

Texas Student Media

Board of Operating Trustees Meeting

November 21st, 2014 at 1:00 p.m.

Belo Center for New Media, KUT Community Room, BMC 1.108A

Austin, Texas 78712

Voting Members Present: Mary Dunn, Arthur D. Soto-Vasquez, Bobby Blanchard, Arjun

Mocherla, Pauline Berens, Adam Alloy, Heidi Toprac, Robert Quigley, Todd Nienkerk, Jeff Cohen

Voting Members Absent: Matt Eastin?

Non-Voting Members Present: Gerald Johnson, Riley Brands, Elisabeth Dillon, Rodrigo Leal, Edward Stockwell, Tess Cagle, Chris Gilman, Peter Flynn

Non-Voting Members Absent: Rohan Needel, Zo Asmail

Guests Present: Frank Serpas, Jacob Kerr, Kat Sample, Elly Dearman, Jordan Rudner, Curt Yowell, David Davis, Jr.

Meeting Opening

The Texas Student Media Board of Trustees October 24th meeting was called to order at 1:02 by Mary Dunn.

Approval of the Minutes of the October 24th, 2014 Meeting

Pauline Berens noted that the spelling of the word 'waive' needed to be corrected. Arjun Mocherla moved to approve the minutes of the October 24th, 2014 Board meeting. Heidi Toprac seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Executive Committee Report

Mary Dunn announced that the Executive Committee approved Jacob Kerr as the recipient of the Julia Jeffries excellence award in journalism. She also reported that the Executive Committee approved the transfer of funds from the TSM reserve to cover the deficit from the 2013-14 year and discussed the current status of hiring, including 4 positions that are being recruited for. These positions include an account executive for advertising, an administrative assistant for the business office, a print media advisor and a broadcast advisor. The inclusion of a web advisor was also discussed and determined to be out of the budget for this year but something to be considered for future years.

Activity reports from TSM Director and student managers

Before discussing the reports, Mary Dunn brought up the media law certification of student managers that was discussed at the last meeting. She noted that the journalism department had been contacted regarding the situation and it is being rectified, including the formality of an actual certification test. She has also met with some student managers to talk about the transition process and hopes to formalize a process of transition early next semester. This does not necessitate formal action from the Board.

Mary Dunn also told the board about generous gifts from the Communication Council and the Friends of the Daily Texan. She said that she is drafting a formal thank you for the contribution from the Communication Council and Elisabeth Dillon noted that the Daily Texan video department is putting together a thank you for the Friends of the Daily Texan gift.

Rodrigo Leal relayed the success of the KVRX 20 Year Anniversary Event. He said that they were still waiting on some alumni for their unfulfilled pledges but that they were looking at around \$17,000 coming in from the event, which cost KVRX about \$3,000.

Mary Dunn noted that there had been a change in permanent staff. The head of advertising, C.J., has left, and Mary Dunn took a moment to thank her for all she has done and wish her the best of luck. Her replacement will be coming in January and is currently being recruited for.

Mary Dunn also stated that advertising revenue for October was \$107,000, which was 70% of goal but is up from the October 2013 numbers. Gerald Johnson attributed this increase to a greater success with the tailgate but noted that it was still shy of our goal due to a budgeting error. In response to this the budget for the year is being redone.

Jeff Cohen noted that this is the time when businesses are deciding their budget for the upcoming year and Gerald Johnson replied that he was currently reaching out to businesses and advertisers.

Gerald Johnson then relayed the success of Master the Possibilities, which brought in \$13,000 in revenue and cost \$1,500 to produce. He stated that much of the success was due to the creation of content that fits the target audience and that there will be a second publication in the spring that is an opportunity for companies to recruit graduates and interns from the University. Gerald Johnson noted that despite this November numbers are only at 70 % of where they were last year. Mary Dunn recommended planning earlier with Master the Possibilities should this become an annual publication.

Mary Dunn recognized the google analytics certification and recommended it as a publishing life skill. The materials for training are free and the test costs \$50. Bobby Blanchard suggested the possibility of paying for student managers to take this test should they wish.

Curt Yowell said that the digital team has three students this semester.

Mary Dunn congratulated Tess Cagle for the success of the Cactus Yearbook this semester and said that she is trying to get in contact with some Texas Exes. Jeff Cohen said that he though the idea of selling ads to parents was a good one and asked what other big universities were doing with regards to their yearbooks and how technology was changing the field. Tess Cagle

said that a lot of universities don't know where the future is for yearbook right now but noted that she participated in a survey recently among top yearbooks. Once all of the data is collected it will be available to analyze. Gerald Johnson stated that they ordered same amount of yearbooks as in the past year (750). Last year 400 yearbooks were sold and there is an ability to reprint if necessary. This year the Cactus is transitioning from a more typical yearbook format to a "coffee table" format. Tess Cagle said that sales have not yet started and Mary Dunn suggested pushing this sales information on the other media outlets.

Edward Stockwell said that TSTV was discussing new cameras and would try to detail what they needed and come up with a number.

Rodrigo Leal said that the 20th Anniversary event helped KVRX to form a new relationship with one alumni who has reached out to help in different ways. He stated that the event has been really good for networking in general.

Chris Gilman said that the Travesty is focusing on streamlining processes in order to continue to increase quality and that they were in communication with some nationwide parody papers. Mary Dunn suggested looking into parody shirts and Todd Nienkerk suggested the possibility of production screens. All entities could have a screen printer to do shirts on demand at different events. This would be a good idea to make money without having lots of extras around. Chris Gilman also noted that Tinka the cat is a huge success as the most liked thing posted on Facebook and that social media in general is doing really well. Chris Gilman also expressed gratitude for a \$200 gift from the Communication Council. One recent change is the addition of a subscribe button for people to get the Travesty mailed to you.

Riley Brands stated that he met with Mike Horn who is working on the UT websites new design. He is trying to incorporate different ways for Texas Student Media and the Daily Texan to be included on the website. Mary Dunn congratulated Riley for adding a graduate student to the editorial board and suggested reaching out to GSA. Riley Brands stated that there are currently no solutions from the Texas Monthly but that he is comparing notes with the publisher with regards to advertising. He also did note that social media is worse this year but that this could be attributed to a lack of a couple really viral pieces that were present last year.

Elisabeth Dillon noted that the social media coordinator is much better this year and that the structure for running social media had not change. Todd Nienkerk suggested normalizing the data by isolating the viral pieces and then comparing social media. Mary Dunn noted that consistency across all forms of social media was crucial and branching out into different forms of social media was discussed. Adam Alloy suggested Reddit and Rodrigo Leal suggested using Snapchat, especially for the Travesty. Jordan Rudner stated that she had noted the decline in social media presence and that it might be best to try and find a middle ground with "clickbait."

Elisabeth went over other highlights from her report, stating that the Dallas Morning News photographer and a Daily Texan alumnus had come to talk with and mentor students from different departments.

Discussion and possible action on revisions to the TSM Handbook regarding qualifications for TSM student leadership positions

With regards to the Editor in Chief requirements, Mary Dunn noted that a lot of the language was the same as that for the Managing Editor.

Riley Brands clarified that the Editor in Chief needed to work two semesters total at the Daily Texan, and that one must be in Opinion and one outside of Opinion (either issue staff or permanent staff). This was agreed upon.

Riley Brands also requested that the requirements include no past disciplinary issues. Jeff Cohen asked for a definition of what he meant by “disciplinary issues.” Riley defined it as verbal or physical harassment. Todd Nienkerk noted that this seemed targeted and too vague to be implemented in the requirements. Mary Dunn also said that these situations get referred to the University and that there are usually privacy laws that make this information private. Robert Quigley reminded the Board that these requirements are supposed to be a minimum and that other issues would be revealed in the election. Pauline Berens also voiced that the requirements stated that applicants be “in good standing” and asked if good standing did not already imply not being on disciplinary probation. As the Board was not sure, it was decided that the definition of “in good standing” would be looked into. It was determined that this disciplinary issue addition would be left out and a vote was taken to keep the edits as written. The motion passed.

Mary Dunn suggested the creation of an Ethics Committee of three student members and two nonstudent members. Todd Nienkerk questioned the need for such a committee, suggesting that someone with an ethics issue could just approach Gerald Johnson. Heidi Toprac noted that a workaround would be necessary if someone on the Ethics Committee was the problem. It was determined that in such cases, the person in question would be responsible for recusing himself from the committee when dealing with the issue.

Todd Nienkerk noted some benefits of such a committee, particularly the ability to deal with issues in a much timelier manner and possibly being more accessible than the Board. It was decided that the committee would need to report all issues to the Board, and the Board would decide whether or not to discuss the issues in further detail. Heidi Toprac and Todd Nienkerk volunteered to serve on this committee.

Discussion and possible action regarding the appointment of The Daily Texan Managing Editor (spring)

Mary Dunn stated that Jordan Rudner, the only applicant for the Daily Texan Managing Editor position, meets the requirements for applicants.

Then Jordan Rudner discussed some points on her resume, as well as her vision for the Daily Texan. She stated that she wished to build on the paper’s momentum as well as fix some things quickly. One main point of focus was a 24 hour news room, stating that it was inappropriate to put pressure on editors to skip class, but still always keep someone in the basement by carefully hiring and arranging schedules. Another goal she emphasized was advocating community

outreach, especially obtaining the opinions of underrepresented minority communities. She also wants to bring back daily blogs.

Jeff Cohen expressed concern about the lack of other applicants for the position, but stated that after looking at Jordan's application he was very impressed and comfortable.

Bobby Blanchard made a motion to hire Jordan Rudner as the Daily Texan Managing Editor. Robert Quigley seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Item G was moved up.

Discussion of concerns raised by David Maly

Gerald Johnson provided a wrap up of the events concerning David Maly. He stated that he spent lots of time with David Maly and investigated his concerns. The Board has now revised the handbook policy and clarified when it is appropriate to work for another publication. Gerald repeated that David Maly had requested a public apology.

Robert Quigley noted that the Board should have acted long ago and that he had written an apology letter, which he passed around to be signed.

The meeting went into closed session at 2:46 p.m.

The meeting reconvened in open session at 3:34 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.