

University of Michigan Board for Student Publications

Minutes of the April 23, 2017 Board Meeting

Board members present: Neil Chase (chair), Alan Broad, Jennifer Conlin, Cindy Goodaker, Terry McDonald, Peter Mooney and Kevin Tottis

Board members teleconferencing: none

Board members absent: John Bacon and Steve Henderson

The Michigan Daily was represented by: Emma Kinery, Hussein Hakim, and Nathan Gupta

The Michiganensian was represented by: Sophie Ruf, Allison Zimmer and Matisse Rogers

The Gargoyle was represented by: Jenny Khose and Molly Miller

SHEI Magazine was represented by: Aaron Pelo, Kassie Wallace, Maggie O'Connor and Lauren Ayers

The Student Publications Staff was represented by: Mark Bealafeld, Kathy Ciesinski and Lisa Powers

Others Present: Stuart Emmrich (Board Member Elect)

Chair Neil Chase called the meeting to order at 3:52 p.m. He introduced Stuart Emmrich, our incoming Board Member.

Minutes

A motion to approve the March 30, 2017 meeting minutes was made by Jennifer, seconded by Cindy and passed without dissent.

Public Comments

None.

Neil discussed his thoughts for organizing a summer retreat to do some long range planning.

The Michiganensian

Allison discussed their efforts to put together a slide show that will be shown at Commencement. The books are being delivered on Monday the 24th. She discussed the results from April Grad Extravaganza.

Sophie said that the new edit team is in place and has been meeting to plan for the upcoming year.

SHEI Magazine

Kassie introduced Lauren and Maggie and provided some background information on them. Maggie will be the EIC and is coming from the business side. Lauren will be the new Publisher. Their last issue of SHIFT has been delayed and so they have yet to complete the transition to the new leadership team. They are planning an alumni newsletter and they announced that they have finally digitized the print edition of SHEI. One will have to pay \$4 to download and read it. They received awards from the U for publication design and visual art, each of which comes with a \$100 cash award and a \$75 credit that can be used for any of their intra-U expenditures.

Aaron stated that the last issue of SHIFT has a bicentennial theme and features an interview with Ed Cho, this year's Golden Apple award winner. He discussed his transitional conversations with Maggie. He expressed gratitude towards the Board, the Professional Staff and his peers at the other publications.

There was a discussion about the differences between SHEI and SHIFT and how each is branded.

Meeting Schedule

Neil again raised the topic of the Board Meeting schedule and having a planning session to start the year where we would discuss product planning, what we want to do over the course of the year, how the Board can be most helpful, and what each of the publications wants to do. He and Kathy have been working on a survey of past Board Members and student leaders which they hope will provide some guidance about the Board's role and how the meetings ought to be conducted. He envisions a half day meeting somewhere off site, covering the topics that the students want to discuss particularly with regard to the role that the Board can play. He asked the students to put together a list of such issues to be discussed at the meeting. He wants to structure the meeting to maximize the help that the Board can provide. In particular, to deal with the investment of the funds we have available.

Lisa suggested that we dovetail this initial meeting with the reunion weekend in September. This met with mixed reactions. There was a discussion about when it might be best to meet.

Kathy discussed all the data that we have coming in over the next month or so that might make interesting topics for discussion.

The Michigan Daily

Emma discussed the production of the final issues of the year, the Best of Ann Arbor and their participation in SpringFest. They intend to send someone to the Cannes Film Festival over the summer. She discussed the plans for the Summer Daily.

Hussein provided an overview of the Business Staff's accomplishments during the year. They had two goals: building their digital presence and developing their media consulting line of business. They had four clients for the consulting business, one unpaid. They generated \$1,500 at a 75% margin. He feels that there is lots of opportunity to scale this business up. On the digital side, they brought up a fully interactive page on the website that potential advertisers can use to determine the cost of their ads. There's also a button that takes them to an email form that can be used to contact the sales staff. In addition, they brought up and fully stocked the online store.

He discussed his thoughts on the issues that need to be addressed going forward. First, what can be done about the decline of national and online advertising revenues. Second, based on the revenue decline, he believes that the pace of generating new revenue streams has to be accelerated. Finally, how should they restructure the Business staff to accommodate that acceleration and how to recruit the new skill sets that the diversification will require. Also how should they deal with the having the tenures of the Edit staff and Business staff on different schedules.

Afterwards, he thanked the Board, the staff and his peers for the opportunity to serve a Business Manager and for all the experience that he gained doing so.

There was a general discussion of the four media consultancy clients and their projects. Stuart raised the issue of branded content and a discussion of this ensued.

Nathan discussed his experience with the Daily and meeting with the Board. He discussed the transition thus far and expressed gratitude to those that have helped him. He discussed his efforts to coordinate goals with Emma. He discussed how he reorganized the staff to integrate the media consulting staff, improve the branding of the Daily and further diversify revenue.

Gargoyle

Jenny introduced herself as the new EIC and Molly as the new Business Manager. She stated that the staff completed their fourth edition of the year and distributed copies around the room. She discussed their goals for the summer: cleaning out the extraneous back issues, setting up an archive of old issues, and mapping the location of their racks. They have set a goal of selling more alumni ads and subscriptions next year. In addition, they want to upgrade their website and increase their use of social media.

Molly discussed the staff's trip to a college humor conference in Princeton, NJ. She stated that they learned more from networking with other magazine staffs than they did at the formal workshops.

There was a discussion about the possibility of working with local comedy clubs to increase the Garg's exposure. They could use such events to distribute copies and increase the recognition of the Garg brand.

Finance

Mark asked for questions on the March results. He discussed cash flow for the month. He discussed the upstream bankruptcy of one of the Daily's ad agencies major clients that may cause them to write off \$12,000 of accounts receivable.

Staffing

Mark discussed his plan to retire at the end of December. He laid out the timetable for finding a replacement. He felt the job should be posted at the beginning of October, run for at least two weeks, followed by interviews beginning in November with a candidate selected by the beginning of December. He also pointed out that some of the Board members will need to volunteer to serve, along with Neil, as the selection committee. He stated that that process should be facilitated by a video conferencing system that he hopes to implement over the summer.

Development

Lisa discussed the event that preceded the meeting. She invited everyone to the Post Commencement Reception scheduled for noon the following Saturday. She reminded everyone about the Reunion Weekend scheduled for September 15th through 17th. She discussed her plans for the summer. She is planning to photograph each of the tiles in the newsroom and to send those photos to their donors as a means of encouraging further sales and donations.

There was a general discussion about the process of planning the reunion and how to include the students in that process over the summer.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Kevin, seconded by Peter and passed without dissent.

At 6:13 Chair Neil Chase closed the meeting.

Actions Taken:

Motion to approve the March 23, 2017 Board Meeting minutes: Jennifer Conlin
Seconded by: Cindy Goodaker
The motion was passed without dissent.

Motion to adjourn: Kevin Tottis
Seconded by: Peter Mooney
The motion was passed without dissent.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Bealafeld
General Manager
Office of Student Publications