

**MINUTES  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS  
SEPTEMBER 28, 2011  
NEW ORLEANS, LA**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

With President John Ensslin presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 9:06 a.m. on Wednesday, September 28, 2011, at the Sheraton New Orleans., in conjunction with the Society's annual convention at the Excellence in Journalism conference.

In addition to Ensslin, the following were present: President-Elect Sonny Albarado; Immediate Past President Hagit Limor; Secretary-Treasurer David Cuillier; Vice President for Campus Chapter Affairs Neil Ralston; Director at-Large Bill McCloskey; Director at-Large Lauren Bartlett, Campus Advisers at-Large Kym Fox and George Daniels; Student Representative Taylor Mirfendereski; Regional Directors Luther Turmelle, Michael Koretzky, Brian Eckert, James Pilcher, Liz Hansen, Amanda Theisen, Kelsey Volkman, Scott Cooper, Don Meyers, Terri Carnicelli, Dana Neuts, and Kelly Kissel

Staff members present for the meeting were Executive Director Joe Skeel, Director of Events Heather Porter and Director of Communications Scott Leadingham.

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

President Ensslin welcomed new board members and told of how excited he is to begin this year as president and briefly outlined some of his major goals.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS**

**Upon proper motion and second by Pilcher and Turmelle, respectively, the board elected Brian Eckert to the SPJ Executive Committee as a representative of the Regional Director caucus.**

**Upon proper motion and second by Cuillier and Pilcher, respectively, the board elected Bill McCloskey to the SPJ Executive Committee as an at-large member.**

**DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP FELLOWS**

Curtis Lawrence, Diversity Committee Chairman, introduced the 2011 Diversity Leadership Fellows. Each gave a brief background on herself and the goals of their involvement.

Rebecca Aguilar — Could not attend this meeting.

Chandra Temple — Mentored by Kym Fox. She said after coming to SPJ this weekend she is really looking forward to working with either the Freelance Committee or Professional Development Committee.

Sergy Odiduro — Mentored by Neil Ralston. Member of the SPJ South Florida Pro board. Said she was very proud of the resolution passed by delegates concerning "illegal alien."

Lara Salahi — Mentored by Liz Hansen. Said she would like to work on bootsting SPJ's resources for covering Arab issues.

Lucy Bejan — Freelancer in Detroit, formerly a reporter for a Romanian newspaper. Wants to extend the volunteer work she is doing in Detroit. Would like to be involved with the Diversity Committee. She said she would like start a Diversity Committee at the chapter level in Detroit.

Sandy Frost — Freelancer and investigative journalist in Seattle. Mentored by Steve Geimann and Kelsey Volkman. Wants to help SPJ develop processes for communications between chapters and would like to help improve and update the Rainbow Sourcebook.

## **APPOINTMENTS TO SIGMA DELTA CHI FOUNDATION BOARD**

Ensslin said he would like to appoint the SPJ officers and two additional board members, George Daniels and Kelsey Volkmann, to the SDX Foundation Board of Directors.

**Upon proper motion and second by Mirfendereski and Eckert, respectively, the board approved the appointments of the SPJ officer, George Daniels and Kelsey Volkmann to the SDX Foundation Board of Directors.**

Ensslin said he would also like to reappoint to the SDX Foundation board those directors from the SPJ board whose terms were expiring.

**Upon proper motion and second by Ralston and Neuts, respectively, the board approved the reappointment of SPJ directors to the SDX Foundation board of directors.**

## **COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**

**Upon proper motion and second by Cooper and Turmelle, respectively, the board approved meeting minutes from the February 17, 2011 and April 16, 2011 meetings.**

Ensslin explained his appointments of committee chairpersons and ad-hoc committees he is forming to expand on his ideas. In addition to tradition committee assignments, ad-hoc committees and appointments include Regional Directors Coach and a special "Blue Sky Committee" headed by Michael Koretzky. The Blue Sky Committee will spend time studying what chapters need for funding to put on programming.

Ensslin said that the Digital Media Committee will work on improving the SPJ History section of SPJ.org to make it a more interactive experience. He reported that Ricardo Sandoval and the International Committee will work to have international members give feedback on how SPJ can serve them in their countries.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

**Upon proper motion and second by Albarado and Neuts, respectively, the board approved the nominations of Bill McCloskey and Lauren Bartlett to serve on the SPJ Finance Committee.**

## **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

Turmelle said he was concerned with the guidelines for campaigning or politicking as board members for board candidates. He said he wished for no action, but wanted to get it on the record as a reminder.

Daniels asked if that is a function of the Nominations Committee to provide such guidelines and be in communication with candidates.

Pilcher asked if with the new one member, one vote, the issue is moot.

Bob Becker, Bylaws Committee Chairman, offered clarification with how the bylaws change for one member, one vote and said by July every year, SPJ needs a set of procedures in place to know how elections will go forward. Becker said that HQ staff and the board need to have all the procedures in place on how to help candidates and how to control elections.

Ensslin said one of the things he'd like to do is a virtual town hall meeting, and not necessarily at the convention. Becker said campaigning will still go on at the convention because under the bylaws the election isn't over until one hour before the closing business session.

Turmelle suggested that the board consider a change to the cut-off date for elections.

## **CONVENTION RECAP**

Chris Vachon, Associate Executive Director, provided a recap of the convention numbers and major points of information.

Ensslin reported that RTDNA had told him they were encouraged by this convention and there is a suggestion, though no official board action yet, to continue the SPJ/RTDNA partnership for at least three years beyond 2012.

A discussion ensued about the need to officially commit to further convention partnership years with RTDNA.

Kissel suggested instead of just surveying all attendees, we have a metric for tracking responses of SPJ members specifically to see how they liked the joint conference.

**Upon proper motion and second by Pilcher and Meyers, respectively, the board voted to continue the partnership with RTDNA through 2013 and potentially beyond.**

## **CHAPTER REQUIREMENTS UPDATE**

Albarado said that the chapter requirements passed at the Sept. 25, 2011 meeting were somewhat “bare bones.” He presented a proposal to further clarify what chapters would have to do to remain in good standing without the start ranking system, which was abolished at the Sept. 25, 2011 meeting.

Daniels said he felt it was good to move a meeting along, but sometimes voting on a proposal may be too quick and suggested the board review the document and suggest changes for a time before voting on this proposal.

Fox said because of the rhythm of college chapters, starting in the fall, chapters are planning things now and changing the requirements after they’ve planned for the year might be confusing.

Albarado said what people submit doesn’t change, only the ranking system by which chapters are evaluated.

Daniels said he likes having more specifics along the lines.

Hansen said maybe instead of saving a requirement of “three professional development programs,” the language be “programs that support the missions of SPJ.”

Albarado said he is happy to accept that change.

Fox said her concern was that she wanted some time to read and consider the proposal before voting.

McCloskey suggested this be approved as a draft, send it out for consideration and squaring it with the bylaws committee.

Albarado said he would be willing to withdraw the motion with the stipulation that the board reconvene in 30 to 60 days or so to approve a final proposal.

Ralston said there is a lot of turnover in campus chapters and a new adviser or president could look at these and consider them only the minimum and do no more.

Koretzky urged passage of this proposal.

Skeel said he saw no mention of hitting the annual report deadline and that could be a problem. He recommended to add language saying “filing an annual report by the stated deadline.”

Daniels suggested there be a FAQ on the website for chapters to understand what exactly is needed.

Pilcher suggested an email soon to all chapter leaders and adviser fully explaining, and Albarado suggested putting in SPJ Leads.

**Upon proper motion and second by Albarado and Pilcher, respectively, the board approved that in further clarifying elimination of the star-ranking system, SPJ adopt the proposed guidelines as a replacement system for evaluating the health of chapters.**

## **BOARD ORIENTATION**

Laurie Babinski reviewed the requirements for board members and their legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

## **LEGAL UPDATE**

Laurie Babinski presented the annual report from Baker Hostetler. She reported that the Shield Law, though reintroduced in the House of Representatives, does not stand any realistic chance of passing in the current Congress.

She said a new issue emerging is the use of the Espionage Act and potential to prosecute journalists and news outlets in the wake of high-level government leaks. She said at least under the current laws, it likely wouldn't apply to third parties (journalists), but there are possible calls for it to be amended to include these third parties, and SPJ would have a significant stake in opposing such an amendment.

A federal anti-SLAPP bill is on the Hill at the moment, and SPJ and other organizations support the concept, though she reported the current bill has some kinks to work out.

## **COLLEGE MEDIA ADVISERS AND SPJ**

Ralston said he had met the new president of College Media Advisers, who expressed an interest in having the organization be more involved in SPJ's Regional Conferences.

## **CLOSING**

Ensslin said as a closing note that SPJ had an extraordinary convention and in the midst of it had a lot of controversial business that had consumed SPJ for nearly a year. He said he was proud of the way the discussions took place at the convention and the level of intelligence and professionalism at the business session.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Upon proper motion and second by Pilcher and Cooper, respectively, the meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.**