



Committee on Student Communications – Meeting minutes
Friday, January 16, 2015, 10:30 a.m., VIP Room, Student Center

Members Present

Boyd Beckwith (Student Center Director), Bryce McNeil (Assistant Director for Student Media), Anna Yang (The Signal Editor-in-Chief), David Armstrong (faculty, at-large), Raven Neely (student, at-large)

Members Absent

Jeannie Barrett (ex-officio), Greg Lisby (faculty, Department of Communication), Warren Turner (GSTV Managing Director), Undergraduate Representative, Department of Communication (vacant), Graduate Representative, Department of Communication (vacant), Akiem Bailum (student, at-large), Alayna Fabricius (WRAS General Manager)

Guests

Stephanie Devine (sitting in for Jenny Brown, *New South* Editor-in-Chief)

Call to order

Meeting was called to order by Boyd Beckwith at 10:43 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Due to the lack of quorum, the minutes from the November meeting were tabled for approval in February.

Signal shortfall

Continuing from the previous meeting, the committee discussed the Signal budget shortfall and potential solutions.

Anna noted that former Editor-in-Chief Chris Shattuck reached out to Jasmine Stewart from the Alumni Association to discuss building a *Signal* alumni group. David suggested that a LinkedIn search would help uncover a list of alumni that could be willing to participate, noting that the more established graduates would be more likely to have money to contribute. Boyd noted that this could work for the other media groups too, particularly if the organizations decided to cut their budgets to make funds available for a business manager. Bryce noted that Taylor Pannell (undergraduate reader) might be an ideal candidate for such a task for *New South*, for example.

Raven adds that there's a lot of automatic information at the Registrar's office that might be accessible via the right contacts. Boyd suggests Alumni help in crafting a letter to appeal to alumni, noting this idea worked during his time at Rice. He also suggests talking to David Cheshier for ideas on the matter.

David added that some of the information regarding alumni would be subject to Open Records Requests, which could be additionally useful. Boyd noted that the sooner alums donate, the more likely they continue to do so, so early outreach would be critical for the future.

David also suggested adding an “alumni profile” feature to the *Signal* and/or Student Media website to attract attention and noted that the Modern Media Conference would be a good starting point for such an initiative.

Boyd noted that Shantavia Reid-Stroud was working to establish a foundation account for WRAS as it had received an unsolicited donation.

Business Manager proposal

Bryce presented a first draft proposal to reduce the expenditures of *The Signal* and the allocations to GSTV, WRAS, and *New South* to free funds for the hiring of a business manager for Student Media to operate out of the central account. Bryce noted this proposal would only cover eight months (\$29,200) of potential salary/benefits for such a position and welcomed feedback.

Boyd agreed the addition of such a position was crucial as it would allow more time for the Assistant Director to work on advisory duties. He also noted that due to the Affordable Health Care Act, there would need to be proper funds available for benefits for such an employee. Boyd, however, indicated he would not reduce the Media Head stipends, as proposed, and would instead continue to cut the student assistant funds for GSTV, as the “tag along” model of Assistant-to-Leader was not working as planned.

Boyd noted that with the GPC-GSU consolidation, there might be a potential savings in printing costs, but that it was too early to tell and that it would be highly unlikely any new money would result. In addition, the GPC model of funding student newspapers worked in the opposite manner of the *Signal* (GPC funded the operations whereas printing money was derived from advertising).

David agreed and stated that it would likely be more administrative structure that would be affected by the consolidation than student activity funding. David also pointed out there might actually be unforeseen added costs, such as accounting for paying writers at GPC satellite campuses (which GPC does not currently do).

David believes that with proper business management, the *Signal* could improve its ad sales noting that on college campuses, print has a more captive audience than in other locations. He also noted that in the developing world, print is thriving.

Bryce agreed to talk with the media heads about the proposal and the media heads were free to agree or offer counterproposals at the next CSC meeting.

Media Head Updates

GSTV: Bryce reported that the Technical Advisor search was close to an end, with three candidates in consideration. *Santa vs. the Elves* was staged by GSTV staff to over 80 people before the holidays. Bryce met with Carlyn after break to discuss possibly reformatting *Panther Report*.

WRAS – Bryce reported that members of management met with he, Boyd and Douglass Covey to discuss improvements to station operations, including antenna improvements/relocation costs, potentially retrofitting Cinefest for live performances and hiring personnel to improve the station’s digital and

online presence. The staff was conducting its first meetings before opening up a new DJ application window.

The Signal – Anna reported the staff had uploaded 2-3 stories a week during the break and accumulated 1000 likes on Facebook. The first print issue was circulated. The staff received notice of nominations in 14 categories for the Georgia College Press Association “Better Newspapers” awards.

New South – Stephanie reported that the next issue was in development and that the first draft had been sent to the printers. This would allow plenty of time for the issue to be available at the Association for Writers and Writing Programs conference. The staff met to develop a long-term plan of action, including new volunteer positions for undergraduates.

Raven reported the print issue of *Underground* 5.1 had arrived. It was the thickest copy of *Underground* to date and the staff was extremely pleased with its design. Contributors were being given copies and some out of state readers were receiving them as well. The first staff meeting for the digital-only issue was upcoming; Raven noted that with the digital-only format, the staff was accepting audio and visual (music, film, etc.) submissions for consideration in the journal. She was also considering locations for a release show, that would include more than reading (possibly dance pieces, music pieces) that would be at the beginning of May.

David suggested that moving the next meeting to 25 Park Place to which the committee agreed. The meeting was set for room 1042, at 10:30am, February 13, 2015.

The meeting was adjourned.