University of Michigan Board for Student Publications
Minutes of the April 13, 2026 Board Meeting

Board members present: Jewel Gopwani (Chair), Ann Marie Aliotta, Jillian Berman, Geoff Gagnon, Ann Marie Lipinski, Robin Luce-Herrmann, and Kyle Nowels

Board members absent: John Copeland and Walter Middlebrook

The Michigan Daily was represented by: Edith Pendel, Zachary Ajluni, Cici Copenhaver, and Elena Nicholson

The Gargoyle was represented by: Sabrina Barnes and Xolo Hernandez-Herrera

SHEI Magazine was represented by: Grace Donnelly, Erin Casey, Ana Cano, Elena Shaheen and Ceri Roberts

The Michiganensian was represented by: Sydney Lount and Gabriella Noble

The Student Publications Staff were represented by: Kathy Ciesinski, Dave Richmond, and Ben Widdison

Others Present: None

Chair Jewel Gopwani called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm and welcomed everyone to the final meeting of the academic year.

Minutes

A motion to approve the March 16, 2026 meeting minutes was made by Ann Marie Lipinski, seconded by Ann Marie Aliotta, and passed without dissent.

Public Comments: None

Publication Updates

SHEI Magazine – Reporting by Grace and Erin

- A new editorial board and a new business board have been seated for the coming year; the incoming publisher, Ana Cano, joined the meeting and outlined her goals
- Incoming goals include building a stronger sense of community across editorial and business teams, strengthening brand awareness, and increasing community involvement through mass meetings, alumni network engagement, and professional development programming
- The final print product of the year, "Desiderium," will be released Saturday, April 18 at the launch party
- April digital issue, "Stamina," focusing on the intersection of sports and fashion, releases Saturday, April 25 and includes a collaboration with Adaptive Sports
- The outgoing publishers reflected on solidifying business team operations and strengthening year-over-year collaboration between the business and editorial sides
- A recorded reflection video from graduating senior Bobby Currie was shared with the board; it will be distributed to members following the meeting
- Erin and Grace thanked the board and professional staff for their support throughout the year

The Michiganensian – Reporting by Sydney and Gabby

- Two new photo editors and a new copy editor have been hired, along with new business-side staff; the full new e-board will meet at the end of April to align on summer hiring and work
- End-of-year banquet scheduled for Wednesday, April 22
- Yearbook handout is planned for the last week of April, pending delivery of the printed books
- Budget initiatives are complete
- Grad Extravaganza is going well, with steady business throughout April; two weeks of sales remain
- Most proud of the quality of this year's yearbook and the marketing, sales, and social media work behind it, supported by new staff with fresh ideas; also proud of the e-board for growing into their roles and meeting deadlines

- Looking ahead: awaiting yearbook shipment, beginning theme and cover planning for next year's book, and continuing to recruit an Associate Design Editor over the summer so training can begin early
- Help from the board: Kathy's assistance is needed with the SSO form to re-register the organization before the end of July to participate in Festifall; student publication leaders were asked to share the commencement slideshow Google Form with seniors on their staffs before the Thursday deadline
- Additional shift coverage for Grad Extravaganza is still welcome, and leaders were asked to remind staff members who sign up to attend their scheduled shifts

The Michigan Daily – Reporting by Edith, Zach, and Cici

- CTI (Culture, Training, and Inclusion) initiatives: the internal Demographics and Culture Survey wraps up in about a week with roughly 400 responses received, representing a majority of staff. A report will be developed over the summer. An external readership survey is also in development
- Sports coverage highlights: Women's Month wrapped up in March with a dedicated site and a special tabloid edition; pre-sales of the basketball book are performing well; both Sports Managing Editors were featured in a CBS Detroit newsroom segment
- The national championship edition was a significant success. The Daily printed 18,000 copies, compared with a typical run of 5,000. Newsstand copies were claimed within roughly 30 minutes, staff set up a distribution table in the front hall, and lines extended out the door and down the street. More than 500 copies have been sold through the online store
- A special one-page "Champions" edition was produced in advance of the game and distributed inside the arena by beat reporters in coordination with athletics communications staff. The edition appeared on national television and the Jumbotron, and additional copies were sold online
- Elena Nicholson was introduced as the incoming summer Editor-in-Chief, following her election on Friday. She currently serves as co-editorial page editor and led opinion coverage of the data center issue this semester. Summer managing editor staffing is also shaping up well
- Tri-Campus Edition planning continues, with publication scheduled for Wednesday, April 22. The UM-Flint Editor-in-Chief appeared on the news to discuss the collaboration, and photography of the UM-Dearborn campus was completed today
- A new fun page has been added to recent print editions, featuring an advice column, a comic, and the crossword; reader response has been strong
- Baby Ads sales have wrapped up, exceeding goal. Marketing and creative teams are building the layout for the Baby Ads edition
- Graduation edition sales are underway, with a cover concept in development; the strategy team is coordinating distribution to area hotels
- Summer staff is in place and the business team holds its final meeting of the semester on Friday

The Gargoyle – Reporting by Sabrina and Xolo

- Issue 4, "Journeys in Gargland," is currently being printed and drops Thursday, April 16.
- The issue centers on Gargland as a portal-fantasy realm, with a strong emphasis on lore building and social critique. The issue also includes a satirical treatment of a Google Gemini advertisement placement
- A printing miscommunication resulted in an extra 1,000 copies being produced. Because this issue is glossy and full color rather than newsprint, the additional cost is higher than in past years; with coordination from Kathy and the Student Publications staff, the overage will be covered by donor funds
- Leadership decisions are expected to be finalized within days. The current plan is a co-Editor-in-Chief structure with a managing editor, pairing a candidate with a writing focus and a candidate with an art focus
- Triple Threat, held at Vale Co-op with WCBN and MEMCO, went very well. The Gargoyle distributed zines that included a drink ticket for a themed beverage, encouraging readers to page through the full issue; the zine opens into a commemorative event poster. The event came at low cost to the publication
- Issue 4 printing costs were covered by CSG, with donor funds covering the additional copies
- Merch is arriving soon
- The business manager will return for another year and has begun establishing goals with next year's board

- Looking back: proud of the staff and of Issue 4 as the publication's most innovative issue to date. Looking ahead: finalizing leadership, potentially revising the constitution, and supporting the transition as seniors depart

Committee Reports

Operations Committee

Professional Staff: Kathy Ciesinski

Board Members: Jewel Gopwani, Geoff Gagnon, Walter Middlebrook

- Three board members' terms end in June: Jillian Berman and Geoff Gagnon complete first three-year terms and Jewel Gopwani completes a second three-year term. All three had expressed interest in renomination. Board policy permits three consecutive three-year terms, and all three members represent publication alumni
- A motion to renominate Jillian Berman and Geoff Gagnon to second three-year terms, effective July 1, was made by Ann Marie Aliotta, seconded by Kyle Nowels, and passed without dissent
- A motion to renominate Jewel Gopwani to a third three-year term, effective July 1, was made by Ann Marie Aliotta, seconded by Robin Luce-Herrmann, and passed without dissent
- No board members have come forward regarding the proposed co-chair or vice chair position since the March meeting. Jewel reiterated the invitation, noting the role does not require a significant time commitment and would provide coverage and balance. Interested members were asked to contact Jewel or Kathy at any point before August 30
- Ann Marie Lipinski and Bob Lau met with the Focal Point staff, including the team taking over in the fall. A key takeaway was strong student interest in Freedom of Information requests. Ann Marie offered to help arrange FOI training, potentially virtual, for early fall; Kathy noted the Ann Peterson Berry Investigative Journalism Fund covers FOI costs up to a set amount, and the two will connect over the summer to schedule

Next meeting: Friday, May 15 at 3:30 pm via Zoom

Finance Committee

Professional Staff: Kathy Ciesinski, Kim Tackett, Dave Richmond

Board Members: Jillian Berman, Robin Luce-Herrmann, Kyle Nowels

- The committee held a budget review meeting via Zoom on March 31, preceded by working sessions between Kathy, Kim, and Dave on the publication budgets and between Kathy and Ben on development-related budget lines
- Robin reported that the committee felt confident in where the FY27 numbers landed, that they are broadly comparable to last year, and that contingency plans are in place. She noted that the men's basketball national championship and the Frozen Four both resolved favorably for Student Publications, though those outcomes were unknown when budgeting began
- Kathy noted that revenue from those events will positively affect the FY26 wrap-up and any resulting carryover after July will benefit both the Daily and Student Publications as a whole
- One outstanding figure remained at the time of the meeting: the university's FY27 recharge rate, which will not be available until the following week, ahead of a Wednesday budget submission deadline. Kathy offered to forecast the figure based on year-over-year percentage trends
- A motion to approve all FY27 budgets, contingent on the final recharge figure Kathy provides for the board budget, was made by Robin Luce-Herrmann, seconded by Kyle Nowels, and passed without dissent

Next meeting: No specific date set; the committee will reconvene after the budget cycle concludes

Development Committee

Professional Staff: Kathy Ciesinski, Ben Widdison

Board Members: Ann Marie Aliotta, John Copeland, Kyle Nowels

- The committee has not met since the March board meeting; a meeting originally targeted for late April will be rescheduled after graduation activities
- Giving metrics continue to rise year-over-year. As of April 10, 2026: number of gifts up 19.5% (538 to 668), number of donors up 16.2% (351 to 419), and annual giving up 32.9% ($110,130 to $146,378). Total giving reflects a decrease in percentage terms due to the $100,000 bequest realized in FY25
- Giving Blueday exceeded its combined goal, raising $9,686 against a $5,950 goal from 107 unique donors. Results by fund: The Michigan Daily $7,365, Student Publications $1,235, The Michiganensian $335, The Gargoyle $620, and SHEI Magazine $231. The Daily nearly doubled its goal, aided considerably by the video produced by the staff, which will also be distributed through university development channels and posted on the Michigan Giving website
- The recurring gifts match now includes 26 participating donors supporting 15 unique funds, with an expected match of approximately $6,805
- Championship edition stewardship: just under 2,200 copies were claimed by gift officers across the university, generating an estimated $3,488 in revenue and placing the Daily in front of a broader donor audience. In addition, 332 championship book pre-orders have come through the development community, 188 through the public online link, and approximately 450 are being purchased wholesale by the publisher, which should position Student Publications to set print quantities without significant out-of-pocket expense
- Four events are in progress or in planning: the graduation open house on May 3, the Scholarship and Awards Brunch on August 30, an informal Michigan Daily reunion being organized by alumni from the 1980s, and early planning by Gargoyle alumni for a 2027 reunion

Next meeting: To be rescheduled; Ben will circulate options

GM Report

- Scholarship and award applications have been distributed to students with an April 30 deadline for most awards. Additional time will be allowed for the Lipsey Merit Awards and the Harold O. Warren Jr. Scholarship, which has a more involved application process. Kathy will reach out to returning reviewers regarding bandwidth and will follow up with Ann Marie Lipinski about categories of interest
- FY27 meeting schedule: the first meeting of the year will be Sunday, August 30, held immediately following the Scholarship and Awards Brunch. April 12 is effectively locked in due to the April 15 budget deadline. Rather than settle the November, January, and March dates during the meeting, Kathy will circulate options to board members, returning students, and staff, taking into account the academic calendar and religious holidays
- FY26 Publications Revenue and Net Income has not yet been updated through March, as quarter-end endowment figures are still pending; Kim will update once those are received
- Cash balance remains positive. If similar trajectory continues, Kathy will bring a recommendation to the Finance Committee on how much to return to the quasi-endowment following the June distribution, balancing interest earnings against the need to respond quickly to unforeseen circumstances
- Kathy recognized the graduating seniors for the hours they have given their publications and for the quality of the work they leave behind, and thanked the professional staff for their support of students throughout the year, including during the budget cycle and Grad Extravaganza
- Out-of-area board members were invited to attend the Scholarship and Awards Brunch; Kathy offered to assist with lodging arrangements at the Michigan League

New Business: None

A motion to adjourn was made by Robin Luce-Herrmann, seconded by Ann Marie Lipinski, and passed without dissent.

Chair Jewel Gopwani closed the meeting at 6:43.

Actions Taken:

Motion to approve the March 16, 2026 meeting minutes: Ann Marie Lipinski
Seconded by: Ann Marie Aliotta
The motion passed without dissent.

Motion to renominate Jillian Berman and Geoff Gagnon to second three-year terms, effective July 1: Ann Marie Aliotta
Seconded by: Kyle Nowels
The motion passed without dissent.

Motion to renominate Jewel Gopwani to a third three-year term, effective July 1: Ann Marie Aliotta
Seconded by: Robin Luce-Herrmann
The motion passed without dissent.

Motion to approve all FY27 budgets, contingent on the final university recharge figure: Robin Luce-Herrmann
Seconded by: Kyle Nowels
The motion passed without dissent.

Motion to adjourn: Robin Luce-Herrmann
Seconded by: Ann Marie Lipinski
The motion passed without dissent.

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, August 30, 2026, following the Scholarship and Awards Brunch

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Ciesinski
General Manager, Office of Student Publications