

Minutes of the November 3, 2014 Meeting of the UCLA Communications Board

Board members present: Hossain Albgal, Jesse Coronado, Addrita Das, Steve Greim, Andre Jones, Justin Kumar, Josh Levine, Keren Mahgerefteh, Jener Sakiri, Arvli Ward

Board members arriving late: George White

Board members absent: Mohammad Ahmad, Elaheh Alizadehbirjandi, Mukti Desai, Cuauhtémoc Ortega

Guest: Andrew Erickson (Daily Bruin Editor in chief), Jose Hernandez (Student Media graduate assistant)

I. Call to order (Albgal)

Albgal called the meeting to order at 5:41 p.m.

II. Approval of the agenda (Albgal)

Coronado moved to approve the agenda. Sakiri seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

III. Approval of October minutes (Albgal)

Greim made a correction to the Oct. minutes which stated that the Daily Bruin and BruinLife ACP Pacemaker nominations were from 2013. They should have read “2014.” Kumar moved to approve the amended October minutes. Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

IV. Executive Committee report (Albgal)

Albgal reported that the committee had not met. Albgal said he wanted to have each committee chair commit to a deliverable so that there would be continuity between meetings.

V. Operations Committee report (Kumar)

Kumar said the Operations Committee met on Monday, October 27 with Andrew Erickson (Daily Bruin EIC), Colleen Casabal (Al-Talib EIC/Ops Committee newsmagazine representative), and Lauren Uba (UCLARadio General Manager) in attendance. The editors gave reports on their current status, including reports that Al-Talib was able to add 20 interns during recruitment and that the Daily Bruin recruited close to 200 interns.

Kumar said that Casabal expressed the belief that the newsmagazines were secondary to the Daily Bruin. Ward said both he and Coronado felt the same way when they were student editors but in time came to understand why the newsmagazines and the Daily Bruin were different, including facts like the Daily Bruin was a daily publication with primary budget responsibility for the entire organization. Ward said he believed that most editors will come to realize if they availed themselves of all the

opportunities in Student Media that they could achieve success. He said since Abigail Goldman joined the organization, she has been especially attentive.. Helga Salinas (former La Gente editor) was hired to assist with the newsmagazines. Greim said it may be issues like aging equipment that could be causing newsmagazine staffs to feel like they don't get the support that they need.

Kumar said the Operations Committee also discussed how to address the absence of a BruinLife editor in chief, and that it would be discussed under agenda item IX.

Griem asked if there was any discussion at the Operations Committee meeting regarding a Pacific Ties editor in chief. Ward said he'd had meetings with three students who were interested. They were former staff who expressed reluctance because of the perceived time commitment. Recruiting was ready to move beyond staff if there were no applicants by the end of fall quarter.

Albgaal asked if Kumar would send out an email reminding the newsmagazine editors that the Communications Board meetings are open, and if there was anything they wanted to communicate to the board they could do so through Kumar or to the board directly.

VI. Finance Committee report (Sakiri)

Sakiri said the committee met on October 30, where the September financial statements were discussed. He said that Daily Bruin September revenue was down \$68,673 to budget was because of a change in the September calendar. The Daily Bruin's Registration Issue has historically been in September but this year it fell in fiscal October.

Underwriting for newsmagazines was less than plan because the Center for Campus Progress shifted focus to grants to individuals instead of grants to publications. Kumar asked what impact that would have on the magazines. Sakiri said that magazines only spent money they raised through grants or advertising sales so it would not cause an issue with the budget. Ward said that much of the grant money was used to print, and that there may be a benefit to losing these funds since it may encourage newsmagazines to go fully digital faster. Greim said it would negatively impact them in that they would not be able to get their product out to their non-digital audience. Ward disagreed, saying that the newsmagazine target audience has digital access and those who do not, like the elderly, were not actually part of the newsmagazine's target audience. Albgaal asked what the Communication Board's role should be in the digital transition. Ward said he believed it was to educate the editors and not to encourage outmoded publishing practices.

Ward said that October Daily Bruin revenue was estimated to be \$106,000, twice budgeted revenue of \$58,000. Ward said that with about a third of the month's revenue counted, sales were already at about 55 percent of budget. Ward said at the end of September cash reserves stood at \$170,000, and cash as of the meeting date

was about the same. The policy called for us to have a balance of \$290,000 in the bank.

Sakiri said that members of the Finance Committee met with the ASUCLA BOD Finance Committee meeting on Friday, Oct. 24. Sakiri, Albgal, Greim, Kumar and Ward were in attendance. The BOD chairman David Zeke said he wanted to see different operating models using different revenue scenarios. Zeke questioned the mobile strategy because it was not profitable. Ward explained in response that it was necessary for publishers to build mobile distribution for the future.

Sakiri said that ASUCLA BOD Finance Committee members offered some suggestions for generating new revenue. They included putting ads on the BOL login page, starting an endowment, and asking big corporations like Disney for money.

Albgal said he believed there were three take away key points from the joint meeting. The first was that working together would require communication. Albgal said that one of the ASUCLA committee members laid out steps for engaging UCLA's development office to begin building an endowment, but if they would have communicated with the Communications Board they would have learned about its agreement with Communications Studies to build an endowment to fund the media adviser position. The second take away was that the Communications Board had to present different operating models based on sales, and the third was exploring different funding possibilities. Albgal said the process would have to be refined, but that it was a good step.

Sakiri said he was planning a meeting with CJ Gabbe, chair of the BOD Finance Committee Chair.

VII. Media Director's report (Ward)

Ward reported that the Daily Bruin won the Associated Collegiate Press Pacemaker award. Bruin Life yearbook was also a finalist this year. Daily Bruin editor Andrew Erickson said there were as many as 900 entries and four newspapers were nominated as finalists. He said last year's editor in chief Jillian Beck and managing editor Loic Hostetter accepted the award on the Daily Bruin's behalf in Philadelphia. Erickson said it was a proud achievement for the Daily Bruin and it was their second time winning in four years.

Coronado moved for the Communications Board to write a letter acknowledging the Daily Bruin for winning the ACP Pacemaker award. Kumar seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

Ward reported that mobile distribution continues to grow. Mobile installs had reached more than 121,000 and growth over the last month was about 5,000 installs. Ward said that was asked at the BOD Finance Committee meeting to produce a five-year plan for profitability, but Ward said he could not realistically produce one

yet. Levine said he understood why the BOD Finance Committee would be impatient for profits. He asked Ward what analytics were used to know that mobile was on the right course. Ward said they were currently focused on installs and retained users. Levine asked how could the Communications Board better tell this story to ASUCLA. Greim added that the language the Communications Board used was also important like asking for investment instead of a business practice. White said we should try to find other media organizations that have had success in what we are trying to accomplish, but if there were none we should say that we are at the forefront and first to try this.

FEM Newsmagazine

Ward said he had planned to have Fem editor Angelina Murphy attend the meeting to make a presentation but she was unable to attend. Ward said that Fem was a model of recruiting and publishing success. Fem had 50 intern applicants and 20 returning members, making them the second biggest newsroom in the organization. Ward said that a special training for FEM was arranged to accommodate the new recruits. Fem has thousands of readers of its website. According to Fem's analytics, some stories have been read 20,000 times, something they would not have been able to accomplish in print. Fem is also growing its social media and now counts 2,700 Instagram followers, 418 Twitter followers, and some of their stories on Tumblr have 2,000 notes. They are also using Tiny Letter, a subscription email service, to send out feminist news every Friday. Ward said FEM was probably the best read newsmagazine. He said that they were a model for all newsmagazines. Levine said during last year's appointments they talked about sharing best practices and insights across the editors. He asked how they were doing that. Ward said that Salinas was facilitating this.

Discussion Items

VIII. September 2014 Communications Board Financial Statements (Ward)

Sakiri discussed the September financial statements during the Finance Committee report.

New Business/Action Items

IX. BruinLife yearbook status (Ward)

Ward informed the board that Jose Hernandez (Yearbook Graduate Assistant) would keep the yearbook coordinated until an editor was appointed. Hernandez had recruited a staff of about 40 and had begun to train them.

X. Adjourn (Albgal)

White moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m. Mahgerefteh seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous consent.

Submitted by Doria Deen