

Texas Student Media  
Board of Operating Trustees Meeting  
October 24, 2014 at 1:00 p.m.  
William Randolph Hearst Building, HSM 4.122  
Austin, Texas 78712

**Voting Members Present:** Mary Dunn, Arthur D. Soto-Vasquez, Bobby Blanchard, Arjun Mocherla, Pauline Berens, Adam Alloy, Matt Eastin, Heidi Toprac, Robert Quigley, Todd Nienkerk

**Voting Members Absent:** Jeff Cohen

**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:** Jacob Kerr, Curt Yowell, Stewart Vanderwilt, Robert Cross, Frank Serpas III

Meeting Opening

The Texas Student Media Board of Trustees October 24<sup>th</sup> meeting was called to order at 1:03 by Mary Dunn.

Matt Eastin, one of the faculty members from the Moody College of Communication, was welcomed to the Board.

Approval of the Minutes of the September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Meeting

Arjun Mocherla moved to approve the minutes of the September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Board meeting. Todd Nienkerk seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Executive Committee Report

Mary Dunn, chair of the Executive Committee summarized the major points of the Executive Committee meeting. The financial situation of Texas Student Media was discussed as well as options to better the situation. The possibility of needing to consider accessing a 3 year emergency fund was also discussed. The situation was described as unfortunate but not entirely unexpected.

Activity Reports from TSM Director and Student Managers

Gerald Johnson summarized the main points in his report to the Board.

Heidi Toprac asked how the Board could best help him.

Gerald Johnson replied the he could use assistance in bringing TSM to the attention of people and that he would welcome any introductions.

Bobby Blanchard asked when the late payment from University Directories was to be expected.

Gerald Johnson said that they normally respond to a final notice, but have not. They have been referred to University Contracts and are on a vendor hold list. He reiterated that we will not be working with them again.

Edward Stockwell quickly relayed lots of good news from TSTV. Heidi Toprac asked if The Austin Spurs move to a different league would be a risk to TSTV. Edward agreed that it would be and that they were monitoring the situation.

Rodrigo Leal quickly hit the main points from his report. He added that for the 20 Year Anniversary they were able to get Studio 6A at a discounted rate and that they are working to contact alumni. About 400 have been emailed about this event. Mary Dunn asked how staff retention was at this point. Rodrigo replied that they will only have to replace a few staff members.

Chris Gilman added to his report that the Travesty intends to have a more regular presence in the West Mall, possibly doing parody tabling. He also added that they are planning a movie screening in the Union with the intent to distribute content there. Arjun Mocherla added that President Powers is a fan of Longhorn of the Week.

Tess Cagle went over highlights from her report, and Mary Dunn asked her as well about staff retention. Tess stated that writing staff retention, particularly sports, had not been going as well as hoped but that photo staff retention had been amazing. Mary Dunn recommended recruiting students from the new Sports & Media program at the University.

Elisabeth Dillon also went over some highlights from the Texan, including some awards and some travel opportunities for reporters. She reported staff retention to be the same as usual.

Riley Brands quickly hit some high points from his report as well, including the addition of a graduate student to the team.

Gerald Johnson returned to some of his main points and added that Master the Possibilities is going very well and that they have a good metric of who is engaged.

#### Discussion and possible action on revisions to the TSM Handbook regarding qualifications for Daily Texan Managing Editor and Daily Texan Editor-In-Chief

Mary Dunn went through the changes made to the Handbook at the May 2014 meeting, including redrafted language of the requirements. She stated that the media and libel test requirement was combined into one. Upon discussing this is came to the realization of the Board that none of the student managers had taken this test yet. Mary Dunn said that this will be something that she will discuss with Gerald Johnson and it will be implemented soon.

It was also discussed that there is no formal transition process for student managers. It was decided that an overlap of a week is necessary and can happen the last week of the outgoing student manager's term or the first week of the incoming term. It was also decided that the dates for switching over to new student managers should be uniform across all TSM entities and listed in the handbook.

The requirements for Editor in Chief and Managing Editor were then discussed and the old version was compared with the updated version from the May meeting. It was brought up whether it is necessary for the Editor in Chief must have worked in Opinion and one other area. The one semester time period was also questioned. Heidi Toprac brought up that "Opinion" should be capitalized. Mary Dunn stated that there will be some grammatical and stylistic changes to the handbook.

It was noted that the requirements in the handbook and those on the application are not the same and that they should be unified. Due to the Board having to wave requirements in the past for applicants, Mary Dunn stated that the requirements should be made easier in order to broaden the applicant pool so that decisions can be based more on merit. Once these requirements are cut down to the bare bones, they cannot be waved.

Todd Nienkerk asked for a clarification for the distinction between issue staffers and permanent staffers. Bobby Blanchard and Elisabeth Dillon explained this and it was decided that the definitions of issue staffer and permanent staffer could just be referenced in the handbook.

Elisabeth Dillon brought up that it is unnecessary for Managing Editor applicants to have worked in other areas on the paper and also that if applicants must have worked as permanent staff members that the issue staff member requirement was unnecessary. The basis for this is that most permanent staff members have to work as issue staff in order to get permanent staff positions. It was agreed upon to remove the issue staff requirement.

Mary Dunn brought up that the permanent staff requirement could be fulfilled by an outside internship and suggested that this statement be removed.

Heidi Toprac also noted that it is unnecessary for the Managing Editor requirements to be so much more detailed than those of the Editor in Chief.

Elisabeth Dillon also requested that the requirement of taking either the listed journalism class or serving as an editor be removed. It was noted that this is not a requirement for Editor in Chief or the Travesty. The board agreed upon the removal of this condition.

Riley Brands stated that it is important to continue to include some sort of managerial experience requirement. It was determined that it is necessary to define what a "managing position" is in the handbook.

Elisabeth stated that if the issue staff requirement was removed, applicants would only need to serve one semester. She suggested increasing that to two semesters as a permanent staff member, to which the board agreed.

It was decided that a clause should be added that if no students apply for a student manager position, the application process would be reopened and requirements will be waived to get people to apply by a 2/3 vote. This is a change from the language that if no one applies, the Board will make an appointment.

It was also brought up whether the five signature requirement was necessary and was debated. It was questioned whether this would incite a popularity contest. A system like KVRX's show of staff support was suggested for the Texan and it was decided that the staff was too large for something similar to be implemented in the same way. The board came to the conclusion that the five signature requirement will stay.

Mary Dunn suggested passing the proposed edits to Managing Editor requirements with the intention of sending them out to the Board to see if there was any further disagreement. As the Editor in Chief requirements had not been changed at this point it was determined that they would be discussed at a later date. Robert Quigley made a motion to pass these edits in this way. Arjun Mocherla seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Item F was moved up.

#### Update and discussion regarding concerns raised by David Maly

Gerald Johnson relayed that he met with David Maly and David outlined 6 requests to be met in order to move forward, including: that the Board hold a special election for Editor in Chief, submit a change in policy related to discrimination, do a public apology, remove Mary Dunn from the Board, and give examples of when it is appropriate to work at the Texan and elsewhere.

Gerald stated that David realized that a special election would not happen. David said that he did not have time to draft an appropriate response and that he would speak at the October meeting, where he was not present.

The Board has submitted an etiquette clause to the handbook. Gerald Johnson reviewed the emails between David and Mary and determined that Mary's emails were all professional. He stated that he met with an anonymous student who confirmed the presence of the "tip jar" in the past.

It was determined that there should be a clause that outlines a path for people to follow should they feel they are being discriminated against. He recommended no other action be taken by the Board.

An apology was discussed. Robert Quigley stated that an apology was in order. Heidi Toprac agreed and it was concluded that Robert and Heidi would draft such a statement by the next meeting.

The meeting went into closed session at 2:48 pm, then reconvened in open session at 3:32 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:33 pm.