of the institution through a series of planned events designed for several audiences.

The Graduate Research Center, being a unique institution for fundamental research and advanced education, must accomplish communications through five distinct channels at five separate levels to the following audiences: (1) scientific, (2) educational, (3) industrial, (4) volunteers and donors, (5) general public.

The following objectives, which to a degree represent the problems of a still-young institution, were outlined as a part of the Center's continuing program of development, public relations, and publicity:

1. Further definition and projection of a strong institutional image: The "going concern" as opposed to the "new" institution.
2. Show a change in emphasis from the "pure research--science is wonderful" program and image to a program of education augmented by research, chiefly at the post-doctoral level, and the existence of strong ties and alliances to universities of the region.
3. Show additional emphasis on ties to industry and community.
4. Give full emphasis to accomplishments, with special honor to leading individuals, while still maintaining a forward-look.

The means for accomplishing these objectives had to be within fairly easy reach, without requirement for exotic materials, use of agencies, and so forth; in effect, the program had to be home-grown, capable of execution almost within a normal range of staff member activities, and capable of accomplishment at reasonable cost.

Available were normal publicity routes, meeting locations, and a basic staffing of 12 persons, from Offices of Development, Information, Administration, Grant and Contract Administration, and Campus Facilities. Roughly three months' time was open for planning.

All measurements of success were not completed as this summary was written. But the following elements of success existed within the month after the Fifth Anniversary Celebration:

1. Increased tempo of co-operative planning for the future, from three major universities outside the immediate Dallas-Fort Worth area.
2. Visits from three major industrial laboratories, by their leading research personnel, to explore possible co-operation. These visitors were also from outside the region.
3. Return visits, after participation in the program, by a director of Federal Office of Education programs and his assistant.
4. Thirty-minute television coverage, released Saturday, April 9, by a major local station (KRLD-TV, Dallas).
5. News clipping returns, through wire services, in the highest volume ever received for a Center event.

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Analysis:

1. DESCRIPTION

The Fifth Anniversary Celebration involved, as plans were finalized and carried out, a combination of several elements: A major Symposium on Graduate Education, keyed to the needs of the Southwest, and bringing in more than 125 leaders of education, science and industry; an Appreciation Dinner for the Graduate Research Center's founding President and Scientific Director, as he stepped down from these duties for health reasons, with public recognition of his key role in the five years of the GRC's development; the semi-annual meeting of the GRC's Board of Trustees and Advisory Council, involving more than 125 members total; announcement of a 160-acre segment of campus land development for industrial research laboratory sites; a special visit, by invitation, of more than 100 regional civic leaders; and open houses, attended by more than 600 interested citizens.

Publicity keys included in the program and its related functions were: Use of a house flag, previously transported to the Antarctic Continent and back on a scientific expedition, and a Texas flag, which had also been taken to the Antarctic and autographed by expedition members; this led to presentation of the Texas Flag to the President, State Fair of Texas, for permanent display, with a related feature story release on the 1928 Byrd Expedition travels of Dr. Lloyd Berkner, the GRC's first President and Scientific Director; the house flag was flown at the campus site during the program; publicity photography returns were excellent.

Also, an announcement by Director James Webb, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, that Doctor Berkner would receive NASA's highest medal award (Public Service Medal); the award to be made in October, 1966, with public announcement cleared for use at the date of the Appreciation Dinner.

Further, because no actual construction was imminent at the time of the anniversary week, a symbolic tree-planting ceremony, involving representatives of surrounding land owners and communities, was staged to point up the melding of resources by and near the Center and to promote and dramatize the formal announcement of the 160-acre Technology Park development at the Center. Television and newspaper coverage of this event was good.

Displays of building models planned by industry were used in the main building at the campus, as well as two art exhibits; one of these was a judged exhibit, involving entries of community children from grades 1-12 of the school systems, and handled through the local Civic Arts Society.

2. OBJECTIVES

Objectives have been noted in the summary statement. These are basically the same as the long-term objectives of the Graduate Research Center, which depends on donors for construction funding, and for start-up costs in basic research. In summary, the task of all Development and Information programs is the building of a favorable climate for philanthropy. The total program, opened in 1963, has produced more than \$5 million in gifts and pledges, and has been expanded to regional and national proportions. Thus, the objectives are pre-conceived to the extent that they derive from and fit into the over-all plan of long-range operations, and the only special planning requirement for the Fifth Anniversary Celebration was a choice of points that needed new or additional emphasis.

3. PERSONNEL

General policy was determined by President Gifford K. Johnson, whose first anniversary in his office was also an item of publicity information. The organization for the Celebration was drawn from and arranged by the Development and Information Office, headed by Vice President James S. Triolo; Associate Development Officer Richard T. Lipscomb served as co-ordinator for the whole program. Information Officer Alfred T. Mitchell and Assistant Director Patricia Atmar handled media information.

From the Administrative Office, Asst. Corporate Secretary Patricia Jackson handled arrangements for Governors, Trustees and Advisory Council Member's meetings; John Henson, Director of Administrative Services, supervised physical plant requirements for sessions at the campus site.

Dr. Lloyd Berkner and Presidential Assistant Ross C. Peavey brought together the Symposium on Graduate Education.

Grants and Contracts Administrator John S. Robottom arranged tours for all visitors, with John J. Foley, Associate Development Officer, handling the program and luncheon for area leaders and Mr. Lipscomb supervising the open house and display functions.

James D. Braham, Campus Facilities Office, arranged the program for the 160-acre Technology Park announcement.

The organization was not a formal one; there were no regular committee meetings involving the group. Instead, it was simply a matter of keeping good liaison among people who were adding a few extra items to their more-or-less regular assignments. Telephone and simple memorandum communications were entirely adequate for the purpose.

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4. CHRONOLOGY

The Fifth Anniversary Celebration planning began with a simple memorandum of suggestions within the Development and Information Office, representing combined staff thinking about possibilities of exploiting the fact that five years had passed since charter issue. The memorandum was written December 17, 1965. The program began March 16, 1966.

Responsibilities were laid out by February 2, 1966. From that point on, there was periodic review of status for the various items of the program with information centralized at Mr. Lipscomb's desk. In short, a well-drilled team planned, revised, and executed a series of meshed, general assignments with an absolute minimum of conferences, memoranda and "calendar checking."

5. BUDGET/COSTS

As of the date of this study, less than one month after the Fifth Anniversary Celebration, costs accumulated in a special account (to a single charge number) are in the order of \$4,900. These funds are drawn from the general, philanthropic funding of the Graduate Research Center. The amount represents less than 10 percent of the annual Information budget, for comparison, and less than one-tenth percent of the over-all operating budget of a non-profit institution with a faculty and staff of more than 300. The total expenditure is expected to be not more than \$5,000, which is also within the ratios noted.

6. SPECIAL PROBLEMS

As mentioned in the summary, the Graduate Research Center is a unique institution with several communications channels which must be utilized to gain full recognition of the Center's mission and purpose. The Fifth Anniversary events were planned and executed to expose a maximum number of each of the five "publics" to the Center's accomplishments, current assets and future objectives. Vehicles used to reach these publics were as follows:

Scientific Audience: Invitation to attend the symposium on graduate education and to visit the Center and discuss pure research with the faculty and staff.

Educational Audience: Similar invitations to attend and participate in the symposium. Fourteen of the 24 participants on the symposium program are directly associated with higher education. These individuals were selected to ensure favorable communication within the educational community.

Industrial Audience: Emphasis toward reaching the industrial audience was placed in the industrial research-oriented land development program. This program was constructed to gain both participation and endorsement by several local industrial firms.

Volunteers and donors: Primary communication to this group was handled through the meetings of the Center's board and advisory council. Additional contact was gained through invitation to attend the special dinner honoring Dr. Lloyd Berkner. Other invitations were sent to all donors to attend the open house sessions.

General Public: Coverage of this public was directed primarily through newspaper and TV-radio media and by general invitation to attend the open house sessions. Promotional spots were carried on several local radio stations as a public service in addition to the consistent and generous coverage of all anniversary events provided by local television and newspapers. Use of one radio outlet's "Headline Cruiser" truck system, inviting the public to the open houses by visual display, was freely given. A 30-minute documentary film was produced by the combined efforts of one major TV station and the Information Office staff, as a second coverage of the Fifth Anniversary events. This program, broadcast shortly after anniversary week, reached an estimated general audience of approximately 20,000 TV homes. Duplicate video tape and kinescope transfer were also made, for broadcast at other regional locations.

7. MEASUREMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It may sound like a "Texas Brag" to say that few, if any, mistakes were apparent in the Fifth Anniversary Celebration; the whole program went through with no hitches, and no ill effects have been reported from any source.

With no quantitative measurement of success possible, the Development and Information Office staff believes that the objectives were met.

The returns are still coming in. The Development and Information Staff believes strongly that (particularly through the Symposium, and related publicity including magazine reports and depth features still being developed by media of the region) the Fifth Anniversary Celebration will "bubble along"

for many months to come. Most simply, the Graduate Research Center made several hundred new friends by its observance--even though there have been open houses, symposia, art exhibits, etc., at fair frequency in the past.

Recommendation basically is that any institution can and should attempt to exploit its key dates; if possible, keep the whole process simple; employ staff at their strengths, working out details with co-ordination as opposed to supervision.