



**Committee on Student Communications – Meeting minutes
Friday, September 12, 2014, 10:30 a.m., VIP Room, Student Center**

Members Present

Boyd Beckwith (Executive Director), Bryce McNeil (Assistant Director for Student Media), Jeannie Barrett (ex-officio), Warren Turner (GSTV Managing Director), Anna Yang (*The Signal* Editor-in-Chief), Jenny Brown (Editor-in-Chief, *New South*), David Armstrong (faculty, at-large), Megan Hodgkiss (Graduate Representative, Department of Communication), Akiem Bailum (student, at-large), Raven Neely (student, at-large)

Members Absent

Greg Lisby (faculty, Department of Communication), Alayna Fabricius (WRAS General Manager), Undergraduate Representative, Department of Communication

Guests

Alex Jackson (sitting in for Alayna Fabricius, WRAS General Manager)

Call to order

Meeting was called to order by Boyd Beckwith at 10:33 a.m.

Introductions

Boyd welcomed all new committee members and each CSC member introduced themselves and announced their titles.

CSC Bylaws

The current bylaws were distributed to the members and Boyd provided a brief overview, allowing a few minutes for the committee to examine the document for errors. Boyd noted that the current bylaws do not readily state how its governing rules are changed and that the CSC does not regularly practice all activities laid out in the bylaws. He argued that the bylaws should be revised to accurately reflect amending processes and to accurately reflect CSC practice. Jeannie suggested that a “Track Changes” version of the document be created with all suggested changes added; Bryce agreed to create this document and disburse it at the next CSC meeting.

Bryce explained that his primary motivation for adding the bylaws discussion to the agenda was to discuss potential changes to the overall structure of student media. As the bylaws were due for renewal in a year, a year-long discussion on how (and if) to remodel student media could occur and the bylaws could be reformed accordingly. He noted, however, that making radical changes (such as adding new groups and/or positions) may require additional funding requests and/or reallocation of the funds the Committee already receives. (Jeannie and Boyd reminded the committee that the CSC is provided a total allocation of operating services funds by the Student Activity Fee Committee, which the CSC then decides to distribute amongst itself before re-convening before the SAFC to defend its decision on what to do with the funds).

Jeannie reminded the committee that *The Signal* and WRAS receive funds from Essential Services, and that any changes to structure and funding requests would need to take this into consideration. Boyd also noted that he and Bryce would like to propose an administrative position to provide management of an advertising staff for *The Signal* in addition to clerical support for the Student Media office. *The Signal* proposed a full-time advertising position to be funded partially on commission but the position, as proposed, did not meet state regulations. The desire for this position was twofold—to provide students with proper guidance to maximize sales and thus revenue for *The Signal* (which had been declining) and to help the Assistant Director with clerical and business matters so that he may devote more time to direct advisement.

Bryce raised the issue of publicizing the CSC's minutes, noting that it had never been done as a matter of regular practice. He added that he had always been able to provide minutes, when requested, in a reasonable amount of time, to which Jeannie added such requests should normally be referred to the Office of Legal Affairs.

However, in light of Sunshine Laws, increased scrutiny on media matters, and *The Signal's* expectations of the Student Government to do the same, Bryce argued the CSC should adopt a regular practice for publicizing its minutes. Jenny agreed that this would benefit the committee and the public greatly. David, however, noted that the meeting minutes would likely be a month behind as the Committee would not want to publish unapproved minutes, to which Jeannie agreed.

The Committee agreed to discuss the "Track Changes" document at the next meeting but also to continue the discussion of long-term changes to the document and to Student Media structure throughout the semester. Once the document was amended at that meeting, the Committee expected a regular practice for publicizing the minutes to result.

Media Head Updates

The Signal: Anna reported that the first issue was published with a special section on football. She noted that the paper had already encountered some controversies. First, there was concern from some readers about a photo accompanying a story on sexual assault that involved a black male and white female. Anna wrote a "Letter from the Editor" on the matter, apologizing for the judgment behind the photo. There had also been some mixed feedback on Rachel Kingsley's Sex column, to which the editors had decided to prescribe a reader advisory.

Jeannie stated that the controversies appeared to be layout issues that could be addressed with consistent design solutions (clear reader advisories, clear process for approval of photos, etc.). Jenny and Megan did not think the issues were yet cause for major concern: Jenny stated that complaints would have to rise to the level of everyday frequency first to raise alarm. Megan noted that from her experience, the Sex column had supporters also but that they might not be as vocal as its critics. Warren argued that if any controversy helps to get people talking about the paper in classrooms and other venues, it could help raise awareness about student media in general.

Boyd noted that the controversies were part of a larger issue of "trigger warnings," noting that the GSTV news team had reposted raw footage of a police shooting on its Facebook page without providing the reader with warning. Jeannie agreed but noted that a simple "FOR ADULTS" warning practice or something similar was the best solution as a more complicated system might confuse readers/viewers.

Anna was happy with the paper's glossy Incept issue and Bryce reported receiving a lot of positive feedback about it in his appearances in Freshman classrooms. He also noted that the Neighborhood Guides section made it ideal for repurposing during the Southeast Journalism Conference in February, for visiting students from other schools.

Bryce also noted that The Signal design staff, led by Anna, received a national award nomination (the CMA Pinnacles) for the 2013 Modern Media Conference program.

WRAS: Alex reported that with GPB broadcasting during the daytime terrestrial hours, the student programming experienced a severe listenership decline. This made compiling charts difficult as listener feedback was considered a key component to this process and that had declined. Jenny inquired about how the students were planning to promote different avenues to listen to the station. Jeannie suggested recording and submitting a PSA that would air on GPB broadcasts that would alert listeners of where to go (Internet, WRAS-HD2) to find the station. David recommended contacting the Computer Sciences department about app solutions, to which Jenny also noted a grant might be available for such projects. David noted that unfortunately the current GPB app was pointing to the Rome feed, which meant the students couldn't benefit from a runoff from that listenership.

Alex noted that there were several ways to access the station on the internet and on mobile devices (TuneIn, a listener-designed application, Soundtap, GSU app) but that promoting those methods was the key. Bryce also noted that the link in the GSU app for 88.5 was not as intuitive as it could be and that he would contact Andrea Jones to see if the link could be more direct. He also stated that he and Promotions Director Hannah Frank would appear in a public relations class to pitch WRAS/Album 88 as a classroom project.

Alex noted that the station was also developing a programming plan for the 7pm hour on weekdays that would emphasize 10-15 minutes of talk content (concert calendars, WRAS news and public affairs programming) to retain GPB listeners coming out of drivetime. He and his assistant Program Directors were also in the early stages of proposing an hour of content that would emphasize campus groups, an idea that Jenny, Megan and Raven supported. Raven felt that the Rialto would support programming of this nature. Boyd pointed out that the "Org. United" meeting on September 26 would be a good opportunity for WRAS staff to find groups for this idea.

GSTV: Warren reported that the Livestream was being readjusted for better resolution. The staff was anticipating eight episodes of the program *Side Effects* during the Fall semester; they were still debating on how they would like to roll out the episodes. The station wanted to more efficiently roll out content in general so that there would always be the possibility of something new on the site each week; Warren noted that at the end of the Spring semester, the station experimented with posting news segments from *Panther Report* as they were completed (rather than just in the single episode format).

The *Panther Report* team had completed an orientation session on the previous Monday with the overall team conducting one on the following Monday. Megan inquired about promotional methods for these sessions; Warren reported the staff relied primarily on flyers around campus as well as social media, although he wanted to improve the latter efforts in the future (Instagram, etc.).

He and Student Assistant Casey Williams spoke with Spotlight about staging the play *Devil Boys From Beyond* and recording it for GSTV. They were hopeful that once professor Frank Miller completed auditions for his play, there would be an increase in volunteers to audition for *Devil Boys*.

The station also set a goal to do a live *Panther Report* by the end of the school year.

Raven asked Warren if there was a possibility of providing trailers for GSTV content at Cinefest. Boyd noted that Cinefest attendance had increased overall and that the theater was hoping to still show have 35mm screenings when the right opportunities arose. Warren agreed with Raven that it was a good idea and noted that the recent Cinefest screenings of *Under the Skin* were beneath the blockbuster movies attendance but ahead of last year's attendance, so a strong potential audience was there.

New South: Jenny reported that the staff's trip to Minneapolis for the Association of Writers and Writing Programs in April was already booked. The latest issue was in printing, the staff was slowly reducing the amount of printed copies in anticipation of one day producing a digital version. She noted that there was a possibility of one day moving to a strictly digital format but that she did not want to commit to the idea in the short-term.

The staff was planning two theme issues for the upcoming year; one of which based loosely on the theme of "adventure." This concept is similar to the "Choose Your Own Adventure" series but the staff investigated trademarks and noted that they could not use this direct theme. The staff was also still trying to collect recordings of some of its poems for the WRAS *Melodically Challenged* program, which was proving to be challenging. The staff had organized two readings for the fall, one with general contributors from the school and another featuring Christopher Merkner, which had been postponed from the spring.

Raven added that *Underground* would soon be celebrating its fifth anniversary and that a redesign might accompany the milestone. Jenny noted that she was advocating that *Underground* receive office space adjacent to *New South* in the new English department location in 25 Park Place, effective Fall 2015.

Bryce added that Raven helped secure the majority of literary speakers for the Modern Media Conference, as part of his goal to diversify the medium representation at MMC. The conference was scheduled for Sept. 19-20 at the Student Center and over 40 speakers had volunteered to appear.

The next CSC meeting was scheduled for October 10, 2014 in 404 University Center.

The meeting was adjourned.