Staff Teams for Debate Success

By Jill Wagner

The public safety department adopted a motto in the weeks leading up to Oct. 16 that described the demeanor of offices across campus: Semper Gumby. The tongue-in-cheek credo was borrowed from the San Diego Police Department, which remained “always flexible” when planning for the Republican National Convention held in San Diego this August.

Director of Public Safety Rana Sampson spoke for hundreds of people across campus when she described the importance of taking in stride changes throughout the debate planning process. The task of securing the campus for high-level political leaders required immense flexibility, as did the hundreds of tasks undertaken to put on the biggest event ever to hit USD.

While some of the more obvious endeavors included renovating Shiley Theatre and planning for the arrival of more than 1,500 press members, many efforts by individuals and departments were not apparent until debate week.

By Monday, Oct. 14, the plans were in motion. Students and employees parked at an off-campus lot and a shuttle service transported them to classes and work. The main dining room and Traditions grill opened for business in tents on the Hahn University Center parking lot. Lecture halls and the Sports Center gym were equipped with large-screen monitors for a live video feed of the town hall meeting between President Bill Clinton and Republican candidate Bob Dole.

In Sampson’s department, virtually every employee was engaged in securing buildings, directing the parking arrangements and providing protection during the week-long hoopla. The 60 USD public safety personnel worked closely with the Secret Service and San Diego Police Department, which dispatched officers to Alcalá Park to aid with security.

“It’s an historic event and we want to shine,” Sampson said while in the midst of planning.

The physical plant staff that keeps Alcalá Park shining year-round paid special attention this summer to the courtyards, hallways and foyers near Shiley Theatre. One hundred and thirty five employees worked 12-hour shifts, six days a week to relandscape the Camino courtyard and Camino-Founders patio, paint the interior and exterior of several buildings, and build scaffolding for television cameras.

Asked how such detailed projects were completed in addition to extensive renovation to other buildings and the usual summer clean-up work, Director of Physical Plant Roger Manion said, “It just gets done.”

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Doing What We Do More Efficiently

By Jill Wagner

University officials recently made their first move to begin an extensive analysis of the school's business practices by appointing Larry Gardepie, formerly assistant director of human resources, to head the project. Gardepie will work with departments to evaluate where technology can be used more efficiently and thus make employees better able to serve customers (i.e., students or other employees).

Known in the corporate world as business process re-engineering, the endeavor now under way on campus had its beginnings in the university's strategic plan. The overriding goal of the plan calls for providing a college education without pricing the average family out of the market, according to Fred Brooks, vice president for finance and administration.

"That brings you to a discussion of how to do what we do for less money, but without changing the nature of the university," Brooks says.

He and Gardepie are quick to note the intention is not to downsize or eliminate jobs.

"We don't have extra people around here," Brooks says. "Instead of having people embroiled in paper work, we need to have them relating to students and employees."

Gardepie will work as a facilitator, first guiding the departments through an evaluation of their job processes, then helping the employees decide how to run the office more efficiently. His background in human resources will help him work with individuals and his knowledge of business software will help in applying new technology to streamline department functions, Gardepie says.

Administrators close to the process emphasize the need to eliminate duplicate processes by making the same information available to all offices through a computer network. A student's address, for example, is currently taken every time the student fills out a new form or visits a different office. Ideally, that information would be available to any office with a computer, saving the student and employee from processing data that is already in the system.

The same sort of technological streamlining can be utilized in human resources, says Judith Muñoz, director of the department.

A centralized recordkeeping system would allow quick access to employee data, whether it's a supervisor, payroll, benefits or the athletic department needing the information. Human resources personnel would then be more accessible to customers seeking individual attention.

Streamlining and adding new technology will necessarily change some job descriptions, Brooks says, and the university is fully prepared to invest in the retraining of employees. The new computer training room in Maher Hall will be integral to that effort.

Gardepie is beginning his work with the telecommunications resale department, which handles the billing for every phone on campus. An outside company currently processes the bills and Gardepie is helping to bring the work in-house, which could save the university up to $70,000 a year. At the same time, he is completing an inventory of the various business practices across campus for a report to the board of trustees and vice presidents in February.

With his report in hand, the vice presidents will set a priority list of which departments to work with next, Gardepie says. The analysis, though, is not something that will be rushed. It could take years.

"Some changes will be very complex," Gardepie says. "It takes time to gather the proper input and build consensus."

For more information, Gardepie can be reached at ext. 4822 in Maher 120.

Leave the Cooking to USD's Catering

Are you looking forward to Thanksgiving but not the hours it takes to prepare a traditional turkey dinner? The catering department has the answer!

Nona Janus, catering manager, and her staff are cooking up a storm and invite USD employees to order a complete holiday dinner or individual items from an extensive menu. The dinner includes a whole roasted turkey, stuffing, whipped potatoes, cranberries, sweet potato souffle, gravy, rolls and pumpkin pie. Individual menu items include anything from the dinner, soups, side dishes and desserts.

Orders must be made by 3 p.m., Nov. 21. Food will be available for pick-up between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., Nov. 27. Watch campus mail for a flier with a complete menu, prices and order form. For more information, call Nona at ext. 4560.
Bunton Cherishes Surrogate Family

Growing up in University City, Sandy Bunton was one of five children. Now, in her job as administrative assistant for residence life, Bunton feels again like a big sister to five surrogate siblings.

Larry Perez, Kathy Bruzzese, Lura Poggi, Mary Shepherd and Melanie Horn are resident directors for the various student housing complexes scattered across campus. When they need advice or a friendly ear to vent frustrations, Bunton is the first person they turn to. She’s the objective listener who always seems to have the right answers and the wise older sister who knows the ins and outs of working in residence life.

She’s also the person who kept the family together and the office running smoothly when Director of Residence Life Skip Walsh spent much of the past two years on medical leave.

For all of these reasons, the five RDs nominated Bunton for 1996 Employee of the Year and cheered the loudest when she was named one of three finalists at the June Employee Appreciation Picnic.

“To quote one of the work-study students, Sandy is ‘awesome’ and we ditto that compliment,” the RDs wrote to the selection committee. “Students, staff, administrators and non-USD individuals enjoy Sandy’s personal style and approachable demeanor.”

In her five years at the university, Bunton has mastered her various duties to the point that Walsh too seeks her advice and knowledge of the inner workings of campus life. It’s a relationship Bunton cherishes.

“My boss and I work really well together,” she says. “He’s given me the freedom to just go ahead and do things on my own.”

That trust gets Bunton through days that can get harried in the residence life office tucked in the northeast corner of Hahn University Center. She provides clerical support to Walsh and the five RDs, supervises the work-study students, compiles minutes from the numerous committees Walsh heads, schedules meetings for the residence life staff and handles the budgeting paper work.

In recent years, Bunton has taken on managing the paper work and support for the campus diversity program and human relations workshops. And when Tom Cosgrove’s assistant left, Bunton spent two months working for the associate dean of student affairs while also keeping the residence life office in order.

One of the things she appreciates most about her work, Bunton says, is that she can leave it at the office when she retreats to her new house in Clairemont to spend the evening with her children. When her surrogate family sees the devoted mother playing with Valen, 2, and helping Amy, 15, with her homework, they understand why Bunton is such a great big sister.

New SEA Officers Elected

It’s election season at Alcalá Park and the Staff Employees Association is prepared to seat new representatives. There are several open seats on the board, which includes representatives from each building on campus and four executive positions.

All staff employees are eligible to sit on the board for the two-year terms. If you are interested in becoming a representative, submit your name to Becky Gilbert, SEA president. New board members will be seated at the Nov. 13 meeting in the Hahn University Center.

Elections for the SEA officers were held at the Oct. 9 meeting, when four veteran and one new SEA member joined the board for two-year terms. Frank Holcomb, parking services officer, and David Edgar, paste-up artist in the Print Shop, will serve as co-presidents. Laura Nottoli, secretary in University Relations, moves in as vice president and Alicia Buenrostro, gift coordinator in advancement services, will serve a second term as treasurer. Margie Carroll joined the math and computer science department as faculty secretary this summer and soon after became interested in the SEA. She will serve as secretary beginning in December when the new executives take office.

New Hires and Promotions

Congratulations to the following employees who recently were promoted:

Sheryl Lorey-McAtee, executive administrator in donor relations; Tina Smith, executive assistant in the bursar’s office; Daniel Zasueta, media assistant in media services; and Susan Miller, faculty secretary in the School of Law.

Welcome to the following faculty, administrators and staff members who recently joined the USD community:

Kenneth Chop, disability services; Michelle Garcia, financial aid; Theresa Lu, counseling center; Raji Pannu, counseling center; Noah Stanley, athletics; Chris White, undergraduate admissions; James Bolender, chemistry; Patricia Garver, School of Nursing; Jane Georges, School of Nursing; Mary Hotz, English; Kathy James, School of Nursing; Gwen Morse, School of Nursing; Rick Olson, engineering; Mary Ann Thurkettle, School of Nursing; Joseph Megow, printing and duplicating; Shahra Meshkhaty, academic computing; Helen Quinteno, custodial services; Jessica Gastro, legal clinic; Erich Staebler, dining services; and Constance Tarlton-Lonsway, Manchester Family Child Development Center.

Passages

Births

A daughter, Hayley Nicole, to Jeff Hardick, master crafts-person in building maintenance, and his wife, Denise, on Sept. 23.

Deaths

Agnes Travinski, mother-in-law of Carl Eging, director of admissions and financial aid for the School of Law, on Sept. 13.

Bernice Farrens Rymer, faculty emerita of biology, on Sept. 16.

Wilbur O. Muller, father of Warren Muller, director of undergraduate admissions, on Sept. 24.

Jean Hermes, mother of Carol Lyman, student affairs director of student activities, on Oct. 3.
Debate
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Other department leaders answer in much the same way. Each member of each department worked diligently to complete debate preparations in concert with regular duties.

Judith Muñoz, director of human resources, teamed with colleague Pat Watson to coordinate credentialing of employees and visitors who needed access to restricted buildings like the Hahn University Center and Camino Hall. The detailed work of checking each request kept the two busy, as did the last-minute instructions on which areas of campus would be restricted and when, much of which was decided by the Secret Service.

Barbara Peterson, assistant director of the Office of Community Service-Learning, knows about details. Last spring she created a database and began logging the names of student volunteers who signed up to help with debate preparations. As debate week neared, Peterson filled hundreds of requests for student workers from the Commission on Presidential Debates, the media and campus departments.

Dave McCluskey, director of information systems, and Gary Dobson, telecommunications supervisor, worked with Pacific Bell to run cable and install more than 1,200 temporary phones in the media workspace, production trailers and temporary offices.

McCluskey and Dobson also coordinated with the Secret Service, which has a strict edict against driving the presidential motorcade under power lines. In their efforts to get cable to all the right buildings, telecommunications could not string overhead lines above any possible motorcade route.

These technicalities also kept Director of Dining Services Rudy Spano on his toes. As Spano worked with a party rental company to set up the tents and outdoor kitchens on the Hahn University Center parking lot, he ran into questions like, “Where are the hand sinks for workers?” and “What about restrooms for the customers?”

While keeping students, employees and visitors well fed was one major hurdle, equipping the campus for all those folks to view the debate was the next. Antoine Marcais, director of media services, began his quest for television monitors, sound equipment and video projectors in June. Marcais was pleasantly surprised by the eagerness of big corporations to help out.

“I found out how much humanity is out there,” he says. “This kind of event brings out the best in people.”

The 16 media center staff members inventoried, tested and assigned the equipment to venues from the Sports Center gym to Shiley Theatre to a tent on West Point Field. Telecommunications technicians then took over, hooking up and programming hundreds of TVs.

Meanwhile, media center camera crews recorded press conferences, renovation work, student activities and special events for an archival video. They even took “before” and “after” footage of the classrooms transformed into candidate green rooms.

The so-called green rooms, traditionally places for the candidates to relax and prepare for their stage appearance, were furnished by Ruth Stanton, director of institutional design. She planned the rooms to feel as comfortable as living rooms and decorated them with furniture lent by several fine antique dealers and design studios.

Even though the days were long and the challenges many, Stanton spoke for all involved in the planning process when she said, “It’s been a fascinating experience.”