

SPJ Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

September 12, 2004 - Grand Hyatt Hotel, New York City

Meeting Date: September 12, 2004

Meeting Place: Grand Hyatt Hotel, New York City, New York

Meeting Called to Order

With President Irwin Gratz presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 9:10 a.m. on Sunday, September 12, 2004, at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York City.

Roll Call

In addition to President Gratz, the following were in attendance for all or a portion of the meeting: Immediate Past President Mac McKerral; Vice President for Campus Chapter Affairs Jim Highland; Directors at Large Sally Lehrman and Jim Parker; Campus Advisers at Large Mead Loop and Neil Ralston; Campus Representatives Callie Martell and Sonya Smith; Regional Directors Carl Corry, Ann Augherston, Holly Fisher, Richard Roth, Dave Aeikens, Travis Poling, Deb Hurley, Scott Maben, and Clint Brewer; Executive Director Terry Harper; and Deputy Executive Director Julie Grimes.

Kansas State University Resolution

Relative to the work of the campus task force investigating the reassignment of the campus newspaper adviser at Kansas State University, Ralston introduced a resolution for the board's consideration.

Upon proper motion and second by Aeikens and Brewer, respectively, the board adopted the resolution.

The resolution is attached to these minutes as Exhibit A.

News Conferences

A request for a resolution calling on this and future Presidents of the United States to conduct regular and open press conferences had been made to the committee too late for consideration by the convention delegates. Since no specific language had been proposed, President Gratz asked that the matter be referred to the Executive Committee for preparation. McKerral offered to take the lead in preparing the resolution.

Upon proper motion and second by Brewer and Corry, respectively, the board instructed McKerral and the Executive Committee to prepare a resolution stating SPJ's position regarding the importance of open and ongoing presidential news conferences.

Sigma Delta Chi Foundation Officers and Directors Ratified

Upon proper motion and second by Highland and Loop, the board ratified the following newly-elected officers and directors of the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation:

Officers:

Todd J. Gillman, President (two-year term expiring in 2006)

Betsy F. Ashton, Vice President (one-year term expiring in 2005)

Stephen J. Geimann, Secretary (one-year term expiring in 2005)

Howard S. Dubin, Treasurer (one-year term expiring in 2005)

Directors (term expires):

Kenneth F. Bunting (three-year term expiring in 2007)

Alvin M. Cross (three-year term expiring in 2007)

Howard S. Dubin (three-year term expiring in 2007)

Robert Leger (two-year term expiring in 2006)

Hoag Levins (three-year term expiring in 2007)

Anthony Mauro (three-year term expiring in 2007)

Russell B. Pulliam (three-year term expiring in 2007)

Matthew Winkler (three-year term expiring in 2007)

SPJ Appointments to the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation Board of Directors

Gratz presented his recommendations for one-year appointments to the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation board of directors.

Upon proper motion and second by McKerral and Poling, respectively, the following were appointed to one-year terms on the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation board of directors:

**Irwin L. Gratz
David E. Carlson
Christine Tatum
James L. Highland
Mead Loop
Guy Baehr
Holly Fisher**

Executive Committee Elections

President Gratz called for nominations for the two available seats on the board's executive committee. Parker and Fisher were nominated.

Upon proper motion and second, Jim Parker and Holly Fisher were elected to serve on the executive committee for a one-year term expiring at the close of the 2005 convention.

The Journalist

With 2004 publisher Amy Lemel and Sigma Delta Chi Foundation Vice President Betsy Ashton present, the board discussed producing a 2005 issue of *The Journalist*.

Ashton strongly encouraged the board to support the project for another year. Ashton said the magazine presented SPJ as classy, in touch with leading journalists and on top of journalism news. Ashton said she is confident the magazine can again secure writers and comp photographers.

Board members discussed the need for a business plan and marketing strategy for the magazine. Brewer suggested the need for printing bids and advertising plans and projections. Gratz pointed out that beyond a marketing tool, the magazine was created as a potential new revenue stream, and it needs to generate revenue and make a profit.

Loop spoke to the long-term benefit of the magazine and encouraged the board to capitalize on the momentum of the current issue. Brewer also spoke in favor of the publication.

Roth questioned how the publication was different from AJR and CJR and how the publisher could ensure enough advertising revenue to make the venture profitable. Ashton responded that the magazine is design focused and is more of a yearbook that would become a keepsake.

Upon proper motion and second by Parker and Fisher, respectively, the board voted to proceed with production of *The Journalist* in 2005.

Board Member Orientation

Malena Barzilai, Baker and Hostetler LLP, reviewed the Society's mission, as well as board member responsibilities and duties.

Regarding First Amendment issues, the Baker & Hostetler contacts are Barzilai, Bruce Brown, Bob Lystad, and Bruce Sanford. Harper also works with Baker & Hostetler's Cleveland office of regarding tax exempt issues. Harper encouraged the board to be judicious about calls to legal counsel.

Corry suggested that a board information handbook be prepared for all board members. Staff will update and distribute it to board members. The book should include expectations about policies, board member responsibilities, and deadlines and notes about written reports from board members.

Harper pointed out that reports for the spring board meeting would be due at headquarters by April 8. The

board meeting will be April 30 in Indianapolis.

Future Convention Sites

Beginning with the 2005 convention in Las Vegas, headquarters staff will be primarily responsible for planning and executing national conventions. Staff will manage fund raising; develop a programming grid; work with the Professional Development Committee to complete the grid; and seek out future convention sites.

Board members should send programming suggestions to the Professional Development Committee and copy any messages to Gratz and Harper.

The board discussed future convention sites and the need to plan further ahead.

Upon proper motion and second by Aeikens and Highland, respectively, the board voted to make plans for hosting the national convention – pending full research – in the following locations:

2006 – Chicago, Ill.

2007 – Williamsburg, Va.

2008 – Atlanta, Ga.

2009 – Indianapolis, Ind.

2010 – New York City

Committee Appointments

Gratz reported that most committee chairs have been appointed and the lineup will be distributed to the board shortly. The only outstanding position is the chair of the Legal Defense Fund. Gratz noted that committee chairs will receive \$500 stipends for committee-related activities.

Western Kentucky University Proposal

Highland reported that Western Kentucky University plans to prepare and publish a series of First Amendment case studies. WKU will be seeking a \$10,000 grant from the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation this spring to fund the project. Highland sought SPJ's support for the project.

The group discussed the fact that some of these case studies will be based on the work of SPJ task forces. An independent person may evaluate the history of an issue and the work of a task force.

Upon proper motion and second by Parker and Smith, respectively, the board endorsed Western Kentucky University's case study project. Highland abstained from the voting.

New Business

High School Program

Poling said he had been asked to have the board discuss the San Diego Pro Chapter's work to encourage high school journalism. It was the consensus of the board that SPJ should develop a "best practices" tip sheet that focuses on valuable high school programs and partnerships that involve SPJ chapters. Staff should create this tip sheet.

Membership Retention Idea

Roth encouraged board and staff to examine ways to increase membership retention. He proposed allowing freshmen to pay dues for four or five years – at a discount – when they first join SPJ. Staff should examine the feasibility of this idea and report back at a future date.

Student Representative Responsibilities

Martell asked for information about the role of the student board representatives and the funding available to assist with their work. Harper advised Martel and Smith to work with him and Grimes to outline their responsibilities and plan their schedules well in advance of any scheduled trips.

2005 Regional Conference Schedule

Harper reminded regional directors that regional conferences should be scheduled to take place after April 1 to allow for adequate processing and judging of the regional Mark of Excellence Awards. He also pointed out that regional pages were available at spj.org to promote regional conferences and activities. SPJ provides the template, and regional directors or designees fill in the conference information.

Lehrman encouraged regional directors to consider the Rainbow Sourcebook and Diversity Toolbox when planning programming for regional conferences. Consider incorporating training around sourcing in diversity.

The following conferences were noted:

- Region 1: April 8-9, Stanford, Conn.
- Region 2: April 8-9, Towson State University, Towson, Md.
- Region 3: April 8-9, Charleston, S.C.
- Region 4: April TBD, Morgantown, W.V.
- Region 5: TBD
- Region 6: April 1-2, Bloomington, Minn.
- Region 7: TBD
- Region 8: March 18-19 (TBD), San Antonio
- Region 9: TDB, Salt Lake City, Utah
- Region 10: May 6-7, Seattle, Wash.
- Region 11: April TBD, Palm Springs, Calif.
- Region 12: April 1-2, New Orleans, La.

Harper reminded regional directors that each region would receive a grant of \$500 from the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation to assist with speaker travel for the regional conference.

Student Ink

Smith reported that she is already working to create "Student Ink," an online newsletter for student members. She anticipates the first issue will be distributed in October or November. Smith also plans to focus on starting new chapters in the coming year.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the board of directors, President Gratz entertained a motion to adjourn. Upon proper motion and second by Smith and Martell, respectively, the meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m. on Sunday, September 12, 2004.

EXHIBIT A

Resolution Concerning the Reassignment of newspaper adviser Ron Johnson at Kansas State University

WHEREAS, the Society of Professional Journalists is dedicated to the perpetuation of a free press as the cornerstone of our nation and our liberty; and

WHEREAS, one of the missions of the Society is to maintain constant vigilance in protection of the First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and of the press; and

WHEREAS, another mission of the Society is to encourage a climate in which journalism can be practiced freely; and

WHEREAS, the Society also is dedicated to inspiring successive generations of talented individuals to become dedicated journalists; and

WHEREAS, administrators at Kansas State University removed Ron Johnson as newspaper adviser of the

independent student newspaper, the *Kansas State Collegian*, effective May 24, 2004; and

WHEREAS, Kansas State University journalism school Director Todd Simon stated that one of the reasons for the removal was that a content analysis of the student newspaper indicated to him that “news content has fallen below standards;” and

WHEREAS, removing the adviser of an independent student newspaper at a public university violates the First Amendment principles of free speech and a free press when the action is an attempt to change the future content of the newspaper; and

WHEREAS, the action taken at such a highly regarded university as Kansas State University may encourage administrators at other schools to take similar action, thereby adding to the degradation of the First Amendment protections for college students nationwide;

Therefore BE IT RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists hereby condemns in the strongest terms possible the removal of Ron Johnson as newspaper adviser because the action is a clear violation of the principles of free speech and a free press,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Society encourages all other journalism organizations that have not already done so to join in the condemnation of such a blatant violation of First Amendment freedoms,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in light of Kansas State University’s actions, the Society recommends that high school students who are considering a career in journalism carefully examine whether the schools they are considering show full and unwavering respect for the rights of free speech and a free press that are so vital to journalism in the United States of America.

Adopted September 12, 2004