

University of Michigan Board for Student Publications

Minutes of the March 19, 2018 Board Meeting

Board members present: Neil Chase (chair), Alan Broad, John Bacon, Jennifer Conlin, Stuart Emmrich, Cindy Goodaker, Peter Mooney and Kevin Tottis

Board members video-conferencing: Terry McDonald

The Michigan Daily was represented by: Alexa St. John, Nathan Gupta, Bob Lesser and Dayton Hare

The Michiganensian was represented by: Matisse Rogers, Claire Bartosic, Joseph Coates and Dylan LaCroix

The Gargoyle was represented by: Jenny Ghose

SHEI Magazine was represented by: Maggie O'Connor and Lauren Ayers

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

Others Present: none

Chair Neil Chase called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Minutes

A motion to approve the February 19, 2018 meeting minutes was made by John, seconded by Jennifer and passed without dissent.

Public Comments

None.

Publication reports were presented via a slide show. Highlights for each is as follows:

The Gargoyle

Jenny reported:

- The staff would like to focus on expanding distribution coverage to residence halls and expressed issues with UM Housing. Ensuing conversation addressed whether someone had issues with the Gargoyle, or if it had more to do with how the magazine was being distributed.
- Issue 4 is in the production phase. It will be fully funded through a combination of Arts at Michigan and LSA Student Government grants.
- A succulent sale will take place Wednesday, March 28th, with the goal of a gross profit of \$150+

The Michigan Daily

Nathan reported:

- Love Notes (a Valentine's Day Special) surpassed first year expectations & last year's sales numbers.
- There were at least two budgeting errors that have been accounted for moving forward (1430 - Computer System Support Service and 1630 - Advertising & Marketing Expenses)
- February was a good month generally in terms of revenue, but Nationals severely underperformed.

Alexa reported:

- Innovation and a partnership with alum Roger Rapoport for coverage of Larry Nassar, which would lead to an increase in traffic to michigandaily.com
- Multimedia - she is hoping to put more resources toward the web team and asked for ideas on how this might be funded.
- Inclusion: a discussion took place on opportunities to increase participation for underrepresented minority students working at the Daily

The Michiganensian

Claire reported:

- The spring project “Recollection” is in progress. Final cost of the project is \$1,310, which means they have to sell 131 copies at \$10 each to break even.

Matisse reported:

- March Grad Extravaganza event brought in \$125,300 in revenue. 2,400 students came through Student Pubs the week of March 12th. This compares to \$119,000 in revenue and 2,500 students during the same period in 2017.
- Her team is working on how to successfully promote and sell “Recollection.” They are offering a combo package with the Daily’s “In Review” poster.

SHEI Magazine

Maggie and Lauren reported:

- A successful branding effort was undertaken to emphasize SHEI, so SHIFT is now SHEI Digital
- The demand on photo team members has made it so photo will be represented as part of SHEI leadership and an emphasis on photo team members during mass meetings and recruiting season.
- Magazine content this year has been elevated to a new level, it’s more cohesive, and a sustainable business model has been established for sourcing clothing and increasing partnerships.
- The Work It! event helped build relationships with people outside of Ann Arbor.
- Help is needed with advertising. They have exhausted their local business contacts and are discussing ways of how to motivate the advertising team.
- They also solicited suggestions for growing their audience in both digital and in print. Suggestions were made by members of the board and other students in attendance.

Board Nominations

A discussion of the applicants took place. Given the work on the strategic plan is still in progress, the decision was made to not act to fill the Campus Community representative position until the skill set needed can be clearly defined.

With regard to the Publications Alumni representative a discussion took place, which was then followed by a motion made by Peter to nominate former Daily staffer, Jacob Smilovitz to a three-year term beginning FY 19, and seconded by Jennifer. The motion passed without dissent.

Budget Reviews

First round budget for each of the four publications had been shared with board members prior to the meeting. In order to expedite this discussion, Kathy asked that members of the finance committee and/or any board members reach out specifically to the publications by the end of the month with any questions, comments and feedback so final annual budgets and subsequent monthly budgets could be ready for review/approval at the April meeting.

Kathy said she would be working on the Development and Board budgets and work with Terry, Cindy and Neil before presenting them for review/approval by the board.

Development

Lisa reported on the following:

- Scholarship event on April 15th, followed by the final board meeting of the fiscal year.
- Graduation luncheon event on Saturday, April 28th following Big House ceremony.
- One final alumni talk on April 2nd

- Additional unofficial alumni talks - one for the Gargoyle on April 13th - Jonathan Wright, and Josh White from the Washington Post
- First Facebook Live of an alumni panel talk
- John Madigan will be here for the scholarship and awards event.

A discussion took place as to whether the scholarship and awards event should be expanded to an alumni fundraiser opportunity.

GM Updates

Kathy reported:

- She's planning to post the Sales & Marketing Advisor position
- She'll be in Kansas City the week of March 26th, along with three students from the Daily's business staff.

Strategic Plan

Committee Reports:

- Finance Committee - Terry reported that a deep dive into current funding is in the works and a future discussion on whether increased fundraising is the appropriate strategic path.
- Operations Committee - Pete reported on the survey of other college newspapers, their governance, organizational structure and staffing structure. There was also a discussion of the board itself, as well as future evaluation of the professional staff. A goal for summer is to work on board bylaws, governance and procedures that can be shared with future board members at the time of onboarding.
- Strategic Plan Draft Committee - Stuart reported looking for common themes from February meeting and email conversations and well as conversations with as many former Daily alumni as possible. A detailed report was shared with the group for review and further discussion. Key items: What is the role of the board as it relates to supporting the needs of the students, how to go about systematically identifying and recruiting new board members, identifying new sources of revenue and how do we do a better job of getting alumni involved. Cindy talked about fundraising and its role as part of the strategic plan. Lastly, a preliminary discussion of a daylong board retreat for September took place.

Neil recognized John Bacon for his contribution to the board the past three years.

Adjournment

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

At 7:46 Chair Neil Chase closed the meeting.

Actions Taken:

Motion to approve the February 19, 2018 Board Meeting minutes: John Bacon

Seconded by: Jennifer Conlin

The motion passed without dissent.

Motion to nominate Jake Smilovitz to the Board for Student Publications for a three-year term

beginning FY '19: Peter Mooney

Seconded by: Jennifer Conlin

The motion passed without dissent.

Motion to authorize posting of open Sales & Marketing Advisor position: Cindy Goodaker

Seconded by: Jennifer Conlin

The motion passed without dissent

Motion to adjourn: Kevin Tottis
Seconded by: Stuart Emmrich
The motion passed without dissent.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Ciesinski
General Manager
Office of Student Publications