

How to contribute to the Communiqué and improve its quality



By **Barbara Batokova**
Editor-in-Chief

In response to the last semester's "recent controversies," as the series of unfortunate events regarding the Communiqué, Chatham College Progressives and the so-called "Coalition" came to be known, I would like to point out some important things and dispel some myths regarding the Communiqué.

On Nov. 29, from a statement issued by Chatham University President Esther L. Barazzone, Ph.D., it was clear that the production of the Communiqué was put on hold until further notice and that Issue 5 was prevented from being published.

I regret that the situation had to go so far that the freedom of the press at Chatham was jeopardized. I would like to point out that under my leadership, the Communiqué has

not printed one libelous story and will never print one. I believe that concerns about the Communiqué being a racist organization were unfounded and unnecessary, especially when hardly anyone bothered to investigate the issue in detail prior to the appointment of the faculty committee.

I regret that some students jumped to conclusions without critically analyzing the situation and evaluating their sources of information, which is something that every institution of higher education aims to teach its students.

I was appalled by some students lack of knowledge of the media and its function in a nation that prides itself in the freedom of speech and the press.

Before, as well as during the investigation of the "recent controversies," I was very well reminded multiple times that I am not an American citizen. However, I can say with confidence that I know more about American journalism than some American students on this campus.

After witnessing the frenzy that caused Dr. Barazzone to call the cooling-off period, in part to prevent further open forums where personal insults and threats replaced rational thought and behavior, suddenly it is not surprising that the Communiqué had not been in operation for the past years, because knowledge of journalism was missing on campus.

I regret the amount of energy that had to be put into trying to better the situation before and during the investigation. That energy was surely needed elsewhere.

I would like to point out that the Communiqué is not an academic organization, even though it relies on content produced by some undergraduate academic courses. Students enrolled in those classes are by default expected to be members; however they don't have to be.

The Communiqué is a student organization that is not funded by the CSG. It is open to all students on campus, undergraduate or graduate, except for members of the Chatham Student Government (CSG) and the Graduate Student Council (GSC), who can only be contributing writers in order to maintain the credibility and independence of the student newspaper.

As "The Associated Collegiate Press Model Code of Ethics for College Journalists" states, "to maintain the role of the press as an independent watchdog of government, a staffer should not be an elected or appointed member of student government."

Any member of the Chatham community, whether it be an undergraduate student, graduate student, student of the College for Continuing and Professional Studies, faculty member, or a member of the administration, can be a contributing writer.

Contributing writers will be held to the same journalistic standards as staffers and objectivity and maintaining the role of a journalist as an independent watchdog still apply to contributing writers while writing news stories. In practice, a contributing writer cannot write an objective account of an event

in which he/she took an active part, a situation which would constitute a conflict of interest. Considering that Chatham University has a small student body, conflict of interest is sometimes unavoidable, especially when covering athletic events. However, the Communiqué strives to prevent athletes reporting on sports.

Opinion pieces are subjective and conflict of interest does not apply, however they must present a rational opinion and must not incite violence or hate of any kind.

If a student would like to become a staffer, it is not necessary for him/her to have taken journalism classes, as there are other aspects of newspaper production such as advertising, layout, graphic design, photography and drawing cartoons. In fact, the Communiqué is in dire need of staffers with those skills.

The Communiqué has been accused of not covering Chatham events adequately, and of not reaching out to the community enough and being rather closed off, causing students not to think of the Communiqué as "their student newspaper." The Communiqué can confirm this sentiment through a number of anonymous letters received in the past.

Not to excuse the lack of coverage of certain events on campus, or mistakes that have been made by myself or the staff, it is important to know that the Communiqué is understaffed and lacks not only human resources, but also a proper newsroom and equipment.

More importantly, it is also the community's responsibility to voice

their opinion in a reasonable manner and try to remedy the situation, with which they are dissatisfied. I could count the times that we received a letter to the editor on one hand, and none of them expressed such dissatisfaction that seems to encompass the campus.

Taking into account the recommendations set forth by the "Report of the Faculty Committee to President Barazzone on the Recent Controversies," the Communiqué decided to take steps to strengthen the ties with the community and improve the flow of information.

We have set up a course on the Chatham University BlackBoard to provide an additional outlet for comments, suggestions and corrections other than letters to the editor. We have also posted our publication deadlines and a list of staffers. The Communiqué has announced the creation of its BlackBoard to the CSG President Alexa New and asked her to inform campus organizations during the CSG meeting on Jan. 16.

The Communiqué will also be working closely with the newly instated Communiqué Publishing Advisory Board, whose task is to help the Communiqué reach out to the community, help with recruitment, problem solve and clarify its mission.

However, the only people who can truly improve the Communiqué are students alone. Only those who are willing to commit day and night to a purpose that is bigger than grades on a transcript. A purpose that is called American journalism with all its sacrifices.

Without the media, the masses might as well be mute.



By **S.J. Antonucci**
Staff Writer

The media is the watchdog of our government and society. It spreads information and keeps the public informed. We are lucky to live in a country, where people are not punished for free speech.

The media can be powerful when influencing leaders and

changing opinions. People can use the media to their benefit to ensure that their voice is heard.

When I worked with people in the local battle to save Schenley High School, and slow down high school reform, the media was a crucial part of the process.

Media exposure helped to rally people together. The media spread awareness about the issues and raised questions about the situation.

People watching the news and reading the papers learned about what was going on and wrote letters to the editor, wrote letters to their school board members, and voiced their thoughts.

The media puts a spotlight on current events, and sometimes that spotlight is necessary in touchy situations.

Recently, the media has

been shining that spotlight on the Hill District and the drama with a new arena, a barely planned master plan, and cries for a community benefits agreement.

The media has been scrutinizing the moves of the government officials, politicians, and community organizations. News sources have captured local politicians fumbling with the situation, which has in turn applied more pressure.

With exposure through the media, people become more alert of the news happening around them and pay attention to what's going on.

Look at what's going on with the drink tax situation: many bars have the drink tax printed on their receipt as the "Onorato Tax."

Many establishments have hung pictures of Dan Onorato

and the county councilmen who voted to tax alcohol and plan not to serve any of them if they come to that bar.

The Drink Tax situation has gotten tons of media attention, because people are upset and they're screaming their thoughts and opinions.

The media can help keep an issue alive long enough so that the voices of the people play a role in the decision-making process.

Through the media, the masses have a voice. People learn about what is happening around them. People have a chance to respond to news and express opinions in a place where other people will be able to hear them. Some of the people listening are the decision makers, who are often elected officials.

When people who have jobs that depend on the votes

of their constituents, they have to listen to outcries. Their jobs depend on those votes.

So when angry masses of people talk about their dissatisfaction with a situation, and start talking about making their next vote count on Election Day, decision makers listen, and try to fix the situation.

The media is a public outlet for people to unleash their voices where their peers and decision makers will hear them. People can complain to their neighbors all day long about how they hate something.

But when people's opinions are published in a newspaper and shown on the news, their complaints are out in the public, and decision makers get active.

Without the media, the masses might as well be mute.

COMMUNIQUÉ

CHATHAM UNIVERSITY

Communiqué, a member of the Associated Collegiate Press, is published five times per semester by Chatham University students. Its purpose is to deliver news of importance to the Chatham community.

Letters submitted to the student newspaper must be 250 words or less and must be relevant to our audience. Submitted letters will be edited for clarity. Libelous or obscene letters will not be published.

Send letters to:
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Pittsburgh, PA 15232
Phone/Fax: 412-365-2931

Or e-mail to:
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Letters must be signed and must include a telephone number for verification. Anonymous letters will not be published. Publication of these letters does not mean endorsement of the views expressed.

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Communiqué Staff,

Thank you so much for highlighting our Experiential Learning Awards brown bag lunch in the most recent issue of the Communiqué [Vol. 64, Issue 4]. I know that this form of advertising for the awards will greatly increase the number of applications we receive, thus increasing the quality of the applications as well. I appreciate Ms. Gelli taking the time to talk with me and Amy Bittner about internship, environmental research, and travel abroad scholarship opportunities at Chatham, and hope you will continue to focus on these awards in upcoming issues.

However, I must kindly make two corrections to your article:

1. The Vira I. Heinz Scholarship Program for Women in Global Leadership is awarded yearly to three Chatham women, not just one. This changes the chart you inserted into the article drastically. Each recipient of the Vira Heinz award receives \$5,000 – bringing the total amount to \$15,000. This means there is a total of \$29,300

in scholarship awards available for either travel abroad or environmental research.

2. I am the coordinator for the experiential learning awards at Chatham, not the head of the selection committee. There are many fine individuals on this committee, including members of CAS and select faculty and staff. This committee kindly made me a member last year, and so I do have a voice in the selection process, but I have never been the head of the committee.

Thank you once again for focusing on our event for your most recent issue. I was surprised and thrilled to read the article, and hope it generates a lot of future interest in our programs.

Sincerely,

Jenée J. Libby
Coordinator for Volunteer & Donor Relations

Dear Editor,

I think something that was missed in "Do you waste paper" article from Issue 4, is that a lot of Chatham's printers do not print double-sided, as far as I know the library has the only printers that do. I think that this is a problem that the college needs to address, and if it is possible it would help if double-sided printing was the default setting on the printers, and not the other way around. Managing paper waste IS up to the students, but when we don't even have the option of printing on both sides in our dorms it is difficult.

Christina Gridley
Junior

Curious Cougar: Do you find it hard to access CSG information?



Jane Kelly
Junior

"I have never tried."



Angela Whalen
Junior

"I've never really thought about it as a concern. It's not obviously presented to me. If I wanted to find, I'm sure I could. But I don't know how to go about it."



Erica Parraniello
First-year

"No, because they don't publicize. We should know where the money is going and into what activities."



Bryn Dehmcke
Sophomore

"I've never really tried. I have a lot of friends in CSG, though."



Katana Bosetti
Junior

"I've never even tried. I wouldn't even know where to look."



Jamie Sarkis
Junior

"I've never tried to access the information, so I can't assess whether it's hard or not."