

Uncustomary Alliance

Troubling Union between Government and the Media in Victoria

Reporter Kayla Bell's 11-May-2011 [report for](#) *The Victoria Advocate* entitled "UHV faculty issues vote of no-confidence in provost" tells some of the story that an earlier **... Breaking News ...** [report here](#) at USMNEWS.net told about the vote of "no confidence" taken by a vast majority of the University of Houston-Victoria Faculty Council against UHV provost Suzanne LaBrecque. Bell's *TVA* report also generated a large number of comments from online readers, all of which seem (on 15-May-2011) to have been expunged by *TVA Online* administrators, making for yet another intriguing chapter in the situation developing at UH-V. A number of those now-missing comments conveyed a sense of distrust from the general public vis-à-vis *TVA*'s reporting on various issues, including those surrounding UH-V.

Since this story developed, a few USMNEWS.net readers have forwarded information that reveals an uncustomary, and even uncomfortable, relationship between *The Victoria Advocate* and the University of Houston-Victoria. One [piece of this](#) dubious relationship puzzle involves Paula Cobler, the "communications manager" for UH-V. According to UH-V, Cobler's "duties include supervising press releases and marketing copy, creating presentations, and assisting the media and faculty, staff and students to increase communication about UHV."



Paula Cobler

Chris Cobler

Cobler's bio also mentions her husband, Chris. That UH-V bio fails, however, to indicate that Chris Cobler is [the editor of](#) *The Victoria Advocate*. As sources point out, it is difficult to fault UH-V's decision to hire Paula Cobler to "manage" the public's perception of the state-funded university; in fact, with husband Chris in charge of *the* local print media outlet, UH-V's decision to hire Paula would have more upside than the institution could usually hope for out of this public relations position. The fact that the Coblers, particularly Chris, allowed this uncustomary alliance to develop via Paula's hiring by UH-V, is, according to sources, where *fault* in this situation should be placed. The newspaper's value in the community relies largely on the public's trust in its editor, and, to sources at least, that trust cannot be cultivated given the relationship that now exists between UH-V (Paula Cobler) and *TVA* (Chris Cobler). In other words, thinking that the *TVA* is simply another arm of the UH-V public relations arsenal is only natural for citizens of Victoria and surrounding areas.