AGENDA
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
TIME: 9:00 A.M. ET
APRIL 18, 2015
INDIANAPOLIS
STREAMED LIVE AT WWW.SPJ.ORG

1. Call to Order – Neuts

2. Roll Call – Walsh
   a. Cuillier
   b. Neuts
   c. Fletcher
   d. Kopen-Katcef
   e. Walsh
   f. McCloskey
   g. Tarquinio
   h. Gass-Poore
   i. Brett Hall
   j. Reilley
   k. Tallent
   l. Baker
   m. Schotz
   n. Koretzky
   o. Gallagher-Newberry
   p. Givens
   q. Radske
   r. McLean
   s. Gallagher
   t. Johnson
   u. Hallenberg
   v. Matthew
   w. Hernandez


4. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – Neuts
   c. Nov. 18, 2014 [Page 15]

5. Review of the SPJ budget for fiscal year ending July 31, 2016. – Skeel [Page 21]

6. Chapter Activity – Puckey [Page 36]


8. Report of the SDX Foundation President – Leger [Page 38]

9. Staff Report – Skeel [Page 40]

10. Action/Discussion Items
       i. Discuss moving to June, July, October
       ii. Discuss criteria for city selection
    b. Online LDF Auction – Skeel
    c. Meetings recording policy – Skeel
    d. Religious Freedom legislation, as it affects SPJ – Neuts and Fletcher
    e. SPJ Diversity – Neuts
11. Old/New Business
   a. Financial implications of extended post-grad discount to 4 years – Skeel [Page 54]
   b. Career center update – Walsh
   c. Communities update – Neuts [Page 56]
   d. Tech upgrade update – Puckey [Page 58]
   e. Update re high school journalism book – Tallent
   f. Advocacy fund – Cuillier [Page 69]
   g. Student issues/concerns/ideas – Gass-Pooré
   h. “It’s the People’s Data” – Johnson
   i. Business meeting/vote tally policy – Neuts [Page 75]
   j. Communications discussion – Royer and Neuts [Page 59]
   k. Non-affiliated member representation – Fletcher [Page 62]
   l. Awards recommendations – Walsh [Page 76]

12. Public comment period
   a. Public can make comments prior to the meeting at www.spj.org. Comments will be monitored and addressed online during the meeting.

13. Committee/Community/Task Force Reports
   a. ACEJMC – Geimann [Page 92]
   b. Awards and Honors – Schotz and Bauer [Page 97]
   c. Digital Community – Veeneman and Mirfendereski [Page 108]
   d. Diversity – Bethea [Page 111]
   e. Ethics – Seaman [Page 112]
   f. Freelance Community – Pratt [Page 113]
   g. Freedom of Information – Cuillier [Page 115]
   h. Generation J – Amezcua [Page 117]
   i. International Community – Restrepo [Page 118]
   j. Journalism Education – Cain [Page 119]
   k. LDF – Limor [Page 121]
   l. Student Community – Hall and Pooré [Page 123]

14. Group photo – Skeel

15. Adjournment
The Society of Professional Journalists

Board of Directors Meeting

April 18, 2015
9 A.M. – 5 P.M. ET

Indianapolis

Streamed live at www.spj.org

Improving and Protecting Journalism Since 1909

The Society of Professional Journalists is the nation’s largest and most broad-based journalism organization, dedicated to encouraging the free practice of journalism and stimulating high standards of ethical behavior.

Founded in 1909 as Sigma Delta Chi, SPJ promotes the free flow of information vital to a well-informed citizenry, works to inspire and educate the next generation of journalists, and protects First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and press.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 6, 2015
FROM: Dana Neuts, President
SUBJ: President’s Report
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

Since becoming president in September, I have learned more about the internal workings and external pressures of SPJ than I anticipated. Internally, we have made great strides in our communications, approved a badly needed tech upgrade, helped our communities grow, and expanded our partnerships. Externally, we have addressed tough issues including the FBI’s impersonation of a reporter, fought against the “secret executions bill” in Ohio and discrimination in Indiana, spoken out about press freedom following the Charlie Hebdo attack, criticized Brian Williams and Hillary Rodham Clinton, and commented on many ethical issues, including *Rolling Stone’s* flawed reporting in “A Rape on Campus.”

I continue to be amazed by the amount of hard work, passion and dedication that SPJ staff and volunteers put in to make the SPJ engine run. You will read about much of the work in the committee and community reports, and I will summarize some of those accomplishments here. No matter how thorough I am, it cannot begin to do justice to the countless hours that are put in on behalf of our organization and the SDX Foundation. I want to thank everyone for their commitment to SPJ and SDX and their ongoing support.

COMMUNICATIONS

Since we first began talking about SPJ’s need for a communications strategist, I have been excited about the potential this position holds for helping SPJ fulfill its mission and shaping our place in the journalism world. We have been fortunate to have qualified, talented interns on board, but SPJ also needs someone who can think big picture and long-term, giving SPJ a consistent voice over time. Since Jennifer Royer joined the SPJ team last summer, we have made great strides in honing our message, reacting quickly, developing consistent processes and procedures, and being proactive in developing talking points, finding speaking opportunities, and planning promotion for upcoming events, among other activities. Collectively, we’ve had a few missteps, but with guidance from the board, we have tweaked our approach, and things seem to be running smoothly for the most part. Statements and letters since EIJ14: 18, not including statements we joined other organizations in signing. In addition, SPJ board members have done a number of interviews on various topics.

COMMUNITIES

You’ll see in the enclosed reports how our five communities – Freelance, Digital, International Journalism, Generation J and Student – are doing, so I will omit the details here and speak globally. What started out as a borrowed idea years ago has blossomed into an exciting, new way for SPJ to reach our members and beyond.
Each community has grown deliberately, allowing itself to morph organically into something that meets each group’s needs. The communities have grown so large that, a few months ago, Alex Veeneman, the acting chair of SPJ Digital, volunteered to be our community coordinator. Creating this position has helped me manage the communities, and put the communities in a sustainable position after my term is over. I am very pleased at the progress of the communities and excited to see their growth in 2015.

ETHICS
Following the approval of the revised Code of Ethics at EIJ, SPJ promptly posted the revised version online and had copies printed for sharing. The committee also began preparing the supplemental materials to accompany the Code. Andrew Seaman told me some of the material should be posted in time for the April board meeting. To date, the Code has been translated into French, German, Spanish, Chinese and Arabic. Next up, Farsi. Andrew is having the translations proofread by colleagues. Once approved, the translations will go live on SPJ.org. In addition to this work, the committee has been discussing program ideas for Ethics Week and EIJ15, Andrew has fielded numerous questions and done a number of talks and interviews on the Code and ethics-related topics. The committee blog is regularly updated with topical information and opinions, and Andrew has been very responsive and helpful when I’ve had ethical questions or concerns. His input and support have made my job easier. He has exceeded my high expectations.

ADVOCACY
In addition to the activities in FOI chair Dave Cuillier’s report, Dave has been very helpful representing SPJ publicly on FOI and related issues, doing interviews, and proactively seeking cases and issues where SPJ can take the lead or join other groups. He has also continued work on the advocacy fund to make it a reality. He has been a good sounding board and been very helpful fielding interviews and commentaries in his areas of expertise.

MEMBERSHIP
While the Membership Committee has always had an important role in SPJ, how the committee can improve or enhance membership has been vague, making it difficult to have a significant impact on SPJ. However, Robyn Sekula has done a great job forming a diverse committee of passionate volunteers and laying out a master plan for 2015. Among the goals for the year: diversifying membership, marketing to students more effectively, reaching out to unaffiliated members, and improving retention. If the committee is successful with its plan, I’d like to see this serve as the template for the committee in the future.

I had the opportunity to attend the region 5 SPJ conference in Louisville last weekend. Taking my directive that SPJ needs to be more diverse to heart, Robyn made a concerted effort to be sure the conference panelists and topics were diverse, including a panel on how to report on transgender issues and transgender related news and a “then and now” diversity panel, showing how attitudes have changed but still need work. The “then and now” panel was planned in partnership with the local NABJ chapter. I applaud her for having the courage to tackle some tough topics.
Also, on the membership front, Tara Puckey was promoted to membership strategist, allowing us to think big picture and long term, and Linda Hall has added more benefits to our membership package. Combined with our new communities, SPJ has much to offer current and prospective members.

**DIVERSITY**

Lead by April Bethea, the Diversity Committee has a few projects in the works, outlined in her report. The committee has been active on Twitter (@SPJDiversityNow) and the blog to improve our presence online. I am pleased with their progress, their responsiveness, and their receptiveness to new ideas. Co-chair and past SPJ president Georgiana Vines will represent SPJ at a diversity summit organized by UNITY on April 10.

We are making progress, but there is more SPJ can and should do to become more diverse. Expanding our diversity needs to come from the entire organization though, not just one committee. One way to improve our diversity is to appoint journalists from different backgrounds to chair and serve on committees, run for board seats, and get involved in their local chapters. One suggestion made was for SPJ chapters to partner with organizations like NAJA, NABJ and NLGJA on programs when the chapters or members are in close proximity. This is more likely to happen in larger metropolitan areas, but it is something we should encourage and facilitate whenever possible. I would also like to add members of those organizations to SPJ committees and communities to help us learn how to better reach diverse journalists and make our organization’s leadership more representative of our membership. At this point, we don’t know what we don’t know, and that can only change if we are proactive and seek support.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

Continuing the tradition started by John Ensslin, president-elect Paul Fletcher and secretary-treasurer Lynn Walsh and I meet regularly by phone to talk about our individual projects, SPJ issues and concerns, topical journalism news, the year ahead and more. Both have been extremely helpful and supportive, and I am grateful for their guidance and assistance.

Paul is always willing to lend his opinion when asked. His legal expertise and journalism experience help give a balanced perspective to many issues. Lynn has been quick to volunteer to take on a number of important tasks including minor things like keeping track of regional conferences and scheduling our calls to major initiatives like making recommendations for our awards and honors procedures and transforming a lackluster job bank into a career center. There are countless others, including members of our board, who have offered input, support and guidance and who have volunteered for projects. Thanks to you all.

**SUMMARY**

Overall, I am pleased with the first seven months of this SPJ year. There is much work to be done, and now that I have a better sense for the work flow and responsibilities involved in my role, I hope to be more proactive and strategic as we move toward EIJ15. Thank you for your support. I look forward to the next five months.

~ Dana Neuts, SPJ President
MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
With President David Cuillier presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 9:05 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 4, 2014, at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee.

In addition to Cuillier, the following were present: President-Elect Dana Neuts; Immediate Past President Sonny Albarado; Secretary-Treasurer Paul Fletcher; Vice President for Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katce; Directors at-Large Bill McCloskey and Carl Corry; Student Representative Brett Hall; Campus Advisers at-Large Kym Fox and Becky Tallent; Regional Directors Rebecca Baker, Andy Schotz, Michael Koretzky, Patti Gallagher Newberry, Susan Stevens, Joe Radske, David Sheets, Eddy Gallagher, Pia Hallenberg, Matthew Hall and Tony Hernandez.

Staff members present for the meeting were Executive Director Joe Skeel, Chapter Coordinator Tara Puckey and Communications Strategist Jennifer Royer.

Newly appointed board members Brett Hall and Matthew Hall introduced themselves to the group, as did Communications Strategist Jennifer Royer.

President Cuillier shared highlights from his presidency, including advocacy efforts, the hiring of a full-time communications position (Royer), the ethics code revision and the launch of communities.

UNDER-30 TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS
John Ensslin shared his task force's report. Ensslin explained the process: The group started as a name-change task force, but learned that there was little support for a name change. It morphed into a task force to look at SPJ's future and added several SPJ members younger than 30. The group of young journalists developed the list of ideas, which was vetted by the senior members on the name-change task force (Future's Task Force).

Ensslin asked the board to embrace the recommendations, some of which have already been adopted and implemented.

Upon proper motion by Tallent and second by Stevens the board voted to instruct staff to examine the financial impact of extending the post-graduate membership rate from three years to four.

Staff is to report its findings to the board in April.
The board also discussed the SPJ job bank, questioning whether the $14,000 it receives each year from Boxwood (the job bank host) is worth it, considering the job bank isn’t very robust. The board agreed that it would like to see more jobs.

The board discussed the possibility of creating an online repository of links that directs people to other job boards, including national sites (such as journalismjobs.org) and chapter sites that list jobs.

**Upon proper motion by Gallagher Newberry and second by Albarado the board voted to create a sub-committee that will investigate the pros and cons of continuing the current job bank model with Boxwood. The subcommittee will deliver a report in April with concrete options.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
Schotz asked whether the conference call to appoint the Region 11 director and student representative was considered an executive session. Cuillier explained that because this was similar to a personnel discussion, the answer was yes.

Skeel asked for clarification on how detailed the minutes should be. The board agreed that all actions and motions should be included, even if motions die with no second.

**Upon proper motion by Kopen Katcef and second by Fletcher the board voted to approve the minutes with the following corrections (as suggested by Schotz).**

**From April 26, 2014, meeting**
- In attendance: Patti Gallagher Newberry (no hyphen), Don Meyers (stated Myers)
- Under “Streamlining” - Cuillier (stated Cullier)

**From July 28, 2014, conference call**
- Include missing motion: Schotz moved to approve Molly Dugan as Region 11 Director. There was no second.

**From Aug, 20, 2014, Skype conference call**
- Gallagher Newberry (no hyphen)
- Schotz objection, stated at the top, was not specifically because of the two points he recommended changing. Here's how that section could be tweaked: “He shared that he was hesitant about voting yes or no on the current version because it still needed work.” The rest of that graf could be cut - the motions he made later speak for themselves.
- In the last sentence on p. 36, add an “s” to “journalist.”
- “Cook opposed the adding the principle…” - strike first “the”
- Schotz’s second motion for including a reference to anonymous comments did not fail in a voice vote. It was an 8-5 roll call vote: yes: Schotz, Gallagher Newberry, Hernandez, Kopen Katcef, Hallenberg Christensen; no: Matthew Hall, Cook, Albarado, Corry, Tallent, Fox, Sheets, Neuts
**SDX Foundation President Report**

SDX Foundation president Robert Leger covered the highlights of his written report, noting that the Foundation’s endowed funds have remained steady – as have the grant-making activities.

He hopes that the Foundation board will take action on during its meeting (Sept. 6) on taking over the educational responsibilities of SPJ. If this happens, the Foundation would become a working board, as opposed to mainly being a grant-making board.

Leger also shared an update on the First Amendment Award, which will be given out during the President’s Installation Banquet on Sept. 6. He also provided updates on the current Editorial Fellowship and past fellowship winners.

**Advocacy Fund**

Cuillier shared a proposal that addressed questions he heard from board members in April. The proposal asked for three things:

- Approve the concept of endowed fund within the LDF. Shared that they could do fundraising now, but that it could officially become endowed in a couple years.
- Allocate $75K from the current LDF fund to this endowed fund.
- Adopt a policy that the SPJ’s board put excess funds into the endowment at the end of each fiscal year.

Upon proper motion by Koretzky and second by Matthew Hall the board voted to launch the endowed advocacy fund immediately, funding it with $75,000 from current LDF account.

Baker moved to amend Koretzky’s motion by also creating a policy that would move excess funds at the end of the fiscal year into the endowment fund. The motion was seconded by Hernandez.

Debate ensued on whether the current board should put this onus on future boards. Also, there was discussion on whether this would “handcuff” SPJ in the future.

There was a move to call to question. The board voted to end debate.

Baker’s amendment was voted down. The original motion stands as passed.

After that, the board voted in favor of the original motion.

**SPJ Torchbearers**

Puckey shared the highlights from her memo, explaining the ongoing trial with a core group of members in Nebraska. The trial is to see if SPJ could sustain/support a group of people who can’t make a chapter structure work, but still want to do work on behalf of SPJ.
Puckey noted that this “centralization” concept is a national trend among chapter-based organizations. Many groups are finding it harder to sustain a nationwide chapter structure, as the number of volunteers shrinks. She hopes this provides a flexible solution for SPJ.

**Partnership/Advocacy Updates**
Skeel shared updates about the advocacy/partnership efforts that have taken place over the past few months.
- The PIO letter (signed by 40 journalism organizations) that was sent to the White House.
- A letter to the EPA regarding transparency and access to scientists working for the federal government.
- Statements on the deaths of journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff.
- A leadership summit scheduled for Sept. 5 at EIJ.
- Two groups are interested in talking to SPJ about providing back-office management services.

**Future Spring Board Meetings**
Skeel shared that Indianapolis is becoming a top convention city, making it harder to secure hotel space for spring meetings. He asked the board to support the idea of moving spring meetings to other parts of the country, namely coinciding with future convention locations. The board supported the idea.

**Chapter Activity**
Puckey shared her memo on the chapters that should be declared inactive. She also shared that the California State University – Sacramento chapter be chartered.

Those that were voted to become inactive:
- Boston College
- Curry College
- Lyndon State College
- Temple University
- Georgia College & State
- Georgia Southern University
- Georgia State University
- Kent State University
- Western Michigan University
- Ball State University
- Franklin College
- Louisville Collegiate Satellite
- University of Southern Indiana
- Marquette University
- University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
- Iowa State
- University of Iowa
- Oklahoma State
Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Neuts the board voted to accept staff’s recommendation on chartering CSU-Sacramento and de-activating the chapters above.

COMMUNITY UPDATE
Neuts provided an update on the Freelance Community. She shared that the group will be meeting during EIJ14 to build interest in the community. The goal is get enough interest to conduct elections.

She also updated the board on the Digital Committee, and shared that the Gen J committee is interested in shifting into a community.

She explained that one of her major focuses in the coming year will be supporting and building communities in the coming year.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS
Neuts shared that while it isn't required in the bylaws for the president to ask for board approval of committee appointments, she felt it was important in the name of transparency.

She asked the board to support her committee chair appointments.

Upon proper motion by Fletcher and second by Tallent the board voted to approve Neuts’ committee appointments.

BOARD MEMBER RECOGNITION
Cuillier recognized, and presented certificates, to retiring board members David Sheets, Carl Corry, Sonny Albarado, Susan Stevens and Kym Fox.

COMMITTEE REPORTS
Cuillier asked committee chairs in attendance to share information regarding their reports. Those in attendance answered questions from the board.
Tallent shared more detail about the Journalism Education Committee’s ongoing high-school journalism book project.

Committee chairs in attendance were Michael Fitzgerald (Freelance), Claudia Amezcuca (Gen J), Tallent (Journalism Education) and Neuts (Membership).

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION
Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Baker the board voted to go into executive session – for the purpose of discussing the Executive Director’s evaluation – at 11:25 a.m.

Upon proper motion by Tallent and second by Baker, the board voted to exit executive session at 12:05 p.m.

Discussion ensued about the evaluation process.

Some board members shared frustrations, noting they didn’t have enough time to read and digest the written evaluation (which was handed out during executive session) before voting on a pay increase. They encouraged a process where the board gets the evaluation sooner.

Cuillier explained that the evaluation process has evolved over time, and it can continue to evolve.

Upon proper motion by Corry and second by Fox the board voted to approve a 4-percent pay increase. Koretzky voted no.

ADJOURNMENT
Upon proper motion by Tallent and second by Baker the board voted to adjourn at 12:12 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 4.
MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
With president Dana Neuts presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 9:05 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 7, 2014 at the Gaylord Opryland in Nashville, Tennessee.

In addition to Neuts, the following were present: President-Elect Paul Fletcher; Immediate Past President David Cuillier; Secretary-Treasurer Lynn Walsh; Vice President for Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Kateff; Directors at-Large Bill McCloskey and Alex Tarquinio; Campus Advisers at-Large Mike Reilley and Becky Tallent; Student Representatives Brett Hall and Jordan Gass-Poore; Regional Directors Rebecca Baker, Andy Schotz, Michael Koretzky, Patti Gallagher Newberry, Deborah Givens, Joe Radske, Rob McLean, Eddye Gallagher, Tom Johnson, Pia Hallenberg, Matthew Hall and Tony Hernandez.

Staff members present for the meeting were Executive Director Joe Skeel, Chapter Coordinator Tara Puckey and Communications Strategist Jennifer Royer.

INTRODUCTIONS AND RECOGNITION
Because this was the first meeting for the newly-elected board, each member introduced themselves.

Neuts presented Cuillier with a gift from the board for his services as president. The board chipped in to donate to the newly created endowed legal defense fund.

PRESIDENTS GOALS AND BOARD EXPECTATIONS
Neuts shared her goals for the coming year, which included:
- Implementing the new Code of Ethics.
- Working to entrench and start communities.
- Keeping the advocacy rolling.
- Work on completing some of the Futures task force items.

Neuts also shared expectations she has of other board members, which included:
- Attendance at board meetings is important. (Dates of the upcoming meetings provided).
- Please come to the meetings prepared. Ask questions in advance.
- Please actively participate in conference/Skype calls.
- Expect that any group email could be made public.
- Board members to send agenda items.
- Board should avoid "shoot-first" mentality.
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS**
Upon proper motion and second by McCloskey and Kopen Katcef, respectively, Joe Radske was nominated to serve on the Executive Committee.

Upon proper motion and second by Fletcher and Baker, respectively, Bill McCloskey was nominated to serve on the Executive Committee.

Upon proper motion by Gallagher and second by Tallent, the board voted to close nominations.

Upon proper motion by Kopen Katcef and second by Tallent, Radske and McCloskey were voted to serve on the Executive Committee.

**SDX FOUNDATION APPOINTMENTS**
In addition to herself, Neuts appointed Cuillier, Fletcher, Walsh, Kopen Katcef, Hernandez and Baker to serve on the SDX Foundation Board of Directors.

**RATIFICATION OF SDX FOUNDATION ELECTIONS**
Upon proper motion by Schotz and second by Kopen Katcef, the board voted to ratify the elections of Fred Brown, Jay Evensen, Jane Kirtley, Dori Maynard, Mac McKerral, Sally Lehrman, Kevin Smith, Kelly Hawes and Sonny Albarado to the SDX Foundation Board of Directors.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**
Upon proper motion by Fletcher and second by Schotz, the board voted to ratify Neuts’ appointments of Gallagher and McCloskey to the SPJ Finance Committee.

**EIJ 2017**
Skeel presented staff’s recommendation to return to the Anaheim Marriott for SPJ’s 2017 convention. Skeel explained the rationale behind recommending Anaheim, which was, in part:

- Good room rate.
- Return to West Coast after four years removed.
- Ideal meeting space.
- Cost savings in planning, since staff knows the space.
- Proximity to entertainment.
- Support from RTDNA and NAHJ.

Board discussed the factors in choosing sites, including willingness to seek properties and cities that might have a higher room rate, but less expensive food options.

Staff took that information under advisement and will consider it in future Requests for Proposals.

Upon proper motion by Tallent and second by Kopen Katcef, the board voted to give staff permission to negotiate a hotel contract with the Anaheim Marriott.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION
Discussion centered around the fact that some didn’t feel there was enough time to review the evaluation and make informed comments. The group also discussed making the evaluation more in line with common human resources standards.

Some pointed out that including it as part of the packet would make it public. Others felt having it emailed in advance, separate from the meeting packet, would suffice.

Neuts then explained the process of the evaluation, and said the executive committee would set down procedures for how to conduct the evaluation.

Fletcher, who will be leading the evaluation process next year, asked if a deadline of Sept. 4, 2015 would suffice. The board said yes.

Before the vote on the original motion, Fletcher’s committed to e-mail the evaluation to the board no later than Sept. 4. The board supported this approach.

Upon proper motion by Gallagher and second by Baker, the board voted to include the executive director evaluation as part of the meeting materials that is sent to the board for its first meeting of convention.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS
Upon proper motion by Koretzky and second by Baker, the board voted that all SPJ committees will meet at the EIJ site. Moving meetings to other rooms will be noted on the convention app if possible, but signs in the new and old meeting rooms are mandatory. Committees will have agendas available at the meetings.

McCloskey voted no.

The board discussed that it is important for SPJ’s committee meetings to be open and welcoming to all those in attendance. The board asked that all promotions for the committee meetings indicate the public is welcome and encouraged to attend.

AWARDS SELECTION
Koretzky moved that all SPJ awards will be debated and bestowed by a vote of the entire board in executive session, except for those that honor board members themselves (i.e. regional director of the year). Board awards will be bestowed by the executive committee. And to direct the executive committee to come up with procedures for implementation. The motion was seconded by Gallagher Newberry.

Members discussed the pros and cons of having the full board make the decisions. Some of those concerns were:
- Having the executive committee choose all the awards perpetuates an image of an exclusive club.
- Having the 23-member board keep the Wells Key a secret is unrealistic.
• Asking the board to vote by secret ballot might solve the problem of the winner's name getting out.
• The work this would require of the board may be unmanageable.
• Perhaps the Executive Committee could develop a short list for board consideration.
• SDX Foundation President Robert Leger (who is also a Wells Key winner) asked that the decision remain with the officers.
• Having a system with more board input could lead to a better diversity among all award recipients.
• The board wants to be involved in the process, so it can better explain to members how the selections are made.

Neuts took a vote by show of hands. The motion was voted down 10-9.

Upon proper motion by Koretzky and second by Gallagher Newberry, respectively, the board voted to charge the Executive Committee to develop a plan in which the entire SPJ board will vote on all SPJ awards, except for those that honor board members themselves (i.e. regional director of the year). The board will present a plan during the April meeting.

McCloskey voted no.

BOARD ORIENTATION
Upon proper motion by Cuillier and second by Fletcher, the board voted to enter executive session at 11 a.m. for the purposes of meeting with legal counsel for board orientation.

Upon proper motion by Kopen Katcef and second by Brett Hall, the board voted to exit executive session at 11:54 a.m.

Before adjourning, some board members asked if we could address the following issues:
• Give out circle of excellence awards during opening business session.
• Better educate delegates as to what is happening during business meetings.
• Share individual vote totals during closing business meeting.
• Discuss programming as a board during board meetings.

No action was taken on any of the above.

Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Schotz, the board voted to adjourn at 12:05 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 7.
MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
With president Dana Neuts presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 11 a.m. ET on Tuesday, November 18, 2014 via Skype conference call.

In addition to Neuts, the following were present: President-Elect Paul Fletcher; Secretary-Treasurer Lynn Walsh; Vice President for Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef; Directors at-Large Bill McCloskey and Alex Tarquinio; Campus Advisers at-Large Mike Reilley and Becky Tallent; Student Representatives Brett Hall and Jordan Gass-Poore; Regional Directors Andy Schotz, Michael Koretzky, Patti Gallagher Newberry, Joe Radske, Rob McLean, and Tom Johnson.

Staff members present for the meeting were Executive Director Joe Skeel, Chapter Coordinator Tara Puckey, Webmaster Billy O’Keefe and Associate Executive Director Chris Vachon.

TECHNOLOGY UPGRADE
The purpose of the meeting was to consider staff’s proposal (Appendix A) for upgrading the Society’s membership database and website.

McLean asked if the project would require downtime of SPJ.org. O’Keefe said he didn’t anticipate any downtime because the current site would remain active while he builds the new site in the background.

Puckey also explained that the new site will be rolled out slowly over time. New features will become available in a systematic manner to ensure everything works properly.

Gallagher Newberry asked if there would be any changes to regional blogs. O’Keefe explained there wouldn’t be changes initially.

Gass-Poore asked if student chapter leaders would have control of their sites, similar to regional directors, board members and pro chapter leaders.

O’Keefe said they would. Puckey explained that this would likely be a function rolled out later, once SPJ determines how many “micro-sites” it wishes to have.

Upon proper motion by Bill McCloskey and second by Kopen Katcef, the board voted to approve the recommended budget and move forward with the proposed technology upgrade as outlined in the documents.
ADJOURNMENT
Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Kopen Katcef, the board adjourned at 11:13 a.m. ET on Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2014.
APPENDIX A

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 22, 2014
FROM: Tara Puckey & Billy O’Keefe
SUBJ: SPJ Technology
FOR: SPJ Executive Committee

OUR CURRENT SET UP
Think of SPJ’s integrated technology as having three main pieces:

- **iMIS** – our database that is used in-house (accessible reliably only through desktop versions on workstations). This software manages memberships, contact information, registration and accounting information, etc.
- **INET** – our hosting provider. This company hosts our website. Additionally, information collected on our website passes through their content portal – meaning we retrieve convention registrations, Annual Reports, etc., here
- Our website.

SPJ has been using iMIS since the late 1990s. We launched our website around the same time. Back then, nothing was integrated. The two operated separately from each other, and manpower bridged the gap. Furthermore, the database was rudimentary – and not user friendly. As we have learned over the years, SPJ didn’t do a very good job of setting up the database the way it was meant to be used. It’s akin to hammering a nail with a screwdriver. Nonetheless, we only knew how to use the database the incorrect way we were trained.

Over time, in our efforts to integrate our website with our database, the problems have been exacerbated. Because our database wasn’t set up correctly in the first place, upgrades and web integration proved more difficult. Over the years, those upgrades and integrations have led to a tangled web that complicate day to day operations.

For example, when members join SPJ, they do so on our website, which talks through our host provider INET, which then talks to our iMIS database. Information is relayed through the channels and then back again, creating several places where errors can occur. Tracking down the location of those errors can sometimes be long processes that take significant staff and outside provider time to fix.

Not only are we battling challenges with all the pieces working together, we’re also not using the technology to our advantage. For example, our conference registrations aren’t integrated with the database, so they are entered manually, taking up valuable staff time and creating higher possibilities for error.
Changes to information we wish to collect require coding, often tasked out (and paid for) to our iMIS service provider and INET.

Bottom line – we’re working harder, not smarter.

Over the past six months, Tara and Billy have rolled up their sleeves and learned the ins and outs of our situation. They have attended database training courses and met with our providers. What follows is their recommendation, with the support of the executive director, for moving forward.

PROPOSED OVERHAUL TO DATABASE AND WEBSITE
Last year, iMIS created a different type of system with their latest upgrade. It’s called EMS (Engagement Management System) and it is the basis for iMIS 20. In a nutshell, the system works to bring together all the different solutions we’ve had in the past into one cohesive platform for almost everything we do.

On the website side:
- Members will have an easier-to-manage, more robust member profile section that allows them to quickly and easily update their information at any time.
- Our database and website would be tied directly together so members and non-members can register for conferences or events. The data moves seamlessly into our database and corresponding event registration sections (huge timesaver for convention registrations!).
- Board members can work within their own section of the website and see up-to-date information that is most important to them, as can chapter leaders (which will create a new place to share ideas and converse).
- We have the ability to create community workspaces and pages for each different community.
- Data from iMIS will be directly integrated with the website, so no more three step processes for usernames and passwords.
- Social sign in (allows members to sign in to their SPJ account with Twitter or Facebook).
- Cart view with multiple items (members can register for conferences, training programs, join SPJ, donate, etc. all in one step).
- SPJ retains total control on the look and feel of the site.

On the database side:
- We’ll be able to easily collect more member data, such as pictures, beats, categories, etc., and do so without having to custom code things on the back end.
- Staff can access the database anywhere via the web instead of being tied down to their HQ desktops, which will come in handy for convention and when working remotely.
- Our reporting will be more accurate and we can create our own reports using IQA (Intelligent Query Architect) to look at any piece of data in our system, where before we were tied to previously created reports or having them custom coded by our outside provider (which costs time and money).
- Each staff member will have targeted tools they need to succeed – for example, Linda will be able to quickly view up to the minute stats, access records easier and find the people she needs depending on different criteria; Chris will have access to live donation stats and be able to review donor data in a way that makes sense.
Things this upgrade will address:

- Integrating the AutoDues directly into our website for easier member experience.
- Accurate, deeper data – this is incredibly important since it will allow us to know our members better and figure out ways to engage with them about things that are of interest.
- Removing ancient processes from our database (i.e., software that is tied in currently that is no longer in use, cannot be upgraded, etc.).
- Allowing better communication with our members, creating a log of contact for historical records.
- Providing members with an easy overview of what is included in their membership (i.e., member of chapter, committee, community, etc.).
- Moving our website to a current code structure that allows us to “play nice” with other programs and software. This may be one of the most important aspects of this plan.

Overall, the technology allows us to collect better data and analyze it in a more accurate way, create a more user friendly experience on the website and save valuable time by automating some current manual processes.

**THE COST**

Our total cost for the upgrade is $32,000 (estimated, obviously). This includes our licensing for the iMIS20 bundle ($12,000) and the manpower to do the upgrade. We would pay for this out of our budget surplus from the prior fiscal year.

This cost could fluctuate, as Billy will be doing most of the website work that our service provider does during an upgrade and, once we’re in there, we may find that we need an additional module to meet our needs.

After the initial upgrade is complete, we’ll be eliminating our host provider, INET, which will save us roughly $3,000 per year. As the Communications Module in iMIS gets better, we may also be able to eliminate our Constant Contact subscription, which would also result in a savings of nearly $2,000 per year.

Bottom line, as we start using our database to its full potential, we may find cost savings from eliminating other software we won’t need. The extent of that is really unpredictable since we’ve not explored these options within iMIS before.

**THE TIMELINE**

One of the greatest things about this upgrade and the movement to a RiSE website is our ability to build our site in the background a little bit at a time. Once we have the “go ahead” to move forward, we will begin working in phases.

**Phase I (Four to Six Weeks)**

Upgrading the iMIS software
Fix all data issues discovered in data audit
Phase II (Six to Nine Weeks)
Begin work on Staff Site

Phase III
Though we’ll begin work on our Member Site immediately, this is expected to take the longest and won’t be able to swing into high gear until the first two phases are complete

Overall
We’re looking at better data in three to four months, staff sites for better workflow and more opportunities within six months and a new Member Site rollout sometime in late 2015. Of course, we’d like to finish everything much sooner than that, but we’re well versed in technology hiccups and want to make sure we’re working through every single aspect of this upgrade correctly. Furthermore, big SPJ projects (such as our awards deadline and convention registration) make the timing trickier. i.e., we don’t want to transition something two days before the awards deadline. We have to wait for gaps to do some things.

MOVING FORWARD
Upgrading our technology, both physical technology and software, should be a top priority. iMIS will continue to release new versions and while we don’t need to purchase every
Included with this cover memorandum is the proposed budget for SPJ for the fiscal year ending July 31, 2016. A number of supporting documents are included to provide a better understanding into the process of constructing the budget.

As you review this information, please remember that this is merely a management tool, albeit a most important one. The numbers presented represent staff’s “best guess” based on fixed expenses, estimates, historical data and trends. We do our best to stick to it, but we always adjust one way or another depending on what the year brings. For example, IF SPJ takes on another bookkeeping association management client, we would most certainly have to hire a person to manage the workload. Of course, neither are in this budget.

The biggest change in this year’s budget is the result of our new arrangement with the SDX Foundation. Because the SDX Foundation will now be managing Training Place, Diversity Leadership and Quill, we will no longer be asking for grants for those programs. This results in our revenue dropping more than $300,000 when compared to years past.

In an effort to compare apples to apples, however, we removed revenues and expenses for these programs from the FY2015 budget – which we use for comparison purposes.

For example, we removed the cost to print Quill from the FY2015 column on the “composite view” spreadsheet. If we didn’t do this, the variance in printing when comparing last year to this year would have been closer to $70,000. Nearly every line item in the budget would have been skewed dramatically, making it difficult to see what “other” changes are really taking place.

The end result is that we are comparing the same programs from year to year.

I can explain this more clearly in person if need be.

**BUDGET PROCESS**

Each staffer prepared the preliminary budget for his or her department. Several meetings were held over the course of several weeks to identify any potential gaps. I oversaw the process to make sure staffers could defend their assumptions and to make sure all of the numbers tied out in the end.
CASH ON HAND
Lastly, you will note we are budgeting to have $13,500 cash on hand. This reflects the amount of Scripps Leadership money we will be rolling over from FY2015 into FY2016. I mentioned above that we are budgeting for five programs in FY2016. This is because we will only be having three in FY2015. So, we are rolling over the remaining amount to cover the cost of the fifth program.

UNDERSTANDING THE BUDGET
Just as I do for the quarterly financial reports, below is an explanation of the larger variances when comparing the FY2016 budget to the FY2015 budget that was adopted last year.

Please keep in mind as you look at last year’s column: these are budgeted figures that were adopted. They are not amounts that SPJ actually made or spent. We are only half way through FY2015, so I can’t provide actual figures. This is simply meant to give you an idea of how this budget compares to the prior-year budget – excluding all revenue and expenses that are directly related to previous SDX Foundation grants.

I have only addressed variances that exceed $2,000 but am happy to answer questions about any line item.

REVENUE VARIANCES

CONTRIBUTIONS/GRANTS/SPONSORSHIP
We are budgeting $3,000 less in EIJ sponsorship (based on EIJ14 actuals) and $2,000 less in awards sponsorship (based on estimates from our sales team).

MEMBERSHIP
Our membership has steadily declined over the past couple of years. I expect that to continue. We are budgeting for a 3-percent decline.

ADVERTISING REVENUE
Believe it or not, our advertising revenue is trending up. The increase over the prior year’s budget is a reflection of actual sales.

AWARDS REVENUE
As you all know, we fell short of revenue projections in both the Sigma Delta Chi and Mark or Excellence Awards. This year’s figure is based on actuals from FY2015.

ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT
Since the budget was passed last April, we have taken on several new clients, including the Journalism and Women’s Symposium (bookkeeping and event planning) and the American Copy Editors Society (communications and membership).
EXPENSE VARIANCES

PERSONNEL
We recently hired a part-time communications person to manage the ACES work. Also, as has been the case since I became executive director in 2009, I have budgeted an average 4-percent raise for each staffer (although increases are merit-based).

With increased staff size (and salaries), the following personnel costs also rise:

- Payroll taxes
- 401k Match
- 401k related charges
- Payroll related charges
- Worker’s Compensation Insurance

We are budgeting less for health care than we did in the prior year. Our figure for FY2016 is based on quotes from our broker. It includes an estimate for a new communications person.

EMPLOYE EDUCATION/TRAINING
For too long SPJ has limped along on the knowledge that staff has gained from those here before us. For this year, we are doubling down to ensure SPJ’s staff is also implementing best practices. This includes training on our technology and overall non-profit management.

HEATH INSURANCE
Although our insurance broker said we should see a slight decrease in premiums, I have budgeted for a 10 percent increase for our full-time employees. I have yet to see a day when premiums went down from year to year. If I’m right and our broker is wrong, I’ll be searching for a new broker come FY2017.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS
In the past I budgeted for capital improvements. This is easy when there is a large project on the horizon. However, there are no major projects on the horizon. Some of our expenses will qualify for capitalization. But, trying to budget the amount for those is nearly impossible. Instead, I have chosen not to budget for this line item. The expenses will show up in other places (such as building maintenance and computer services).

BOARD RELATED EXPENSES
The “increase” seen here isn’t really an increase. It’s the result of budget mechanics. It will probably be easier to explain this in person, but I’ll do my best here: We “allocate” many of our expenses – including this one. It’s a way for us to track how much we are spending on each program/service. This allocation is based on the amount of staff time someone spends on each program/service (such as Quill, awards, membership, etc.). Using Quill as an example, we allocated utilities, paper, board expenses, etc. In order to compare apples to apples, we have removed Quill and other grant-funded programs from the prior-year – as I stated above. However, because of the new arrangement, we no longer allocate this line item to Quill or grant-funded programs. Therefore, it “looks” like we spent less on board-related expenses last year.
because we removed those classes from this budget – and their allocated expenses are now spread out among other classes on this SPJ budget.

**EQUIPMENT RENTAL**
This is the same issue that I explained above, only it worked in reverse: Quill and our educational programs still pay for the copier, mail machine, etc. Therefore, those allocated costs have moved over the SDX Foundation budget.

**SOFTWARE MAINTENANCE**
This is due to an increase in our membership license fees.

**ACCOUNTING/AUDIT FEES**
Based on a quote from our auditing firm. Also, part of this variance is related to the allocations issue. In year’s past, SDX paid for more of this expense through grant requests – namely Training Place.

**EMPLOYEE TRAVEL**
Because of the way the calendar fell, we will have five Scripps Leadership Academies in FY2016. For this program, that means increases for staff travel, outside services, facilities rental and events, meals and banquets (however the latter is offset overall because we are projecting far less meals at the President’s Banquet).

**CONTRIBUTIONS/GRANTS/AWARDS**
We did not budget for chapter grants in FY2016. If SPJ decides to reinstate those, it can do so out of the projected $45,000 surplus. We did not budget for them because they have become a nightmare to manage, and few chapters took advantage of the grants once they were awarded.

**OUTSIDE SERVICES**
This is one of the few line items that crosses all programs. Therefore, the end result is a combination of some program costs rising and some falling. Clearly, more fell than rose. Here are the highlights: Our quoted AV and internet prices for EIJ are about $10,500 higher than FY2015. We are also budgeting for transportation to the Opening Night Reception location ($4,000 for our share) and increased sales commission ($5,000). Increased sales commission for our advertising accounts for about $5,000. The “fifth” Scripps program accounts for about $2,000.

**FACILITY RENTAL**
This is the result of the fifth Scripps program.

**PARTICIPANT/SPEAKER TRAVEL**
We are budgeting more for EIJ speaker travel and an additional $700 in travel for Scripps facilitators.
## Composite View

### Proposed Budget

**Society of Professional Journalists**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY 2016</th>
<th>Proposed Budget</th>
<th>Adopted Budget</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions/Grants/Sponsorship</td>
<td>$248,135.63</td>
<td>$253,788.84</td>
<td>(5,653.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Dues</td>
<td>$402,000.00</td>
<td>$414,741.50</td>
<td>(12,741.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising Revenue</td>
<td>$45,000.00</td>
<td>$32,500.00</td>
<td>12,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise Sales</td>
<td>$16,029.00</td>
<td>$15,850.00</td>
<td>179.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest/Dividends</td>
<td>$10,500.00</td>
<td>$10,500.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscriptions Revenue</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards Revenue</td>
<td>$210,177.00</td>
<td>$234,500.00</td>
<td>(24,323.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration Fees</td>
<td>$121,852.00</td>
<td>$122,801.00</td>
<td>(9,950.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royalties/Membership Benefits/Supplementary</td>
<td>$20,750.00</td>
<td>$19,550.00</td>
<td>1,200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lease Management</td>
<td>$27,967.13</td>
<td>$27,293.00</td>
<td>674.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association Management</td>
<td>$111,000.00</td>
<td>$58,000.00</td>
<td>53,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards Platform Sales</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDX Foundation Management</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td>$1,213,207.26</td>
<td>$1,189,573.34</td>
<td>23,633.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Expenses | |
|----------|-----------------|-----------------|----------|
| Salaries | $470,036.80 | $428,186.71 | 41,844.09 |
| Payroll Taxes | $39,026.34 | $36,565.86 | 130.48 |
| Health Insurance | $60,340.50 | $58,054.76 | 2,285.74 |
| 401k Match | $23,965.02 | $22,329.66 | 1,635.36 |
| Employee Education/Training | $9,345.00 | $4,000.00 | 5,345.00 |
| Payroll Related Charges | $4,174.86 | $3,151.82 | 1,023.33 |
| Workers Compensation Insurance | $988.86 | $911.01 | 77.85 |
| Liability Insurance | $9,686.06 | $8,953.99 | 732.07 |
| Property Taxes | - | - | - |
| Utilities | $9,044.95 | $9,847.31 | (802.36) |
| Telephone | $8,349.71 | $7,367.58 | 982.13 |
| Building Maintenance | $11,000.00 | $10,410.22 | 589.78 |
| Capital Improvements | - | $6,500.00 | (6,500.00) |
| Board Related Expenditures | $62,600.00 | $58,011.57 | 4,588.43 |
| Equipment Rental | $4,168.23 | $6,761.10 | (2,592.87) |
| Software Maintenance/Upgrades | $11,777.07 | $9,163.66 | 2,613.41 |
| Internet Connectivity | $1,988.98 | $1,786.29 | 202.69 |
| Website Expense/Maintenance | $2,982.04 | $2,854.91 | 127.13 |
| Computer Services/Consulting/Maintenance | $13,677.62 | $12,336.15 | 3,341.47 |
| Audit/Accounting Fees | $18,350.00 | $14,574.31 | 3,775.69 |
| Legal Fees | $37,772.50 | $38,277.61 | (505.11) |
| Office Supplies | $5,744.72 | $4,051.04 | 1,693.68 |
| Postage/Shipping | $21,848.00 | $22,097.04 | (249.04) |
| Printing | $15,761.51 | $16,432.82 | (671.31) |
| Employment Recruiting | $1,636.87 | $1,665.63 | (28.77) |
| Dues and Subscriptions | $4,196.78 | $3,819.86 | 376.92 |
| Employee Travel/Meals | $35,023.09 | $33,038.81 | 1,984.28 |
| Merchant Fees/Credit Card Processing | $25,000.00 | $24,601.71 | 398.29 |
| Investment Account Fees/Banking Fees | $345.00 | $259.81 | 85.19 |
| Trainer fees | - | - | - |
| 401k Related Charges | $2,087.55 | $1,875.60 | 211.94 |
| Contributions/Grants/Awards | $24,035.00 | $26,954.00 | (2,919.00) |
| Miscellaneous Expense | $400.00 | $333.13 | 66.87 |
| Outside Services | $110,644.78 | $79,553.82 | 31,090.96 |
| Events, Meals and Banquets | $66,118.24 | $68,114.36 | (2,096.12) |
| Facilities Rental | $30,705.89 | $26,393.91 | 4,311.98 |
| Marketing | $4,092.16 | $4,164.09 | (71.93) |
| Free Lance labor | - | - | - |
| Participant/Speaker Travel | $14,069.16 | $9,910.00 | 4,159.16 |
| **Total Expenses** | $1,180,955.27 | $1,076,362.29 | 104,592.99 |
| Cash on hand from prior year | $13,500.00 | - | 13,500.00 |
| **Net Change in Assets** | $45,751.98 | $113,211.05 | (67,459.07) |
## Revenue Variance Analysis 2016 Budget vs 2015 Budget

### Contributions/Grants/Sponsorships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2016 Budget</th>
<th>2015 Budget</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorships - Convention</td>
<td>$55,484.74</td>
<td>$58,637.95</td>
<td>($3,153.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorships - Awards</td>
<td>$10,000.00</td>
<td>$12,000.00</td>
<td>($2,000.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDX Grant Convention</td>
<td>$85,000.00</td>
<td>$85,000.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDX Grant Training Place Workshops</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDX Grant Diversity Outreach</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDX Grant Mark of Excellence</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDX Grant Communications Committee</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDX Grant On-Line On Demand Training</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDX Grant Chapter Education Grant</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDX Grant Convention - Convention</td>
<td>$50,000.00</td>
<td>$50,000.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDX Grant Chapter Education Grant</td>
<td>$34,650.89</td>
<td>$34,650.89</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDX Foundation Software/Supplies/Fees Associated Expenses</td>
<td>$4,500.00</td>
<td>$4,500.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quill Endowment Grant</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership - Presidents Club</td>
<td>$8,500.00</td>
<td>$9,000.00</td>
<td>($500.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contributions/Grants/Sponsorships Total:** $248,135.63 - $253,788.84 = ($5,653.21)

### Membership Dues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2016 Budget</th>
<th>2015 Budget</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lifetime</td>
<td>$3,803.27</td>
<td>$3,860.00</td>
<td>($56.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>$264,804.64</td>
<td>$271,952.78</td>
<td>($7,148.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>$7,711.66</td>
<td>$7,903.37</td>
<td>($191.71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household</td>
<td>$2,115.58</td>
<td>$1,984.13</td>
<td>$131.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>$21,691.66</td>
<td>$22,623.18</td>
<td>($931.52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate</td>
<td>$21,709.52</td>
<td>$20,455.12</td>
<td>$1,254.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>$68,826.20</td>
<td>$72,293.90</td>
<td>($3,467.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiate</td>
<td>$9,465.84</td>
<td>$10,784.00</td>
<td>($1,318.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>$1,871.63</td>
<td>$2,885.00</td>
<td>($1,013.37)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Membership Dues:** $402,000.00 - $414,741.50 = ($12,741.50)

### Advertising Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2016 Budget</th>
<th>2015 Budget</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quill</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
<td>$7,500.00</td>
<td>($2,500.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Communications</td>
<td>$40,000.00</td>
<td>$25,000.00</td>
<td>$15,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Advertising Revenue:** $45,000.00 - $32,500.00 = $12,500.00

### Merchandise Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2016 Budget</th>
<th>2015 Budget</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convention</td>
<td>$16,025.00</td>
<td>$15,850.00</td>
<td>$175.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Interest/Dividends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2016 Budget</th>
<th>2015 Budget</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convention</td>
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### Awards Revenue

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<th>Variance</th>
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<td>MOE Awards</td>
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<td>$139,675.00</td>
<td>$154,000.00</td>
<td>($14,325.00)</td>
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<td>$4,000.00</td>
<td>($1,998.00)</td>
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<td>High School Essay</td>
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**Total Awards Revenue:** $210,177.00 - $234,500.00 = ($24,323.00)

### Registration Fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2016 Budget</th>
<th>2015 Budget</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Royalties/Membership Benefits/Supplementary</td>
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<td>2015 Budget</td>
<td>Variance</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convenvention</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quill</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>$ 20,750.00</td>
<td>$ 19,550.00</td>
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<td>$ 19,550.00</td>
<td>$ 1,200.00</td>
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<td>Lease Management</td>
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<td>$ 27,293.00</td>
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<td>Association Management</td>
<td>$ 111,000.00</td>
<td>$ 58,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Difference In Budgeted Revenue</td>
<td>$ 1,213,207.26</td>
<td>$ 1,189,573.34</td>
<td>$ 23,633.92</td>
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</table>
Expense Breakdown

Budget composed of three major expense categories

Personnel Costs:
Includes salaries, health/disability insurance, payroll taxes, 401k matching. Joe sets salary and personnel changes.

401k match includes all current participating eligible employees.

Direct Costs of Running our Budgeted Programs:
Examples includes shipping costs for MOE Awards, Employee travel, printing for programs, etc.
Staff responsible for each program determines what activities that need to be performed to put on say a training program and then estimate the costs to make the activity happen utilizing quotes and in most cases actual estimated costs.

Allocated Costs:
These are costs that are shared equally across all program activities and in most cases SDX Management as well.
Utilities costs, telephone charges, board related expenditures, audit and accounting fees, legal, etc.

building maintenance costs

Personnel Costs: $ 592,362.67 50.16%
Direct Costs: $ 332,818.28 28.18%
Allocated Expenditures: $ 255,774.33 21.66%
Total Expenditures $ 1,180,955.27 100.00%

Income Breakdown:

Grants $ 139,500.00 11.50%
Contributions $ 8,500.00 0.70%
Sponsorships $ 65,484.74 5.40%
SDX Intern Sponsorship $ 34,650.89 2.86%
Membership Dues $ 402,000.00 33.14%
Advertising Revenue $ 45,000.00 3.71%
Interest/Dividends $ 10,500.00 0.87%
Awards Revenue $ 210,177.00 17.32%
Registration Fees $ 121,652.50 10.03%
Merchandise Sales $ 16,025.00 1.32%
Royalties, Misc $ 20,750.00 1.71%
Lease Management $ 27,967.13 2.31%
Association Management $ 111,000.00 9.15%

Total $ 1,213,207.26 100.00%
100.00%
## Summary By Program

### Budget Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Net Change in Assets</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$1,180,955.27</td>
<td>$716,385.78</td>
<td>$464,569.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>$13,677.62</td>
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<td>Technology</td>
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<td>Health</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>$15,000.00</td>
<td>$13,943.78</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$1,180,955.27</td>
<td>$716,385.78</td>
<td>$464,569.49</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Expenses Breakdown

#### By Program

- **Research**
  - 357.03
- **Education**
  - 357.03
- **Information**
  - 357.03
- **Technology**
  - 357.03
- **Health**
  - 357.03
- **Other**
  - 357.03

#### Summary

**Total Expenses**

- $716,385.78

---

### Revenue Breakdown

- **Research**
- **Education**
- **Information**
- **Technology**
- **Health**
- **Other**

**Total Revenue**

- $1,180,955.27

---

### Notes

- The table above provides a breakdown of expenses and revenue by program, including research, education, information, technology, health, and other categories.
- The net change in assets reflects the overall financial impact across all programs.
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<td>Interest/Dividends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subscriptions Revenue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awards Revenue</td>
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<td>Royalties/Membership Benefits/Supplementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lease Management</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association Management</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards Platform Sales</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDX Foundation Management</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td>$2,502.00</td>
<td>$69,000.00</td>
<td>$164,700.00</td>
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</table>

**Expenses**

<p>| Salaries          | $10,978.89 | $20,867.92 | $20,867.92 | $52,714.74 |
| Payroll Taxes     | $888.72    | $1,690.56  | $1,690.56  | $4,269.89  |
| Health Insurance  | $1,934.01  | $3,815.43  | $3,815.43  | $9,315.86  |
| 401k Match        | $658.73    | $1,252.08  | $1,252.08  | $3,162.88  |
| Employee Education/Training | $61.91  | $117.68    | $117.68    | $297.28   |
| Payroll Related Charges | $97.52    | $185.35    | $185.35    | $468.22   |
| Workers Compensation Insurance | $23.05  | $43.81    | $43.81    | $110.66   |
| BOP Insurance Policy | $226.25 | $430.03    | $430.03    | $1,086.31  |
| Property Taxes    | $ -        | $ -        | $ -       | $ -       |
| Utilities         | $171.06    | $325.15    | $325.15    | $821.35   |
| Telephone         | $195.03    | $370.70    | $370.70    | $936.43   |
| Building Maintenance | $170.27  | $323.63    | $323.63    | $817.52   |
| Capital Improvements | $ -        | $ -        | $ -       | $ -       |
| Board Related Expenditures | $968.96    | $1,841.74  | $1,841.74  | $4,652.48  |
| Equipment Rental  | $97.96     | $185.06    | $185.06    | $467.47   |
| Software Maintenance/Upgrades | $275.09  | $522.87    | $522.87    | $1,320.82  |
| Internet Connectivity | $48.46    | $88.30     | $88.30     | $223.07   |
| Website Expense/Maintenance | $69.65    | $132.39    | $132.39    | $354.43   |
| Consulting/Services/Consulting/Maintenance | $319.43  | $607.24    | $607.24    | $1,534.91  |
| Audit/Accounting Fees | $284.03    | $539.87    | $539.87    | $1,363.76  |
| Legal Fees        | $882.28    | $1,676.96  | $1,676.96  | $4,236.25  |
| Office Supplies   | $85.13     | $361.81    | $361.81    | $706.76   |
| Postage/Shipping  | $288.70    | $4,263.55  | $4,263.55  | $11,445.99 |
| Printing          | $23.22     | $1,800.13  | $1,800.13  | $5,017.48  |
| Employment Recruiting | $30.96    | $58.84     | $58.84     | $148.64   |
| Dues and Subscriptions | $18.46    | $36.04     | $36.04     | $21.04    |
| Employee Travel/Meals | $185.74    | $353.05    | $353.05    | $2,911.84  |
| Merchant Fees/Credit Card Processing | $386.97  | $735.52    | $735.52    | $1,856.00  |
| Investment Account Fees/Banking Fees | $5.34    | $10.15     | $10.15     | $25.64    |
| Trainer fees      | $ -        | $ -        | $ -       | $ -       |
| 401k Related Charges | $48.28    | $91.79     | $91.79     | $231.88   |
| Contributions/Grants/Awards | $5,595.00 | $4,460.00  | $13,960.00 | $25,335.00 |
| Miscellaneous Expense | $6.19    | $11.77     | $11.77     | $29.73    |
| Outside Services  | $715.48   | $5,644.92  | $4,979.42  | $11,339.82 |
| Events, Meals and Banquets | $77.38    | $1,847.10  | $1,847.10  | $20,391.99 |
| Facilities Rental | $34.05     | $64.73     | $64.73     | $163.50   |
| Marketing         | $77.39     | $147.10    | $147.10    | $371.60   |
| Free Lance labor  | $ -        | $ -        | $ -       | $ -       |
| Participant Travel | $ -        | $ -        | $0.00      | $700.00   |
| <strong>Total Expenses</strong> | $25,428.08 | $56,623.33 | $102,981.83 | $185,333.25 |
| <strong>Net Change in Assets</strong> | $(23,426.08) | $12,376.67 | $61,718.17 | $50,668.75 |</p>
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## Proposed Budget

**SPJ**  
**FY 2016**  
**Association Management**

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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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### Net Change in Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Change in Assets</strong></td>
<td>$27,598.20</td>
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## Proposed Budget

### FY 2016

#### Revenue

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<th>Source</th>
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<td>Contributions/Grants/Sponsorships</td>
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<td>Awards Revenue</td>
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<td>Registration Fees</td>
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<td>Association Management</td>
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#### Expenses

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#### Net Change in Assets

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<td><strong>Management and General</strong></td>
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35
MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 18, 2015
FROM: Tara Puckey, Membership Strategist
SUBJ: Chapter Action
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

SEEKING TO BE CHARTERED

American University – Bulgaria   International
University of Massachusetts   Region 1
Nova Southeastern   Region 3
California State Polytechnic University   Region 11

CHAPTERS TO INACTIVATE

As the Annual Report deadline has not yet passed for this year, there is only one chapter to inactivate. Once reports are processed and Regional Directors are consulted, the list will grow and be presented during the board meeting at EIJ.

Region 1
Quinnipiac University
MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 2, 2015
FROM: Sonny Albarado, Nominations Committee chairman
SUBJ: Nominations Committee Report
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

The wide net cast early this year for national board candidates has yielded a paltry catch in comparison to last year. But the season is still young, and I have hopes for an improved yield as spring becomes summer.

So far, all but two of the incumbent regional directors up for re-election have declared their intent to seek another term. Region 10 Director Pia Hallenberg has decided against running again, and Region 12 Director Tony Hernandez moved out of the region for a new job, which leaves that seat vacant.

I don’t believe I violate any confidences to reveal that I’m trying to recruit two well-known SPJ activists to run for the Region 10 post. Don Meyers, who once led Region 9 and now works for the Yakima (WA) Herald, is considering a run for RD10 as is Monica Guzman, a tech and media columnist for Geekwire and The Daily Beast among other roles.

As for the other positions on this year’s ballot:

- Secretary-Treasurer Lynn Walsh says she will run for president-elect.
- Region 1 Director Rebecca Baker and former South Florida SPJ president Jason Parsley, who is editor of the South Florida Gay News, say they will run for secretary-treasurer.
- VP of Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef will seek re-election.
- At-Large Director Bill McCloskey will seek re-election.
- Digital Community Chair Alex Veeneman also plans to run for the at-large seat.
- Campus Adviser at Large Rebecca Tallent will seek re-election.
- Two students have declared for Campus Representative – Dustin Ginsberg at the University of Alabama and Emily Panken at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Region 2 Director Andy Schotz will seek re-election.
- Region 3 Director Michael Koretzky will seek re-election.
- Region 6 Director Joe Radske will seek re-election.
- Region 11 Director Matthew Hall will seek re-election.
- In Region 12, East Tennessee SPJ chapter board member and former chapter president Amanda Womac intends to run for the open seat.

I have reached out to others to run in all of this year’s elections and am awaiting responses. I will update you as I gather more candidates.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 1, 2015
FROM: Robert Leger, SDX Foundation president
SUBJ: President’s Report
FOR: SDX Foundation Board of Directors

In a strictly financial sense, whether the Foundation has a good year or not depends on the stock market. By that marker, our holdings are at $12.3 million as of January 31, up by 3 percent from January 31, 2014.

But that’s not the only way to measure success. Last year’s Pulliam Fellow produced a tremendous piece of journalism on creative uses for abandoned manufacturing and warehouse districts. The recipients of our grants improved journalism by providing innovative resource materials and training programs or strengthening associations that advance the cause of open government.

The Transition
Our transition to being a foundation that produces educational programming is coming along well. The budget penciled out. The programming committee is developing an exciting idea to present to funders. The development committee is on the verge of being fully engaged. You’ll hear the details at our meeting. I’m excited about the progress we’re making.

It comes step by step. The work that has already started needs to continue, further fleshing out details. And there is more to tackle.

On the to-do list:

- Who decides the fulcrum?

The point of our transition is to allow SPJ to focus its energies on advocacy; the foundation to focus on education.

In the past, we made multiple grants to SPJ. Now, we make a single grant for the convention. The amount of that grant directly affects the bottom line of each organization, determining how much SPJ has for advocacy and how much SDX has for grants or its own programming.

The executive director, in the budgets that he presents to both groups, essentially determines the balance. (The budget for 2016 projects an SPJ surplus of about $40,000; SDX had a surplus of about $30,000 available for outside grants.) Should that continue to be our practice? Should volunteers be involved, either the officers or executive committees? Is it a question for the finance committees?
• A change in the SPJ bylaws to give SDX a role in hiring/firing the executive director.

We could vote at this meeting to ask SPJ to initiate the process of making this revision. SPJ exec, at its June meeting, could refer an amendment to the delegates in Orlando.

Article 12 of the SPJ bylaws gives the SPJ board the authority to hire an executive director to “carry out the policies set forth by the convention, president and board of directors.” The executive director serves at the pleasure of the SPJ board.

The SDX bylaws specify that the SPJ executive director “shall serve as a nonvoting Assistant Secretary/Assistant Treasurer of the Foundation Board. He or she shall be responsible for the administration and investment operations and activities of the Foundation, subject to policies of the Board of Directors of the Foundation.”

• SDX bylaws.

While we’re at it, it makes sense to give our own bylaws a review. If you’re interested in being on an ad hoc committee for this purpose, please let me know.

• The future of Quill.

Should it continue to be a print magazine, or should we join the crowd converting to online-only production? I see this as a longer term question, something for Fred Brown’s committee to bring as a recommendation at one of our 2016 meetings.

Dori
There is an empty seat at our board table for this meeting. Dori Maynard’s death is a loss for our board and for journalism. We’ve all expressed our thoughts, many of you most eloquently. I will miss her passion and her counsel.

Thank you
Finally, thank you for the time, talent and energy you devote to SDX. We succeed in doing our part in improving and protecting journalism only because of your efforts.
The intent of this report is to update the board on the latest staff activities. Because of this, it focuses on short-term activities.

However, some background is important to better understand what these activities mean, and where they fit into the larger picture. Of course, it’s also good that current leaders have this historical knowledge.

In 2008, we suffered through one of the worst financial years the country had seen in decades. SPJ – like media companies and many of its members – was operating “check-to-check.” Unrestricted cash reserves were nearly depleted, and hovered around $30,000. We weren’t alone, however. Most other journalism organizations were also facing financial problems.

Many had to severely cut programs and services. Others were forced to drastically restructure staff. Some that didn’t paid the price over the next two years, when conference revenue tanked and reserves were depleted.

Despite the rocky waters, SPJ was better off than most – thanks to Terry Harper’s stewardship during his seven years as Executive Director. The Society is also fortunate to have diversified revenue streams. Much credit goes to the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation for that. Even when money is tight, the Foundation’s large portfolio allows us to conduct training programs – including the conference.

Furthermore, our biggest source of revenue (membership dues) continued to come in – albeit at a slower rate. This is because our members typically pay their own way – meaning it is fairly stable. Organizations that relied heavily on employer-paid dues or convention sponsorship struggled.

Then, tragedy struck in 2009 when Terry died of cancer. I was hired in November of that year.

Most organizations would have fallen down after back-to-back years like that. But SPJ’s leadership kept the ship stable.

After being hired, I was no different than other executive directors and elected leaders of journalism organizations. I was trying to figure out how SPJ should best move forward. How could we not just survive, but thrive in an ever-changing environment? How do we cement our place in the journalism world while accomplishing our mission? I had lots of questions, but no real answers.
Over the next few years, and out of those questions, answers presented themselves. Conversations took place – namely with SPJ and SDX leaders. I spoke with other executive directors. Research was conducted. Ideas were formulated.

This all culminated in the vision memo supported by the board in April of last year.

Before the questions began, however, I knew SPJ needed to regain its financial footing. From 2009-2014, this was my focus – with the support of SPJ’s leadership. The approach was to stay the course in terms of programs and services. This meant little expansion. Sure, we implemented a few new training programs here and there, but for the most part we held the line and pinched our pennies.

Meanwhile, we experimented with ways to generate revenue.

The most important was a change to our grant philosophy. Previously, SPJ requested only the direct costs associated with a program. This would include food, audio visual, trainer travel, etc. SPJ, meanwhile, was paying for the indirect costs of those developing and managing the programs – salaries, benefits, etc.

In 2009, we included indirect costs in our grant requests to the Foundation. SPJ is thankful that foundation leaders supported this new concept. It meant they were giving more to SPJ and less to others. For SPJ, this meant more restricted revenue (grants) covered a portion of personnel costs. This allowed more of SPJ’s unrestricted revenue (membership dues, sponsorship, advertising, convention registration) to go to SPJ’s bottom line – and ultimately our rainy-day fund.

In addition, we built-out and leased the second floor of our Indianapolis headquarters. We packaged and sold our awards platform to other groups. We tested the concept of association management by developing a partnership with the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. Our goal was to test new revenue streams without increasing expenses.

Instead of spending this increased revenue, we saved it. Eventually, we invested it.

Today, we have about $500,000 of unrestricted reserve cash. Our auditors will tell you it’s enough to last three to six months. This assumes we don’t change a single thing about our operations. It also assumes we would lose every cent of revenue. That would never happen. If we lost significant revenue, we would adjust. In reality, this reserve would probably get SPJ through a couple lean years.

With the reserves built, we turned our attention toward expansion and growth. We began to implement some of those ideas that were formulated the prior few years. Specifically, we ramped up our efforts to provide association management services to other journalism associations. This is a major piece of the puzzle laid out in the memo I shared last year.
We still have a long way to go. We still have a lot of improvement to make in a lot of different areas — including operations, programs, services and advocacy. We took a big step last year when the SPJ and SDX Foundation boards agreed to “divide and conquer.” Instead of SPJ asking for grants to fund educational programming, the Foundation will now pay for these programs directly.

This allows SPJ to narrow its focus on advocacy, membership and fighting for journalism. Meanwhile, the Foundation can become more entrepreneurial and zero in on programming that is needed by today’s journalists.

Which takes us to this year’s staff report. As you move through the following sections, please keep in mind that each staffer contributed to it in some way. Like all the work we do at HQ, this was a total team effort. I can’t say enough about the hard work my co-workers put in to make SPJ a better organization. For that, I thank them. I hope you can take a moment to do the same when you see them.

**STAFFING**

In the past eight months, we have hired a communications strategist (Jennifer Royer) a part-time communications coordinator (Janine Wampler) and a part-time membership retention coordinator (Chrystal Parvin). You may also remember that Tara Puckey was promoted to membership strategist.

Connecting the dots: We now have 2.5 positions dedicated to membership and 2.5 positions dedicated to communications. We are now positioned to think strategically and proactively in both areas. In the past, with just one person responsible for each (one being a year-to-year intern), we could only be reactive.

With educational programming moving over to the SDX Foundation (which you can read about under “programming”) we are now staffed accordingly to make big strides in the two biggest areas of importance: advocacy/communication and membership.

**ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT**

Our association management relationships have grown rapidly during the past 12 months. In addition to providing membership services to NAHJ and bookkeeping services to both NAHJ and RTDNA, we now have clients in the areas of communication and event planning. We’ve also grabbed more bookkeeping and membership clients.

Here’s the list:

- Membership: NAHJ, American Copy Editors Society.
- Communications: ACES.
- Convention planning: JAWS.
In all, we are projecting these partnerships to deliver more than $110,000 in revenue for SPJ. Meanwhile, we further cement SPJ’s role in the journalism landscape: to be the “umbrella” organization that helps other groups better reach their mission.

If each and every group can better reach its mission – journalism stands to be better. And, ultimately, that’s SPJ’s goal.

**JOINT MEMBERSHIPS**

One idea that has come and gone over the years is the notion of joint memberships. Specifically, making it easy and affordable for a journalist to join multiple journalism organizations. Linda and I have been talking about this for years.

Recently, however, we have been having these conversations with other journalism organizations. There seems to be some interest in pursuing this possibility. There are no details at this point, only ideas.

I would like to know, however, if this is something the SPJ Board of Directors is interested in pursuing.

**MEMBERSHIP**

Our Membership Department is moving ahead at full speed. We’re happy to report that the new staffing structure is allowing us to dive deeper into everything: retention numbers and procedures, communication and overall efforts to improve benefits for our members.

**General Membership**

- In reviewing our procedures for retention, we decided to cut costs and change up the “feel” of renewal communication members receive. They receive HTML (“pretty” emails, if that’s a better description) emails 90, 60 and 30 days out from their expiration date. We’ve been tracking a pretty good response rate on these: anywhere from 35-50 percent. In addition, instead of receiving two identical paper notices, members will receive a postcard 60 days out from their expiration date. We’re hoping this will cut costs (postcards are cheaper to mail) and get some much-needed attention in the flood of mailed bills that everyone receives. We’ll be tracking all of these efforts and report back with significant findings.

- Our Retention Coordinator, Chrystal Parvin, has been working to reach members via phone. Each month, she calls members who are about to lapse and encourages them to renew, either by phone or on the website. Although she generally leaves messages, this is just another way we’re reaching out to members. In addition, she’ll begin calling non-member attendees to all of the regional conferences, encouraging them to join and ask questions about SPJ.

- We’ve introduced several new member benefits this year. The AP Stylebook is a great perk as is our insurance options. Kudos to Linda for all her hard work on this front. We expect to continue introducing other options in order to create a buffet of options for our members.
• The upgrade to our database is on the horizon and we’re excited about the possibilities it has for improving member engagement, which leads to better retention numbers in the long run. We’ll start collecting more data from our members (some optional, some not) and can begin communicating with them about the things most important to them, calling them to action when it’s appropriate, etc. In addition, we can use this information to work on more member benefits that address member needs.

• We are exploring other ways to boost membership, some old, some new: referrals from programs (JournCamp and Scripps), partner memberships with other organizations, targeting college and professional newsrooms with training as a perk of membership numbers, etc. However, before we move forward with all of these, we’ll look at the pros and cons and establish how they’ll fit our missions and goals.

• The bigger question then, and one that leadership will soon need to address: What is the goal of membership? Is it revenue? Engagement? Numbers? Local boots on the ground? Discussing this question (because I don’t think we’ll ever really arrive at a single answer) will help shape our membership strategy.

Chapters
• The Leading Edge, our newsletter that communicates with chapter leaders, continues to go out on a regular basis. We’ve expanded the recipient list to include anyone in a leadership position within a chapter. This allows us to make sure more people are tracking important information in case a chapter president has stepped down, provide valuable information for those moving up the leadership ladder and have a better shot at info being passed down to chapter members.

• We have and will continue to work with local chapters in their efforts to boost membership. Our Scripps Leadership Institute keeps churning out new graduates armed with the tools to lead successful chapters. A webinar is available for chapter leaders with the nuts and bolts of SPJ, both national and local. In the future, we plan to offer other webinars with programming ideas, chapter start up instructions and one specifically about taxes (so fun!).

PROGRAMMING UPDATE
SPJ continues to build its library of training resources thanks to funding from the SDX Foundation and ongoing partnerships with other groups, organizations and businesses. A brief synopsis:

Through the Training Place grant from the Foundation, we offer web-based and in-person training.

By upgrading our webinar software (a switch to Adobe Connect from GoToWebinar), we’ve offered programs on data visualization, mobile reporting, enterprise reporting for digital, and a three-part series on web coding basics. We will continue to offer webinars on a regular basis and, ideally, expand the number of offerings as we build capacity to do so. Every webinar we
present is (so far) free of charge to any participant. However, we record them and make the replays available only to SPJ members (spj.org/webinars.asp).

Also available only to SPJ members are the On Demand training videos housed under the eCampus section of our website (spj.org/trainingonDemand.asp). For four years, we have added one or two new training videos to the library. These videos are more in-depth and have better production than a webinar, and are meant to give people practical, hands-on skills. This year we’ll add two more topics to the library: investigative reporting skills for non-investigative reporters and photo and image verification techniques. The new videos should be available by late May.

In FY 2014-2015 we’re continuing in-person training with the JournCamps that began in 2012. So far, we’ve held 8 programs:

- Phoenix – May 2012
- Chicago – November 2012
- Washington, DC – June 2013
- Minneapolis – November 2013
- Nashville – January 2014
- San Diego – May 2014
- Miami – November 2014
- Atlanta – February 2015

The next JournCamp will be held in New York City on June 13. (Other cities on our list: San Francisco, Seattle, Denver, Houston or Dallas, New Orleans and Boston. This is just a list of possibilities, and we’re open to others based on need, demand and input from program partners. However, city size and presence of SPJ members/chapters are factors in choosing a location.)

The JournCamp idea started to bring more skills-based, hands-on teaching days to journalists in different cities, knowing that we can’t reach everyone through national conferences or newsroom training programs. The first was a partnership with the Online News Association. SPJ offered four more on our own, and then began partnering with the Kiplinger Program in Public Affairs Journalism at Ohio State University. The partnership has been productive and mutually beneficial, in that Kiplinger brings their knowledgeable trainers, and SPJ brings programming and logistical/event planning.

In 2013 and 2014, SPJ also worked closely with Google to help bring practical tools training to journalists. Google has been a sponsor of the Excellence in Journalism conference, but they looked to SPJ to help bring more journalists to be trained on its free digital tools. Google asked SPJ to be a partner on summits held around the country, meant to give journalists hands-on training for free. Summits were held in Chicago, San Francisco, Miami, Boston and New York City. SPJ’s role was to help in programming feedback and speakers, and to get out the word using our existing network of members and strong chapter in local areas.

Google continues to train journalists and to work with SPJ, though the summits will not be held in 2015 as Google looks to use its budget on training in different ways. That includes continuing to sponsor the EIJ conference, but also to work with SPJ to bring more localized training.
directly to newsrooms. That initiative will be ongoing in 2015 and beyond, with more details coming as both groups finalize details.

For fiscal year 2014 (Aug. 1, 2013 - July 31, 2014), SPJ trained an estimated 1,750 people through the following programs. These were funded by the Training Place grant from the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation:

- JournCamps (250)
- Newsroom training (200)
- Webinars (130)
- On-demand video (new segment only – 115)
- Spring conference speakers – (300)
- Other journalism conferences (500)

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE
Since September, SPJ has distributed 48 news releases and statements, ranging from announcing the new Code of Ethics to condemning the attacks in France on the Charlie Hebdo offices. The topics that have garnered the most traditional and social media attention are SPJ’s statement on the Charlie Hebdo attack; our statement and other Tweets regarding the FOI Improvement Act; our statement regarding the Columbia Journalism Review’s Rolling Stone report; and our statements regarding Indiana Gov. Mike Pence’s attempt at creating a state-run news service.

Most recently, we promoted Sunshine Week activities that included a week of op-eds, blog posts, radio interview on the Jim Bohannon Show, Google Hangout, preview of science writers survey conducted by SPJ and the Union of Concerned Scientists and other FOIA facts and information. Similar activities are being planned for Ethics Week (April 27-May 1).

We are looking for other national opportunities for SPJ leaders to speak on various topics. We are currently working to have Becky Tallent and Lee Ann Peck go on the Jim Bohannon show to discuss the J-Ed Committee’s work on their recent book about high school journalism. We are also in the planning stages for an interview on Bohannon’s show in June after the SDX Awards Banquet. The Washington Post ran a story in early April quoting Kathryn Foxhall on SPJ’s work regarding an essay and study showing federal data is increasingly more difficult for science writers to obtain thanks to PIOs controlling the data, messaging and federal workers. Promotion was done for the April 9 event at the National Press Club regarding the same survey and report. Increasingly, we are targeting appropriate lists of journalists and others in our advocacy efforts (Western Illinois student newspaper editor reinstatement; Ohio death penalty secrecy legislation). Planning is also being done (and may be complete by this board meeting) for advocacy efforts nationally regarding death penalty secrecy legislation that many states across the country are considering adopting as law.

SPJ continues to use Twitter and Facebook not only as ways of distributing SPJ content and marketing programs, but by engaging members, potential members and anyone else interested in journalism or SPJ activities. News releases and statements are also emailed to a national media list, which includes major media outlets – both print and broadcast – throughout the country and to another media list which includes all reporters who have contacted SPJ in the
past with interview requests. Targeted local and regional lists are used for issues that are more focused to a specific area. When SPJ wants to speak out on an issue, or already has, SPJ’s communications team monitors the news outlets and specific reporters who are writing about the issue the most, and sends them SPJ’s statement/press release in addition to all other efforts. This often garners more media coverage for SPJ.

Communications Plans and Guidelines have been created and put into practice in recent months, streamlining the process and allowing us to respond faster to national and world events with statements and news releases. Even if SPJ does not write its own statement or release on a topic, we often take to Twitter (and Facebook to a lesser extent) in support of other organizations or statements we are monitoring or we think are important. We also post several articles on social media that are written by other organizations related to journalism that we believe our followers would find interesting, would engage them in conversations about important journalism topics or would be helpful resources for their jobs. Resources range from job postings to a list of the best apps journalists should be using to make their jobs easier. Social media posting has increased, which has in-turn increased engagement, awareness of the organization and SPJ’s name as a whole. These approaches all work together to make our presence on social media as vibrant and engaging as possible for our audiences.

SPJ also has a presence on Google+, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Instagram. While our following on these is not as large as that on Twitter and Facebook (with the exception of LinkedIn), we dedicate an appropriate amount of time to keep these accounts fresh and interesting for those audiences.

Since convention and the recommendation of the “under 30” task force, we have redesigned Leads to make it more appealing, fresh, concise and mobile friendly for its members. Communications has also spent time sitting through tutorials and researching communications technology to advance what SPJ uses in the future for marketing, social media scheduling and analytics.

In other social media news, SPJ’s total likes on Facebook stand at 22,787 as of early April – a growth of about 3,213 since the Nashville convention. Twitter followers as of early April have reached 33,459. An increase of 3,817 since convention.

Several communities and committees are also becoming more active on social media. As of early April, Gen J Twitter leads the way with 1,510 followers, followed by Freelance with 1,026, Digital with 485 and FOI with 71. On Facebook, Gen J has 184 likes, International has 153 and Digital has 117. It is important that if a community or committee has a social media account, it stays fresh and current in its posts. Headquarters staff is here to help if you need ideas or assistance in ways to do this.

**AWARDS UPDATE**

As most of you know, the Mark of Excellence and Sigma Delta Chi awards are two of the biggest unrestricted revenue streams SPJ has. Unfortunately, we did see a dip in the number of entries for both of our major awards.
We received 4,158 Mark of Excellence entries, which is down 455 from last year. SDX entries were also down by 147 entries. The New America Award entries were down only slightly (by 20 entries) this year with a total of 96 entries.

We will be taking a further look into the awards and examine possibilities of why numbers were lower this year, as well as exploring ways to improve for next year. This will include taking a look into our marketing approach, awards site functionality, member interest and prominence on college campuses.

Awards committee chair Andy Schotz, and Awards Coordinator Abbi Martzall, have been keeping a running list of items that need to be updated. This includes category descriptions, awards criteria as well as the overall judging process for all of our contests. The Awards Committee will take time to go over all of these items following the awards season and will begin to work on these updates.

In hopes of improving the judging system for SDX, this year was the first year we required judges to provide a judging team of at least two individuals. We also partnered with several outside organizations to create a more well-rounded and diverse judging system. The organizations we partnered with for SDX include: White House Correspondents Association, Association of Opinion Journalists and Society for News Design. The Asian American Journalists Association, Radio Television Digital News Association, National Association of Black Journalists, Native American Journalists Association and National Association of Hispanic Journalists assisted with the judging of the New America Award.

For Members and Public Awards and Honors, we finally made the switch to receive all entries online.

**WEBSITE UPDATE**
The biggest story about SPJ.org in 2014-2015 is the one that hasn't yet been written. The tech upgrade, approved in November, will finally allow us to move the site into a content management system that will allow us to tap into better community features, more control for volunteers/officers/staffers, and a more cohesive and stable backend that benefits both the folks using it and the folks contributing to its development. The database upgrade is expected to happen shortly after I write this, after which point (hopefully by the time you're gathered and reading this) I'll be in the weeds working to bring that new site to life.

While that happens, I'm still making user interface tweaks to the current site. We gave SPJ.org a visual makeover in early 2014, and I've been subtly iterating on that ever since. Not all of it will necessarily make the move to the next version of the site, but the goal is to bring as much of it over as makes sense and treat the rest as a learning experience on which to build. The goal, as always, is to keep things as smooth as possible for the end user no matter how turbulent things get under the hood.

Among the most popular bells and whistles added in 2014 were the Freelance Community page and the experimental Ethics Code revision/name change sections that very expressly did lay bare all the turbulence that comes with modifying the society's identity and most prominent
article. Our news dissemination got a boost with Jennifer's addition to the staff, and I'm working with her to make sure that boost gets another boost in 2015. And to the relief of many, except perhaps the United States Postal Service, all of our awards take online submissions. (Next time you're on vacation, send a few extra postcards to make up the difference.)

SPJ.org: 2014's most popular pages (front page: 132,836 views)

1. Ethics Code -- 210,682 views
2. Join SPJ area -- 43,732 views
3. Ethics Case Studies -- 42,308 views
4. SDX Awards -- 33,926 views
5. Mark of Excellence -- 33,477 views
6. Awards front page -- 23,022 views
7. High School Essay Contest -- 22,830 views
8. News release: Letter urges President Obama to be more transparent -- 17,884 views
9. Freelancer Directory -- 16,566 views
10. Ethics front page -- 14,867 views
11. Freelance/Freelance Community front page (changed to community in April) -- 10,224 views
12. Spring Conferences -- 9,503 views
13. Chapters front page -- 8,954 views
14. Shield Law -- 7,993 views
15. Training front page -- 7,832 views

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DELEGATE TRAINING
In the past, SPJ delegates received little to no training on their roles at convention. They came armed with the notion of what they were supposed to do (mainly vote), but not on how to do that, or the process by which we conduct the meeting. It can be incredibly confusing and intimidating to new delegates – giving the perception that we operate as an “old-boys club” not welcoming of others.

Last year, in an effort to better train delegates, we shared links to videos that would help them understand Robert’s Rules of Order. Still, we feel, this isn’t good enough. Although these videos may provide a better understanding of procedural guidelines, it does little to help them understand what happening in the context of SPJ’s business meetings – or the speed by which things happen.

In an effort to improve this, staff will be using those existing videos and creating a new training tool (likely webinar or video) for SPJ delegates. The goal is to have a live webinar, then make it available for replay on SPJ.org. Once uploaded, we will continue to promote the recorded webinar to the delegates. Furthermore, we will attempt to create a way to show this webinar (or a condensed version of the content) during EIJ.

We don’t expect to get this 100 percent right the first year. Nor do we expect any training element will answer every single question that delegates may have. But, we do believe we can – and should – do a lot better.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 1, 2015
FROM: Joe Skeel, Executive Director
SUBJ: EIJ timing and criteria
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

TIMING OF EIJ

Just about every year, we hear from some individuals that the timing of the conference is “bad.” Truth be told, there is no perfect time that suits everyone.

But because it has been a while since leadership discussed EIJ timing, and it’s good to review practices and policies, staff requests that the board of directors evaluate our options, even if that means we stick with what we have been doing.

Currently, we strive for mid-September. Here's why:

Staff has heard loud and clear that we should no longer consider August, as this is problematic for educators and students. Even early September presents problems - specifically the first week.

We have eliminated October in consideration of RTDNA. Its largest event, the Murrow Awards dinner, takes place in October. Having EIJ and the Murrow banquet in the same month would overtax their small staff.

November, along with February, May and July are bad for broadcasters (ratings period). This hurts both RTDNA and SPJ. Furthermore, November is election month.

March and April are the same months as SPJ's spring conferences. Furthermore, the National Association of Broadcasters conducts an April convention. This convention takes over Las Vegas and is attended by thousands of broadcast types.

This leaves September, December, January and June.

Even September presents challenges. Often, Jewish holidays Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur occur on September weekends. In years when this happens, we remove these days from consideration. This often results in us altering our day pattern.

Because SPJ tradition is that we have a fall conference, staff works to secure space at a hotel that:

- Is available the second, third or fourth weekend of September.
- Has the required meeting space.
- Offers a room rate our members will accept.
- Has enough sleeping rooms.
• Doesn’t require food and beverage minimum over $50,000.

Staff shared with RTDNA Executive Director Mike Cavendar that we would be having these discussions. He presented the information to his board. Outside of September, RTDNA leadership would support April and August.

Armed with this information, does the SPJ board think we should be looking in months other than September?

LOCATION SELECTION CRITERIA

Staff uses a list of criteria when searching potential convention locations. This criteria has been developed through a myriad of ways over the years: Ongoing conversations with leadership, EIJ attendee surveys/evaluations, staff research, etc.

During last year's board of directors’ meeting in Nashville, some suggested it may be time to revisit this criteria.

Currently, we consider the following before getting into the more detailed criteria:

• Sufficient meeting space.
• Hotel room rate under $200 (ideally under $170).
• Date and availability.
• Food and beverage minimum under $50,000.
• Enough sleeping rooms at the main property.

If a property presents options that meet our requirements on the items listed above, we move on to the following.

• Appealing/attractive city.
• Inexpensive food options for attendees.
• Geographically diverse (east coast one year, west coast one year, Midwest one year).
• Urban setting vs. resort setting.
• Room to increase meeting space (for potential partners that come on late).
• Cost to fly to city
• Distance from airport

Here is the reality: We rarely find a property that meets all of these criteria. For example, the Opryland in Nashville met several of these. However, it was a resort property with high meal costs. Sure, we could go to New York City, where there is fast food on every corner. However, the room rate would be well over the $200 price point.

It has been suggested that we rethink the importance we put on room rates. For example, if the room rate is $159 at a resort but lunch is $15 and dinner is $25, is that better than a room rate of $200 in a destination city close to several low-priced eating options?
Lastly, I should note, that IRE held a San Francisco conference in 2014. The room rate was over $250, which is high for them. Typically, IRE had similar criteria as SPJ. 2014 was their highest attendance on record. ONA also regularly has room rates of over $225. In 2014, their Chicago attendance was one of their highest.

We are aware that attendees want it all: cheap room, cool city, cheap food, cheap flights, great conference vibe. In reality, however, it’s not usually possible to make that all happen.

Therefore, staff would like to get clarification from leadership: What criteria should we consider (and perhaps in what order) when vetting EIJ locations?

Again, we asked RTDNA leadership to consider the same question. Below is their feedback:

TOP FIVE:

- Room rate under $200 (#1)
- Inexpensive food options for attendees
- Hotel food and beverage required minimum below $50,000
- Having everything under one roof
- Appealing/attractive city

BOTTOM FIVE:

- Availability in September
- Airport close to property
- Space to grow (meeting space)
- Enough sleeping rooms
- Geographical diversity
MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 2, 2015
FROM: Joe Skeel, Executive Director
SUBJ: Post Graduate member research
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

Staff was asked to research the impact of extending our post-graduate rate ($37.50) from three years out of school to four years.

After doing this research, we feel there is little benefit or drawback to doing so.

That is, we do not believe that extending the rate one more year will have a dramatic impact on member retention. We do not think it will lead to a meaningful amount of increased revenue, nor do we believe it will lead to improved member engagement.

We also don’t believe it would have a negative impact on any of the issues listed above – assuming any multi-year deals were adjusted accordingly. Staff would not support four years for $75 for example (where as now post grads can sign up for three years for $75). We would assume we would offer a four-year membership for something commensurate (buy three get the fourth year free).

This exercise did lead us to ask several questions. A few of those are:

- Why does leadership feel that people four years out of school need this benefit? Why not five years, or seven years? What is the rationale for that cutoff? I guess the same could be said about three years.
- Although everyone would like lower dues, is the real question here about value, as opposed to price? If people don’t find SPJ worth $75, should we focus on providing more value instead of lowering rates?
- SPJ’s largest growing segment of membership (at least of those that identify interest areas) is freelancers. Much of that is the result of journalists losing their jobs – often being replaced by those of the post-graduate age. If indeed young journalists are getting better jobs than they were 10 years ago because of this shift, isn’t this change counterintuitive?

Ultimately, though, we couldn’t get past this question.

What is the goal of membership?

Is it to generate revenue? If so, this likely won’t have much lasting impact on the bottom line, and could result in a slight step back.

Is it engagement? If so, we also don’t think this will have lasting impact. People may sign up for the good deal, and we may get a few more that stick for the long haul, but that’s not likely to make them more invested.
Or, is overall membership numbers the goal? If so, then this proposal could help in that regard.

Based on the evidence we have collected (through past surveys and anecdotal evidence) most members don’t leave SPJ because of cost.

Most leave because they have changed fields. Many leave because there is no SPJ in their area (and they view the chapter/networking as the biggest value). Others leave because of poor chapter experiences. These reasons are all tied to value: They no longer see value in paying dues – regardless of what those dues are.

Below is the data we used to help in the formulation of our opinion.

**TOTAL IN DATABASE**
There are a total of 2,360 PSG Members (this does NOT include members who have flipped from PSG to PRO). This includes active and inactive members.

**ACTIVE POST GRAD MEMBERS**
There are currently 827 active PSG Members in the system (some of these do not have accurate information and some are duplicates).

- Of those, 278 have one year of membership, indicating they didn’t take advantage of the three-year deal. (34%)
- Two-year memberships came in at 109, indicating that roughly 13% didn’t do the three-year deal either.
- There were 176 people who have a three-year membership, which means one of two things: they either took the three-year deal (most likely) or renewed multiple times. That’s about 21%.
- About 247 members have anywhere from 4-11 years of membership – meaning they a) did the four year student deal and rolled to post-grad, b) joined as a pro or student – or anything really – and then went back to school and changed their membership to post-grad, or c) renewed multiple times – some of which could have included the deal – as a post-grad. This number represents about 30%.

**INACTIVE POST GRAD MEMBERS**
Of the total PSG Members, 1,522 are inactive (again, some are duplicates and have inaccurate information).

- Of those, 1,029 had one year of membership, indicating they didn’t take advantage of the three-year deal. (68%). Keep in mind, some joined before we offered that deal.
- Two-year memberships came in at 192, indicating that roughly 13% renewed at least once.
- There were 107 people who had a three-year membership. Again, some of this reflects the fact that we didn’t have this deal for some of this time frame. (7%).
- About 194 members have anywhere from 4-11 years of membership – meaning they could be any number of things, at this point. This number represents about 13%.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 2, 2015
FROM: Alex Veeneman, Community Coordinator
SUBJ: Community update
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

Last December, National President Dana Neuts appointed me as the first Community Coordinator of the Society of Professional Journalists, working with her to oversee and manage the SPJ’s network of communities. Since my appointment, our network of communities has grown to 5:

- SPJ Freelance – A community for freelance members to allow tips and networking
- SPJ Digital – A community focused on digital journalism and social media
- SPJ International – A community focused on global journalism and press issues
- SPJ Students – A community for student members looking at student journalism and issues for students getting into the industry
- Generation J – Helping journalists

The communities play a significant role in the work of the SPJ, and, in my view, are an integral part of continuing to achieve that work moving forward. They allow unique, individual contributions by each member that suits their niche and interests.

While the communities have taken steps in the right direction pursuant to the SPJ’s overall strategy, there are more things that we can do to emphasize to members that this is your SPJ, and with these communities, you are at the forefront of protecting and preserving the future of journalism, whether they are interested in joining one of the established communities or creating one of their own.

As suggested to myself and President Neuts by Region 3 Director Michael Koretzky, we are moving to implement biographical pages for the communities, so members and the wider public can know more about the people behind each community. In addition, we are implementing measures to ensure that direct contact can be made on those community pages, whether to express interest or raise a question, suggestion or concern.

While those moves are being implemented, we should be able to give members and the public more access to information on the communities, particularly on the home page of the website or with the list of committees, whatever is possible. In addition to established communities, we should encourage members to come forward with ideas for possible communities if they have them, and make it easy for them to submit them and for the executive to review them.
I believe these communities will help the SPJ move forward and strengthen its mission going into the Excellence in Journalism conference this September and beyond. I thank President Neuts, her colleagues on the Board, and my colleagues nationally who chair and take part in these communities for their commitment to this innovation in strategy. They are some of the best and brightest members of the SPJ and play a unique role in keeping the SPJ mission alive.

I look forward to continue supporting the communities and indeed the wider work of the SPJ in whatever way possible.
HAPPENING RIGHT NOW
Since board approval of our upgrade to iMIS 20, we’ve taken several steps in the right direction:

- Database cleaning – have carefully reviewed data to remove errors, which include anything from missing ZIP codes to misspelled words to invalid membership types
- Install additional memory on server – a tech installed additional memory and a segmented portion to our current server, which has allowed our database provider to install the new database in a test environment before the upgrade
- Staff training – we’ve started monthly training to get staff more familiar with new features, as well as specific steps to ensure cleaner data in the future

Right now, our progress is difficult to see from the outside. As I’ve said before, it’s critical that we take our time to work through this upgrade slowly and do it right.

WHAT’S NEXT
We began Phase I of the overhaul on April 6.

Phase I (Four to Six Weeks)
Upgrading the iMIS software
Fix all data issues discovered in data audit

Phase II (Six to Nine Weeks)
Begin work on Staff Site

Phase III
Though we’ll begin work on our Member Site immediately, this is expected to take the longest and won’t be able to swing into high gear until the first two phases are complete

Overall
We’re looking at better data in three to four months, staff sites for better workflow and more opportunities within six months and a new Member Site rollout sometime in late 2015. Of course, we’d like to finish everything much sooner than that, but we’re well versed in technology hiccups and want to make sure we’re working through every single aspect of this upgrade correctly.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 2, 2015
FROM: Dana Neuts and Jennifer Royer
SUBJ: Recommended communications for international matters and journalists’ deaths
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

Although it’s usually pretty clear when SPJ should speak out, it’s not so easy when it comes to international matters. The same is true of journalists’ death.

For example, do we speak out about every journalist that dies? If not, where do we draw the line? Ben Bradlee is probably a no brainer. Stuart Scott? Bob Simon? David Carr? For some, the answer is “absolutely,” for others, it is probably “who is that?” What rises to the level of an “official statement?” What can be handled via Twitter?

These questions started a conversation between SPJ’s communications team and the president, president-elect and secretary-treasurer.

Out of that conversation, with input and research by SPJ leaders, volunteers and staff, the following criteria, checklists and guidelines were developed. We hope these will help current and future leaders in making some of those tough decisions.

We ask the board to consider the following recommendations.

Each situation should be handled on a case-by-case basis, with the following criteria to help guide us.

**Checklist for statements on deceased journalists:**

1. Operate from a position of restraint.
2. Did they have an impact on journalism AND democracy?
3. Were they a pioneer in the field?
4. Were they an SPJ member?
5. Did they have an impact on the general public?
6. Did they go beyond being a great journalist and an inspiration to other journalists?

If they do not meet the criteria, SPJ can still be involved in the conversation via social media.

Any president or SPJ leader can write a blog post which could then be promoted via social media (give HQ a heads up that blog is being written and when it is posted).
Checklist for international incidents/acts of terrorism
Generally, SPJ does not issue a statement or release unless there are overriding circumstances, but the following checklist should be considered:

1. Were American journalists targeted or involved?
2. Did it happen on American soil?
3. Did it happen outside a war zone or area of conflict or otherwise “safe” place (ex. Charlie Hebdo)?
4. A systemic killing: Are journalists continually and intentionally being targeted in a certain region over a certain period of time?
5. An ongoing threat: A journalist has been murdered and there is reason to believe more will be targeted.
6. Other unusual circumstances?

Staff will have a general comment ready for when we do not issue a statement, such as, “SPJ condemns any action in which a journalist is targeted for doing his or her job…”

For international incidents, staff has the authority to respond directly to those reaching out that clearly do not rise to the level of SPJ making a statement. Explain that we typically do not make statements on international issues, and direct them to other experts such as the Committee to Protect Journalists, Reporters Without Borders and the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press.

The International Community can act as it sees fit – blog, social media post, etc., which may be retweeted or promoted via SPJ’s social media.

SPJ may choose to participate in conversation via social media.

MONITORING NEWS 24/7
Lastly, we ask for the board’s help when it comes to monitoring the nightly news cycle.

The president, president-elect, executive director, communications strategist and communications coordinator are all monitoring news as much as possible, while also attempting to do the other duties of their day jobs. Of course, they also all have personal lives.

There may be times when they are not immediately aware of something breaking. Having the extra eyes and ears of board members is helpful in making sure nothing falls through the cracks – ensuring SPJ is as timely as possible on matters it wants to speak about publicly.

How the Board can help:
• When you become aware of a situation you think SPJ may want to speak about or monitor, first check Twitter (@spj_tweets). That is where any statements, retweets or conversation will likely happen first.
• If you are personally Tweeting about it and you think SPJ would be interested, tag @spj_tweets and/or the president, president-elect, executive director, communications strategist and communications coordinator if possible.
• Send a “Just a heads up in case you haven’t seen this…” email to the above mentioned leaders and staff.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 1, 2015
FROM: Paul Fletcher
SUBJ: SPJ Membership – Unaffiliated Members and Chapter Members
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

The Society of Professional Journalists relies on the chapter structure for its governance and for many of its organized activities.

But we have known for some time that a substantial percentage of the Society membership does belong to a chapter, either at the professional or student level.

Joe Skeel last summer estimated that the number was approximately 43 percent.

Our current membership system does not allow an easy sorting of affiliated/unaffiliated members. The tally must be a manual count done by hand. Last fall I asked Joe to provide an accurate number for our discussions.

Tara Puckey and Joe went through rosters of all 12 regions to determine just how many members in each region belonged to chapters. The results are attached to this report in a chart (Chart 1).

The number of SPJ members who do not belong to a chapter is 41 percent.

The results vary from region to region, with the highest numbers of unaffiliated members in Region 3 (58 percent) and Region 7 (48 percent) and the lowest number in Region 9 (30 percent).

This report is intended to share this new information and to begin the discussion of what it means for SPJ.

Note: While the data does not bear on the membership representation issue, I have included for informational purposes a second chart (Chart 2) at the end of this report, breaking down each region by pro and student membership.

REGIONAL DIRECTORS
Chart 1 provides to each regional director with the percentage of unaffiliated members in his/her region. I will be happy to provide the file to any RD who would like a copy of the information for his/her region.

Each RD will need to determine what these numbers mean for his/her region whether and how to respond to this data.

One pattern that did not seem to occur: I could not find any indication that membership in a chapter depended on how long a member has belonged to SPJ.
GOVERNANCE  
I also want to use this data as a starting point for a discussion of SPJ governance.

Under the SPJ bylaws, the society is intended to be a representative democracy. The convention, according to Article 10, Section 1, is the “supreme legislative body of the organization.”

Section 2 provides that the “convention shall be composed of delegates or representatives from each chapter, the national officers and the national board of directors.”

In other words, only members of chapters are represented at the convention. What about the 41 percent of the membership that we now have identified?

There are several different possibilities for providing participation in the convention to these members. Here are five approaches, each of which has advantages and drawbacks.

No doubt there are other options. The point here is to prompt the discussion among members of the board, and ultimately among all members.

ASSIGNMENT TO CHAPTERS FOR DELEGATE TALLYING.  
Proposal: Group unaffiliated members with the closest chapter for purposes of determining the number of chapter delegates. This has been the recent practice.

Pros:
- Does not require a bylaws change
- Provides some accounting and participation
- Region-neutral

Cons:
- Not accurate
- Gives chapters an artificially inflated number of delegates

ONE MEMBER, ONE VOTE  
Proposal: Establish one member, one vote for all SPJ decision-making. SPJ adopted OMOV for election of officers and national reps in 2011. Currently, unaffiliated members have a voice in elections, thanks to OMOV, but not at convention.

Pros:
- Establishes SPJ as a pure democracy
- Insures ability to participate for the 41 percent

Cons:
- Difficult to administer on all but simple up-down votes
- Would not allow for discussion and floor amendments, unless convention became the body that vets and makes proposals to be submitted to vote of the membership
Would require bylaws changes  
Experience with OMOV for elections has not been overwhelming (10-11 percent max)

REgional Delegate System
Proposal: Create delegate positions to represent the unaffiliated members. We have identified who and where the unaffiliated members are. Each region would get one delegate for every 50 unaffiliated members (this would track the process for determining chapter delegates in Article 10, Section 3). Have an online election for delegates among the unaffiliated. Note: the bylaws do not specify the number of delegates for the convention.

Pros:  
- Allows unaffiliated members to elect their own representatives  
- Provides opportunity for participation by members who might not otherwise be involved  
- Makes SPJ’s representative democracy more of a reality

Cons:  
- Level of interest of unaffiliated members is unknown  
- Makes convention potentially larger  
- Requires establishment and administration of 12 regional delegate elections  
- Requires bylaws changes

Regional Virtual Chapters
Proposal: Place all unaffiliated members within a region into a “virtual” chapter for purposes of administration and voting. Provide delegate distribution

Pros:  
- Easy to administer  
- Provides representation  
- Provides opportunity for participation by members who might not otherwise be involved

Cons:  
- Single “chapter” is unwieldy for regions with large geographic reach, no community of interest among “chapter” members  
- In every single region, virtual chapter would become the largest chapter.  
- Leadership? Programming and reporting like that of a regular chapter would be difficult

Straw Polls Among All Members
Last September, the SPJ board experimented with electronic straw polls of all members – those in chapters and the unaffiliated – on two significant questions, the Code of Ethics draft and the potential name change. While not binding, the results served to inform delegates at the convention. On issues of importance for which the board seeks total membership input, straw polls could be used to provide information useful to delegates

Pros:  
- Open to all members  
- Easy to administer
- Would not require any bylaws changes
- Give the board flexibility

Cons
- Not binding
- Vote is on a proposal in its then-current format. Proposal could be changed or amended at convention (similar to experience with Code of Ethics)
- Delegates could ignore poll results

I look forward to hearing additional ideas and approaches and to discussing this issue at our meeting and at the spring board meeting.
### Chart 1
**SPJ Membership – Chapter vs. Unaffiliated Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Unaffiliated</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region 1</td>
<td>1,301</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 2</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 3</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 4</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 5</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 6</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 7</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>142</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 8</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 9</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 10</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 11</td>
<td>898</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 12</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6,937</td>
<td>4,092</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>2,845</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Chart 2
### SPJ Membership – Professional vs. Student Members by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>Pro</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Largest Chapter (members)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region 1</td>
<td>1,301</td>
<td>1003</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>NY Deadline Club (195)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 2</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>DC Pro (146)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 3</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>166</td>
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<td>Florida Pro (75)</td>
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<td>Region 4</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Central Ohio Pro (67)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region 5</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Chicago Headline Club (209)</td>
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<td>Region 6</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Minnesota Pro (97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 7</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Kansas City Pro (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 8</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Fort Worth Pro (73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 9</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Colorado Pro (67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 10</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>W. Washington Pro (96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 11</td>
<td>898</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Los Angeles Pro (133)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 12</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mid-Tennessee Pro (42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6,937</td>
<td>5,337</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The SPJ membership department has seven different categories of member type: Associate, Household, Life, Post-Graduate, Professional, Retired and Student. For the purposes of breaking down membership between Pro and Student members, all members in the first six categories are considered Professionals.
MEMORANDUM

DATE:        April 3, 2015
FROM:      Paul Fletcher
SUBJ:  Member representation task force
FOR:    SPJ President Dana Neuts

Dana, per your request, I have put together a working group to study the issues of membership representation raised in my memo to the Executive Committee in January and to the Board this month.

The members of this task force are:
- Lauren Bartlett
- Michael Fitzgerald
- Joe Radske
- Andy Schotz
- Lynn Walsh

I will serve as the organizing chair of the group; Joe Skeel will staff the task force on behalf of headquarters. I anticipate that others will be joining the group as we work.

The issues were last studied by SPJ in 2011-2012, when a group led by Irwin Gratz considered whether to create and include regional “virtual chapters” or “affinity groups” as part of SPJ governance. That committee recommended against creation of virtual chapters; the affinity groups have since gone on to become the current SPJ communities.

The group will review the data from headquarters that indicates that currently 41 percent of our membership is not affiliated with a chapter; under our current by-laws, only chapters have delegates who decide and vote on SPJ policy matters.

The mission of the current task force is to:

- Consider how best to provide representation at convention for members not affiliated with a chapter.
- Review different models for governance.
- Review practices of other associations and groups.
- Create a draft survey for unaffiliated members to determine their views on governance and to measure their level of interest in same.
- Consider whether and how to give a voice in governance to SPJ’s communities, both at the annual convention and on the board.
- Recommend any changes to the SPJ bylaws and coordinate with members of the bylaws committee.

I anticipate we will begin work following the April board meeting.
DATE: March 31, 2015

TO: SPJ Board

FROM: David Cuillier

RE: Advocacy Fund Infusion

This memo requests that the SPJ Board apply $30,000 from fiscal year-end gains to the endowed advocacy fund, rather than the rainy-day fund.

In September at EIJ14 in Nashville, the Board decided not to automatically dedicate year-end surplus funds to the endowed advocacy fund, but rather handle it on a year-to-year basis.

Currently, SPJ has $450,000 in its rainy-day fund, which is more than sufficient for an organization our size, according to our auditors. With Joe’s excellent fiscal management, we have about $30,000 that we can spare this year for our long-term advocacy.

This infusion is important because it takes the fund from its initial $75,000 to $105,000. This has the psychological benefit for donors of reaching the six-figure level as we seek contributions to bring it next to the $200,000 level. An endowed fund of $105,000 would guarantee SPJ has more than $5,000 per year to dedicate toward advocacy efforts. To put that in perspective, we currently raise about $7,000-$9,000 a year from the Legal Defense Fund Auction. Soon we will have a permanent endowed fund that matches or exceeds our annual fundraising efforts for advocacy.

With a six-figure corpus and a coordinated solicitations system with the SDX Foundation, we can launch our promotions and fundraising efforts in earnest this summer. We can also start using the interest from the fund in 2015-16 toward advocacy activities to highlight the fund, such as creating a J Team with the Student Press Law Center or hosting advocacy events in Washington, D.C.

As a reminder of our previous discussions, I have provided below the memo from the Nashville SPJ Board meeting. If anyone has any questions, concerns or suggestions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Thank you, and hold the line!

David Cuillier
spjdave@yahoo.com
Press freedom isn’t free. And it isn’t forever.

We can change that.

This memo proposes the creation of an endowed war chest that will guarantee that we will always have the means to fight for press freedom, no matter the economy, the budget, or the whims of donors. What I’m talking about is an endowed Legal Defense Fund. Call it the Forever Fund for short. The SPJ Board discussed this idea in April 2014 and this memo further details the mechanics and details for the idea, requesting board action at the first meeting at EIJ14 in Nashville.

The Need
Clearly, it isn’t getting any easier to fight for press rights today. It’s getting worse. Plaintiffs and government officials are more savvy at threatening journalists with libel suits, SLAPP suits, and subpoenas. Government PIOs are more adept at managing the message, and officials are increasingly gaming freedom of information laws to increase secrecy at all levels of government. Reporters Without Borders now ranks the United States in press freedom at 46th in the world, behind such countries as Romania, El Salvador and Botswana. Meanwhile, there are fewer and fewer sustainable resources to litigate and advocate for press freedom. News organizations are less inclined to sue for public records and open meetings. Litigation funds are few – the National Freedom of Information Coalition’s $1 million litigation fund is finite and focuses solely on certain litigation costs. The SPJ Legal Defense Fund helps some, but typical annual payouts of $10,000 have limited impact, and the fund relies on the charity of SPJ members bidding at the annual auction. And it can be depleted. We, as journalists and citizens, need a sustained war chest to push back and guarantee someone is always fighting for the First Amendment.

History of Struggle
Bert Bostrom, in his book Talent, Truth and Energy, documenting the history of SPJ, wrote, “Money to finance what its leaders and members hoped to accomplish in fighting for First Amendment rights had always been the Society’s major stumbling block.” (p. 105) In the early years the organization simply budgeted funds toward helping journalists in need. On Nov. 15, 1972, the board formally established the Sigma Delta Chi Legal Fund with $1,600, raising donations to get it to $6,000 by the following year. Most grants were set at $200 ($900 in 2014 dollars), and the fund was nearly depleted within five years. The account balance rose and fell, depending on the energy of volunteers, hot-button press cases of the time, and spending priorities. For example, in addition to litigation, the fund has been used, especially early on, to assist a FOI service center, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, and media attorneys.
LDF Today
The $150,000 Legal Defense Fund is managed by SPJ (not SDX), meaning contributions are not tax deductible and that the money can be used for any litigation, lobbying or advocacy. According to the SPJ website, the fund’s primary role is to “initiate and support litigation that enforces public access to government records and proceedings.” But it can also support FOI hotlines, coalitions, newsletters, as well as legislative lobbying aimed at enforcing access to records and proceedings. In the past, the fund also has been used for defending journalists from subpoenas and libel suits. The fund is not mentioned in the bylaws and has no legal restrictions on spending other than fulfilling the intentions of the donors who give toward the fund, particularly at the annual auction. People can request up to $5,000 from the LDF Committee, and go to the full board for further funding. Typically, annual total payouts have not exceeded $10,000, although that is likely to change since the committee-level authorized payout amount was increased from $2,000 to $5,000 last year. It is quite possible the increased amount could lead to eventual depletion of the fund, just as the society has experienced in the past. Money to fight today; gone tomorrow. A sustained fight requires an endowment.

The Possibilities
In addition to helping journalists sue for public records or defend against subpoenas, we can do so much more to fight, advocate and litigate for journalism. Such a fund could pay for:

- Trips for the president or other members to Washington, D.C., to lobby Congress on FOIA, the shield law, FERPA, or any number of federal issues.
- Grants for other journalism organizations. For example, the National Press Photographers Association is much better positioned than SPJ to fight for photographer’s rights, and this fund could help them battle more effectively.
- Proactive litigation to establish better case law, and advocacy for better state freedom of information laws.
- Travel expenses to give out Black Hole awards and initiate other parachute offenses.
- Public education, such as PSAs, advertising, school curriculum development, and outreach. If the public doesn’t support journalism, then the politicians certainly won’t. Create another campaign, like the brilliant “If we didn’t tell you, who would?” initiative.

The Method
Creating an endowed fund is not easy, and it takes time. This is something that could take decades to develop, but if we start now we might just see the benefits in our lifetime, and the effects will reverberate long after we are dead. We have the chance to protect journalism forever. Here are some ways of getting this started and infusing the fund as we maintain our current activities:

- **Initial Seed Match:** To launch the endowment, provide a 1-to-1 matching seed of $75,000, shifting $75,000 from the existing LDF account, leaving $75,000 available for typical annual LDF requests. Leverage that $75,000 with donations to get the endowment to $150,000. This base level would generate enough interest income ($7,500) to equal the annual LDF auction revenues and get started. The goal would be to get the endowment to $1 million within 10 years, and keep building from there.

- **Fundraisers.** Continue the auction and other ways of raising money. Some of this fundraising would maintain the $75,000 in the expendable account, but extra could be put in the endowment.
• **Budget Policy:** Establish a budgeting policy that excess funds in the SPJ budget at year’s end go into the endowment. Of course, it’s a “should,” not a “shall,” and it can be changed by the board at any time if financials change and other priorities emerge. Say, for example, the board and staff want to take extra money to upgrade equipment one year. Perfectly fine. But the general idea is to try to build that endowment as quickly as possible – to make advocacy a priority.

• **Legacy Gifts:** Some people may want to give to SDX toward journalism education and others might want to give toward this for press freedom fights. The great thing about a legacy gift is when you die you don’t need the tax deduction, so people might be more willing to give to the LDF fund in their will rather than when they are alive. I am willing to pledge $25,000 toward the endowment, raising that to a minimum $100,000 upon my retirement, and will challenge others to do the same. This will be key to building the fund over time to a substantial amount.

The goal would be to get the corpus to at least $1 million to generate $50,000 a year toward litigation, travel expenses for black hole awards, lobbying, public education, and perhaps part of the salary of a communications person. Even more money could accomplish astounding results. We are ideally poised to take this on. Most journalism organizations are 501c3s, so they are limited in their advocacy and lobbying. Not SPJ. We are a 501c6 and are unlimited in our ability to lobby, sue and advocate. It is our responsibility to the profession to advocate. All of this would free up SPJ dollars for other activities, meaning more SDX Foundation money would be available for journalism training and education.

**How it Would be Administered**

At the April 2014 board meeting, the board unanimously approved the concept of the fund in general, but had several questions regarding the mechanics of how the money would be managed. Since then we have consulted with our attorneys and accountants and have come up with a potential plan:

- We establish a new endowed LDF account – a “savings” account that we can’t touch and is forever. We also have the LDF spending account that we currently have – the “checking” account.
- While we raise funds for this endowed savings account for the next few years, we don’t officially establish it legally until September 2016, giving us two years to make sure we are truly committed before dedicating these funds in a “lockbox” that we cannot tap into later.
- Interest earnings (5 percent) from the LDF endowed “savings” account are deposited into the LDF checking account. Some people have suggested we set an amount, such as $1 million, before we start shifting interest earnings from the endowed account to the LDF checking account. I don’t think that is necessary. It could take years to get the endowment up to $1 million, and the benefits of using the earnings immediately in the meantime outweighs the relatively small amount returned to the endowed fund.
- The checking expenditures continue to be managed by the LDF Committee, and requests of more than $5,000 go to the full board for approval, as they do now. We can cut checks out of that checking account for items that fall under the scope of advocacy. This could include travel, advertising, marketing, etc., which is no different than what we can do now, if we like, with LDF funds.
• If we eventually get to the point where we are paying salary out of this pot, we do just like we do with SDX. SPJ fronts the costs and we track what the endowment fund owes us. We periodically cut checks from LDF to SPJ, and the SPJ Board has ultimate authority for such budgeting.
• The SPJ Board would approve the estimated amount of money from the endowment we will spend during the normal budget process out of the LDF checking account. They just did this with the earnings from our reserve.
• At some point in the future, we may also consider abandoning the separate checking account for LDF and co-mingle with our operational account. But, that’s a long way off. That decision will likely be made after you and I are dead.
• The auditors would ensure that we are spending the money on its intended purpose.
• Because the board would approve the money during the budget process, and the auditors would ensure it is being spent accordingly, not every expenditure needs to go through the LDF committee.
• The board could want control to ensure that we are spending it on exactly what they want – not just want is acceptable in the eyes of the auditors. If so, the LDF committee reviews every expenditure/request. Because the funds would be small, we could do that pretty easily via e-mail. This would satisfy the current make-up of the board. Eventually, the LDF committee would probably tell the board that the process is a waste of time – and at that point it would operate more like the bullet point above. All of this can be adjusted depending on the board’s wishes from year to year.

Timeline

Phase 1 – Launch (September 2014 through September 2015)
• September 2014: Approval by SPJ board and announce at EIJ14.
• Fall 2014: Set up website, put together pledge form, put together brochure, talk to supporters.
• Spring 2015: Raise $75,000 to match the LDF funds and solicit legacy gifts. Examine viability of using lifetime membership revenues for the fund.
• Fund Goal: Raise $75,000 to match the LDF funds, to have $150,000 in the fund accruing $7,500 a year, doubling the income of LDF.
• Legacy Goal: Secure $1 million in legacy pledges

Phase 2 – 2020 vision (2015-2020)
• Reach out to supporters outside of journalism for immediate support and members for legacy gifts. With $1 million in the fund, SPJ will be able to expand its efforts beyond litigation and start working in advocacy, public education and lobbying.
• Continue to build the endowed fund through gifts and year-end budget revenue.
• Fund goal: $1 million by 2020
• Legacy goal: $10 million

Phase 3 – 2050 future sight
• In 30 years have a robust fund that will fund significant operations for lobbying, litigation and advocacy. Reliance on legacy gifts for significant growth.
• Fund goal: $20 million by 2050, generating $1 million a year  
• Legacy goal: $100 million

Start Now
So what is needed to start this endowment? Board action at EIJ14 to:
1. Approve the endowed LDF Forever Account.
2. Allocate $75,000 from the existing LDF checking account toward the endowment for match money.
3. Approve a policy of putting SPJ’s excess funds in the endowment at the end of the fiscal year (can be changed by the board down the road).

I ask for your support. Everyone wins, but the big winner is journalism and ultimately, society.
SPJ Convention Voting Transparency Policy

At SPJ's annual convention resolutions and bylaws amendments may be brought to the floor to be voted on by delegates. In addition, SPJ members elect national officers and directors for the coming year. To the greatest extent possible, it is Society policy to make public in a timely manner election vote tallies and the results of all votes taken at business meetings.

1. To facilitate and speed the process of counting votes on the floor at business meetings, staff should prepare video and printed training materials to familiarize delegates and alternate delegates with the standing rules of the convention and voting procedures. These materials should be available on convention web pages for viewing and downloading. Staff will also prepare training materials explaining procedures for tallying and reporting results of votes taken on the floor at business meetings.

2. About a week before the first business meeting staff will send an email including links to video and printed training materials to each delegate and alternate delegate requesting that the recipient review the materials before arriving at the convention.

3. At convention registration, staff will provide each delegate and alternate delegate a copy of the Standing Rules of the Convention and a link to the training video.

4. Consistent with Bylaws Art. 9, Sec. 10, before the first business meeting, the President of the Society will appoint an Election Committee, including a sufficient number of SPJ members who are not delegates, alternate delegates or candidates for office, to certify election results and tally votes taken on the floor.

5. Staff will provide members of the Election Committee the vote tallying and reporting training materials before the first business meeting begins, allowing sufficient time for committee members to review them.

6. At the beginning of each business meeting the Parliamentarian will explain to the assembled delegates the procedures for voting.

7. Prior to any vote, the chair or the secretary shall restate the motion or other matter being voted on, and provide clarifications in response to delegates' questions.

8. If a motion or other matter is decided by vote count or secret ballot, the Election Committee will employ the vote tallying procedures to determine the delegates' decision and will immediately report to the Chair, who will announce the number of votes cast in favor, in opposition, and in appropriate instances abstentions.

9. Before the conclusion of the final business meeting, the Election Committee will announce the results of the annual election of officers and directors, including the vote tally for each candidate.

10. Results of each vote taken by any method will be recorded in the official minutes of the meeting, posted in an appropriate place on the SPJ website, and disseminated by other means, which may include the Working Press and social media. In all instances that votes were counted, the tallies will be published.

11. Regional meetings will be conducted under the same procedures as business meetings. If votes are taken at a regional meeting, the Regional Director will announce the results to meeting participants and will report to the President and Executive Director before the final business meeting the motions on which votes were taken and results of those votes. To the extent possible, regional directors' reports will be published in an appropriate place on the SPJ website.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 6, 2015
FROM: Joe Skeel, Executive Director
SUBJ: Awards recommendations
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

The SPJ Board of Directors instructed the Executive Committee to develop a plan for choosing SPJ’s awards and honors. Below are the recommendations that were voted on by the Executive Committee in January.

The Committee’s discussion and recommendations were a response to the recommendations of task force leaders Lynn Walsh and Sue Kopen Katcef. Their original report to the Executive Committee follows this memo.

Lastly, following both memos is a compilation of comments collected by SDX Foundation President Robert Leger. He sought input from past Wells Key winners regarding the selection process and shared those with SPJ’s Executive Committee in January.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Upon proper motion and second by Fletcher and Kopen Katcef, respectively, the committee voted that the selection process for the Distinguished Teaching in Journalism Award read as follows:
The recipient will be recommended by the SPJ Executive Committee with input from the SPJ Journalism Education Committee and the two Campus Advisers-at-Large. The recommendation will be presented to the SPJ board for approval.
Friendly amendment: The process will be implemented in 2016.
The motion passed. Three members voted yes (Fletcher, Kopen Katcef and Walsh), three members voted no (Cuillier, Radske and McCloskey) and President Neuts broke the tie with a yes vote.

Upon proper motion and second by McCloskey and Walsh, respectively, the committee voted that the selection process for the Ethics in Journalism Award read as follows:
The recipient will be recommended by the SPJ Executive Committee with input from the SPJ Ethics Committee. The recommendation will be presented to the SPJ board for approval.
Friendly amendment: The process will be implemented in 2016.
The motion passed. Three members voted yes (Fletcher, Kopen Katcef and Walsh), three members voted no (Cuillier, Radske and McCloskey) and President Neuts broke the tie with a yes vote.
Upon proper motion and second by McCloskey and Walsh, respectively, the committee voted that the selection process for the Fellows of the Society read as follows:
Recipients will be recommended by the SPJ Executive Committee. The recommendation will be presented to the SPJ board for approval.
Friendly amendment: The process will be implemented in 2016.
Friendly amendment: Change that nominations will rollover for five years.
Addition: Add wording from bylaws that “not more than three people can be selected.”
The motion passed. Three members voted yes (Fletcher, Kopen Katcef and Walsh), three members voted no (Cuillier, Radske and McCloskey) and President Neuts broke the tie with a yes vote.

Upon proper motion and second by Kopen Katcef and Walsh, respectively, the committee voted that the selection process for the Historic Site in Journalism read as follows:
The recipient will be recommended by the SPJ Executive Committee with input from the American Journalism Historians Association. The recommendation will be presented to the SPJ board for approval.
Friendly amendment: The process will be implemented in 2016.
Friendly amendment: Change that nominations will rollover for five years.
Addition: Require something with submission that the plaque will be placed on the property.
The motion passed. Three members voted yes (Fletcher, Kopen Katcef and Walsh), three members voted no (Cuillier, Radske and McCloskey) and President Neuts broke the tie with a yes vote.

Upon proper motion and second by Kopen Katcef and Walsh, respectively, the committee voted that the selection process for the Sunshine Award read as follows:
The recipient(s) will be recommended by the SPJ Executive Committee with input from the SPJ FOI Committee. The recommendation(s) will be presented to the SPJ board for approval.
The motion passed. Three members voted yes (Fletcher, Kopen Katcef and Walsh), three members voted no (Cuillier, Radske and McCloskey) and President Neuts broke the tie with a yes vote.

Upon proper motion and second by Kopen Katcef and Walsh, respectively, the committee voted that the selection process for the Howard S. Dubin Outstanding Pro Member Award read as follows:
The recipients will be recommended by the SPJ Executive Committee. Recommendations will be presented to the SPJ board for approval.
The motion passed. Three members voted yes (Fletcher, Kopen Katcef and Walsh), three members voted no (Cuillier, Radske and McCloskey) and President Neuts broke the tie with a yes vote.

Upon proper motion and second by Kopen Katcef and Walsh, respectively, the committee voted that the selection process for the David L Eshelman Outstanding SPJ Campus Adviser Award read as follows:
The recipient will be recommended by the SPJ Executive Committee with input from the two Campus Advisers-at-Large and the two Campus Representatives. The recommendation will be presented to the SPJ board for approval.

Friendly amendment: The process will be implemented in 2016.
The motion passed. Three members voted yes (Fletcher, Kopen Katcef and Walsh), three members voted no (Cuillier, Radske and McCloskey) and President Neuts broke the tie with a yes vote.

Upon proper motion and second by Kopen Katcef and Walsh, respectively, the committee voted that the selection process for the Julie Galvan Outstanding Campus Member Award read as follows:
The recipient will be recommended by the SPJ Executive Committee with input from the two Campus Advisers-at-Large and two Campus Representatives. The recommendation will be presented to the SPJ board for approval.

Friendly amendment: The process will be implemented in 2016.
The motion passed. Three members voted yes (Fletcher, Kopen Katcef and Walsh), three members voted no (Cuillier, Radske and McCloskey) and President Neuts broke the tie with a yes vote.

Upon proper motion and second by Kopen Katcef and Walsh, respectively, the committee voted that the selection process for the Regional Director of the Year Award read as follows:
The recipient will be chosen by the SPJ Executive Committee with input from the two Directors-at-Large and headquarters staff.

Friendly amendment: The process will be implemented in 2016.
The motion passed. Three members voted yes (Fletcher, Kopen Katcef and Walsh), three members voted no (Cuillier, Radske and McCloskey) and President Neuts broke the tie with a yes vote.

Upon proper motion and second by Fletcher and McCloskey, respectively, the committee voted that the selection process for the Wells Memorial Key read as follows:
The recipient will be chosen by the SPJ Executive Committee.

Friendly amendment: The process will be implemented in 2016.
Friendly amendment: Change that nominations will roll over for 10 years.
Call to question passed.
The motion passed. Three members voted yes (Fletcher, Kopen Katcef and Radske), three members voted no (Cuillier, Walsh and McCloskey) and President Neuts broke the tie with a yes vote.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: Jan. 5, 2015
FROM: Lynn Walsh and Sue Kopen Katcef
SUBJ: Awards recommendations
FOR: SPJ Executive Committee

In addition to all the suggestions below, the subcommittee is recommending the following:

- Another round of copy editing is completed on all material posted to the website, sent out via email or any other form of communication.
- SPJ HQ staff work to publicize the awards more. This includes reaching out to other organizations, non-SPJ entities and members, and increasing the prominence of the procedures and requirements on the website.
- The fee for entering the New America Award will be changed from $25 for members and $40 for nonmembers. SPJ HQ recommended no longer physically handing out the New America Award, but we believe it still should be included and physically handed out at the national conference.

*All suggestions are based on input from the 2013 Executive Committee meeting notes; SPJ board members Sue Kopen Katcef, Bill McCloskey, Andy Schotz and Lynn Walsh; and SPJ HQ staff.

*All awards will be submitted online only.

Red = new award specifications/requirements suggestions
Blue = HQ staff suggestions which the awards subcommittee is in favor of
Green = HQ staff would like Exec to discuss

Distinguished Teaching in Journalism Award

The award honors a collegiate journalism educator and recognizes outstanding teaching ability, contributions to journalism, journalism education and contributions toward maintaining the highest standards of the profession.

Eligibility: Anyone teaching in the field of journalism on the college level is eligible. SPJ membership is not a requirement for eligibility.

Nominations: Nominations can be submitted by students, former students, colleagues and department heads, as well as professionals in the field. Nomination form shall be accompanied by a CV, letter(s) of recommendation from dean/department head as well as letters of support from students that address the nominee’s contributions and service to journalism education. Self-nominations are permitted. Nominations will not rollover.
Selection: The recipient will be recommended by the SPJ Executive Committee with input from the SPJ Journalism Education Committee and the two Campus Advisers-at-Large. The recommendation will be presented to the SPJ board for approval. The Society may present one award unless there are no worthy nominations.

Deadline: All entries should be submitted no later than March 20.

*If SPJ is interested in including high school educators, SPJ should do so through JEA, similar to the High School Essay Contest.

Ethics in Journalism Award

The award honors a journalist or news organization that performs in an outstanding ethical manner demonstrating the ideals of the SPJ Code of Ethics. It also honors especially notable efforts to educate the public on principles embodied in the code or hold journalists ethically accountable for their behavior.

Eligibility: Any journalist or news organization is eligible.

Nominations: Nomination form should be accompanied by a letter(s) of recommendation that addresses why the nominee is deserving of this national recognition. Self-nominations are permitted. Nominations will not rollover.

Selection: The recipient will be recommended by the SPJ Executive Committee with input from the SPJ Ethics Committee. The recommendation will be presented to the SPJ board for approval. The Society may present one award unless there are no worthy nominations.

Deadline: All entries should be submitted no later than March 20.

Fellows of the Society

This recognition honors journalists who have made an extraordinary contribution to the profession. Honorees must agree to attend the Excellence in Journalism Conference.

Eligibility: Nominations are open to anyone in the journalism community. Nominees from all areas of journalism and media are eligible.

Nominations: Nomination form should be accompanied by a letter(s) of recommendation that addresses the nominee’s contributions and/or service to the profession and why the nominee is deserving of this national recognition. Self-nominations are not permitted. Nominations will rollover for two years. Nominations are accepted year-round. Nominations received after Dec 1 will be considered for the next year’s nomination.

Selection: Recipients will be recommended by the SPJ Executive Committee. The recommendation will be presented to the SPJ board for approval.
Staff would like the group to discuss how many Fellows should be given out each year

**Deadline:** All entries should be submitted no later than December 1.

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**Historic Site in Journalism Award**

*The award honors the people and places that have played important roles in American journalistic history. The award dates back to 1942.*

**Eligibility:** Nominations must possess an accurate significance to the history of journalism.

**Nominations:** Nomination form should be accompanied by a letter(s) of recommendation that reflects the nominee’s national historic significance in journalism and why the nominee is deserving of this national recognition. Nominations should also include an indication of the specific location (i.e. building, street address, inside or outside installation) where a bronze plaque would be placed. Nominators should contact the rightful authorities (such as owner of the building) to ensure that they are amenable to placement of a plaque. Nominations will rollover for two years.

**Selection:** The recipient will be recommended by the SPJ Executive Committee with input from the American Journalism Historians Association. The recommendation will be presented to the SPJ board for approval. The Society may present one award unless there are no worthy nominations.

Honorees will be announced and honored at a special celebration event determined by the award recipient. A bronze plaque is displayed at the location marking it as a Historic Site in Journalism.

**Deadlines:** All entries should be submitted no later than March 20.

*We have made a note to contact the local chapter each time the award site is selected.

*Union Hotel and Watergate Garage will be added to the list of rollovers.

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**Sunshine Award**

*The award recognizes individuals and groups for making important contributions in the area of open government.*

**Eligibility:** Individuals/groups who have made a contribution to the area of open government. Nominations are not limited to journalists. Work may be, but does not have to be, related to Project Sunshine (spj.org/sunshine.asp) which focuses the attention of SPJ chapters and leaders on FOI problems, issues, needs and solutions at the local, chapter and state level.

**Nominations:** Self-nominations are permitted. Nominations will not rollover. **Selection:** The recipients will be recommended by the SPJ Executive Committee with input from the SPJ Freedom of Information Committee. Recommendations will be presented to the SPJ board for
approval. There may be up to three Sunshine Awards presented each year unless there are no worthy nominations.

**Deadlines:** All entries should be submitted no later than March 20.

*Staff recommends continuing to limit this to three awards because it ensures that the importance and the meaning of the award are kept intact and it forces judges to recognize only exceptional work. Keeping the number of awards limited also helps staff with time constraints during the President’s Banquet.

*Staff recommends deleting the Project Sunshine reference because the website is not up-to-date.

**Howard S. Dubin Outstanding Pro Member Award**

*The award honors Howard Dubin who has shown outstanding membership with his service to the Society. While he contributes great sums of time, energy and money to the national Society, Mr. Dubin continues grassroots service at the chapter level.*

*The Society honors individual members who have made significant contributions to their SPJ chapters.*

**Eligibility:** Nominees must be a member of SPJ.

**Nominations:** Nomination form should be accompanied by a letter(s) of recommendation that addresses the nominee’s contributions to their SPJ chapter and/or region and why the nominee is deserving of this national recognition. Self-nominations are permitted. Nominations will not rollover.

**Selection:** The recipients will be recommended by the SPJ Executive Committee. Recommendations will be presented to the SPJ board for approval. Only two awards (one from chapters of 75 or more members and one from chapters with fewer than 75 members) may be given. The Society may present one award unless there are no worthy nominations.

**Deadline:** All entries should be submitted no later than April 17.

**David L. Eshelman Outstanding Campus Adviser Award**

*In 1993, the SPJ board voted to change the award name to the David Eshelman Outstanding Campus Adviser Award in order to honor Mr. Eshelman, a longtime member of the Society and Board “Parliamentarian,” who was killed in 1993.*

*The award, initiated in 1978, is presented to the person who has made an exceptional contribution to the campus chapter for which he or she serves as SPJ adviser.*

**Eligibility:** Nominees must be a member of SPJ and serve as a chapter adviser.
Nominations: Nominations must be made by an SPJ chapter officer. Nomination form should be accompanied by a letter of recommendation from at least one chapter officer that highlights chapter programing for the prior year and any accomplishments. The nomination should include specific information about the role the adviser has played with the chapter and its members, as well as the contributions the adviser has made to the chapter and journalism in general. Self-nominations are not permitted. Nominations will not rollover.

Selection: The recipient will be recommended by the SPJ Executive Board with input from the two Campus Advisers-at-Large and the two Campus Representatives. The recommendation will be presented to the SPJ board for approval. The Society may present one award unless there are no worthy nominations.

Deadline: All entries should be submitted no later than April 17.

Julie Galvan Outstanding Campus Member Award

The Award is named in memory of Julie Galvan, a former president of the SPJ San Jose State University Chapter, who was killed in a car accident while on her way to an internship in 1996.

Each of the Society’s campus chapters are encouraged to select one member who is outstanding in his or her class on the basis of character, service to the community, scholarship, proficiency in practical journalism and significant contributions to their SPJ chapter. From this group, the Society’s leaders will select one student member who is considered the most outstanding for national recognition.

Eligibility: Recipient must be a student SPJ member graduating within the academic year.

Nominations: Nomination form should be accompanied by a resume, letter(s) of recommendation that addresses the nominee’s character, service to the community, scholarship, journalism proficiency, contributions their SPJ chapter and why the nominee is deserving of this national recognition. Self-nominations are not permitted. Nominations will not rollover.

Selection: The recipient will be recommended by the SPJ Executive Committee with input from the two Campus Advisers-at-Large and two Campus Representatives. The recommendation will be presented to the SPJ board for approval. The Society may present one award unless there are no worthy nominations.

Deadline: All entries should be submitted no later than April 17.

Regional Director of the Year Award

The award honors individuals serving as an SPJ regional director for outstanding service to the region and the national organization during the preceding year.

Eligibility: Nominees must be an SPJ regional director.
Nominations: Nomination form should be accompanied by a letter(s) of recommendation that addresses why the nominee is deserving of this national recognition. Selection is based primarily on recommendation letters but will also include the quality of annual reports in the nominee’s region. Self-nominations are not permitted. Nominations will not rollover.

Selection: The recipient will be chosen by the SPJ Executive Committee with input from the two Directors-at-Large and headquarters staff. The Society may present one award unless there are no worthy nominations.

Deadline: All entries should be submitted no later than April 17.

Wells Memorial Key

A member who is judged to have served the Society in the most outstanding fashion during the preceding year or over a period of years is presented SPJ’s highest honor for a member, the Wells Memorial Key.

The Award honors Chester Wells, Sigma Delta Chi’s second national president, who died in 1913 while in office.

Eligibility: Nominees must be a member of SPJ. Nominations may be submitted by any SPJ member or chapter.

Nominations: Nomination form should be accompanied by a letter(s) of recommendation that addresses the nominee’s contributions and/or service to the Society of Professional Journalists and why the nominee is deserving of this national recognition. Self-nominations are not permitted. Nominations will rollover for one year.

Selection: Two or three nominees will be recommended by the SPJ Executive Committee. The recommendations will be presented to the SPJ board and voting will take place through a secret ballot process. The Society may present at least one Wells Memorial Key in any given year unless the executive committee agrees no worthy candidates are available for that year.

Deadline: All entries should be submitted no later than April 17.
SPJ exec'ers:

In anticipation of your discussion on awards this weekend, I sought input on the proposed changes in how the Wells Key is chosen from the living recipients for whom I have email addresses going back to 1990.

(Georgiana Vines shared the note with a few more recipients plus people who have been in national leadership but not received the Key. Bill McCloskey, as a Wells recipient, participated in the discussion. I do not quote from him below, as he can speak for himself during your discussion.)

My query was neutral. I explained that the executive committee was meeting and would consider changes in how various award winners were chosen.

"The major change in the Wells Key selection would be to remove the decision from the executive officers and submit up to three names to the full board for a secret ballot. I'm curious what you, as a Wells Key recipient, think about this proposal. I'll be at the meeting in Orlando, and will share any thoughts you send my way."

And then I quoted the specific proposal.

Two takeaways:

- First and most significant: Every one of them responded, including several who have not engaged in any SPJ issue for several years. This speaks volumes. The Wells Key is not just another award.

- Second, the vast majority oppose the proposal, preferring that the selection continue to be made by the officers or the executive committee. This is a group of people who have differed with each other as passionately as anyone on the current board, and haven't been shy about it. There were disagreements over the two days of email exchanges, but they were mostly about side issues such as the origin of the president's awards. A few suggested tweaks in the process of making the selections or soliciting nominations, as you'll read. We're a contentious bunch. But on the issue of how to select Wells Key recipients, there was amazing agreement: Don't make this a board decision.

As he has done so many times, Reggie Stuart cut to the heart of the matter. Reggie is the only SPJ member ever to receive three keys (Wells Key 1992, SPJ president 1994-5, Fellow of the Society 2006):

Having been selected a Wells Key recipient and participated in the selection of several fellow recipients, my thinking on the issue at hand is to table it.

Thoughtful as the idea may be, it would so dramatically dilute the status, meaning and significance of the honor, the 'good idea' would effectively reduce the Wells Key to just another award.

The Wells Key is rich in our history and special in the leadership's responsibilities.
For sure having our entire board vote on the prospects sounds like a very diplomatic open access idea on its surface. It also sounds like a rampant democracy idea. This is not a vote-getting effort (as candidates for office are) nor is it a popularity contest (as casting a wide vote would turn this into). The Wells Key vote gives three people (most of whom have spent some years getting to know SPJ, its people, its challenges, its ups and downs) a chance to make a learned, thoughtful decision about a person’s impact on SPJ in any number of ways over time—recipients were deep thinkers, task masters, creative volunteers, trouble shooters, outspoken leaders, barely visible rank and file members).

It takes time to get to know this diverse SPJ family. Then, you get 'lucky' enough to have a position in our top leadership trioka to be forced to select from an abundant group of deserving people a Wells Key recipient (some times there have been more than one). To be part of that process, reading thoughtful letters of recommendation, discussing back and forth what action to take, making a decision. It's all a one-of-a-kind treasured responsibility and experience.

The current board should respect and honor a successful and secret process and trust those in whom it is invested over the years will treat it with care.

Fred Brown (Wells Key 2006) was just as eloquent:

“I'll concede that traditions like this can seem stodgy. And Wells Key winners do, of course, share a number of common traits -- but they should. They have all served the Society diligently and well, and thus are part of an inner circle. They're mature, and maybe they can be a bit clannish. But that is to be expected among a small number of hard workers who spend a lot of time together.

The process may need to be better defined, perhaps to include a specific carryover period for nominees. And perhaps it could be better explained to the membership, so there’s a bigger pool of nominations to choose from.

But I share the concern of others that having too many participants in the decision likely will lead to leaks, and that would spoil the surprise of the announcement.

Some traditions lose relevance after a while, but this one is worth keeping. It doesn’t really need shaking up.”

Steve Geimann (2001) engaged in a little Socratic method before arriving at his conclusion:

What do we want the Wells Key to be? Right now, it’s a high honor known to a very few that generates talk and interest at the National Convention. Is that what it should be?

Opening this to a vote by the full board essentially takes current office holders out of consideration for the honor, which might actually be a good thing. I can’t remember, in three decades of this, that any current board member was so honored. I may be wrong. (rl: He is.)

Keeping the decision closely held should be the goal. A secret ballot with a designated tallier would achieve that. Having said all that, the vote by the full board -- which promoting inclusiveness and asking for a broad cross section of thought -- might turn the decision into
a popularity contest. The nominees, I assume, would be known to everyone on the board, and that just lends itself to gentle persuasion or activism for a particular candidate.

Doesn't it make more sense for the officers -- the most active of SPJ members -- to make the final decision, and honor the deserving of candidates?

The real issue, which I don't think this process or any other process would correct, is casting a broader net to honor really unsung heroes of the Society who probably don't cross paths with the executive committee or the full board. The process we have now does recognize former presidents, committee chairs and others who come to the attention of national officers.

Not that any of my esteemed Key holders weren't worthy. They all are.

[And a follow-up note, later in the conversation]
I side with those who want the process to remain as is. This is an honor, not a monetary contract. It's a subjective judgment by the leaders of the society. I don't think the process is broken. Let's not create a problem where none exists.

**Mac McKerral (2005):**
I have been involved in the Wells Key decision both ways, the triumvirate and the Executive Committee. I am not sure why it changed, either. Presidential caveat, I imagine. I was more comfortable with the Exec Committee process. That said, and as others have stated, the real problem seems to be with culling nominees.

So, I would suggest more discussion on how to do that, particularly since many SPJers put in enormous amounts of time and energy at the local rather than the national level and over extended periods of time. But they are prone to be overlooked. I also think whatever selection process is used, that process should be codified. (On) the "hold-over" time, I think one year is too short.

**Frank Gibson (1994), with a suggested tweak:**
I'm not sure what the current process is, but I agree with those who advocate leaving or putting the decision in hands of a small group – the executive committee or some other select group. Perhaps could create a panel that includes the officers and 3 recent Wells Key winners. Doing it as proposed is flawed by making the selection group too large and process too complicated – like a legislature, city council or a school board. A big group could be subject to excess politicking. The selecting body ought to include members with reasonable amount of service, an appreciation for the true purpose of the Key, and maybe some independent knowledge of the contributions of nominees. With respect to (the) concern for secrecy (see Kelly Hawes and Kyle Niederpruem's comments, below) – the board and exec committee are not government bodies and the element of surprise - as someone noted – always made the announcement special.

**Irwin Gratz (2010):**
Wow. Haven't seen so much traffic on an SPJ issue in years. ... I would object to a change in the way the Wells Key honorees are chosen for all the good reasons already stated. Encouraging more nominations is fine, but in all the years I was involved in the process (and even in years since) the likely candidates have seemed apparent. Lastly, Robert, thanks for seeking us all out on this question.
Carolyn Carlson (1993):
I'm a big fan of the secrecy of the Wells Key winner. With the entire board knowing who the finalists are, then I'd think everyone will end up knowing at least who the finalists are and there will be rampant guessing as to who the winner will be, probably with wagering involved. There’s no way the two-three finalists wouldn’t know that they were up for the award, and that would ruin the surprise element of the award. They’d all have their speeches written out in advance. The fewer people who know who the finalists are and who make the final decision, the less likely word will leak back to the winner and the more surprised the winner will be, as well as everyone else. It’s the one thing I look forward to the most during the presidential banquet; it’s the only thing we don’t know in advance. I’m hoping we can keep that.

Kelly Hawes (SPJ president, 1995-96) didn’t like the idea of a secret ballot:
I’m not a big fan of secret ballot votes, so that part of the proposal bothers me even though I understand the reasoning behind it. Frankly, I haven’t been a part of this process in a long time, but I wasn’t aware the selection process needed changing. I believe the small group of folks who have traditionally made this selection are well suited to do that. If it were up to me, I’d leave the process the way it is.

[And a followup]
Just to be clear, I don’t question the need for secrecy. That’s a vital part of the tradition. I’m put off by the idea of a secret ballot vote in an SPJ board meeting.

Neither did Kyle Niederpruem (2002):
I don’t like secret anything – having experienced the emotional lashback when SPJ counsel recommended a closed door session on real estate options for the HQ move. Legal advice followed to the tune of considerable fallout. There’s enough lobbying that goes on for Wells Key as it is. People should be willing to explain who they want to select – and why. If the nomination pool is an issue, members should be solicited for a more robust process. Be careful what you wish for. Change the selection criteria and nail it down tightly through vetting – rather than move the process to secrecy.

Kevin Smith (2014):
I remember being on the three-member panel that made the Wells decision when I was secretary-treasurer. It was a tough call that year with three quality candidates. We deliberated for almost an hour, went to lunch, talked about it the entire time and returned and deliberated again -- more than two hours, total. I can’t think of a single award that year which took that much thoughtful discussion. My point is, adding more voices doesn’t always create a more reasoned outcome. Three people can do this with the utmost clarity of purpose and diligence.

For the reasons already stated, I don’t think turning it over to the entire board solves the issues. I think it makes it more cumbersome. Imagine getting 23 people to read board packets, plus all of the Wells materials, before coming to the meeting. Has anyone asked the board about this? Do the majority of them actually want this job?

I remember wondering that first year why just the top three officers decided the Wells and exec, as a whole, chose everything else. I’d support a plan to loop in the entire exec, but I
think making it a total board decision creates larger issues. And, I don’t think an entire board will debate this for two hours.

As for placing a time limit on the number of years a person can be considered, we should have no time limit on how long it takes for our leadership to recognize a deserving person. A legacy of service is not accumulated in few years.

Paul McMasters (1990):
Let me say at the very start, after reading all of the replies, what a delight it has been to hear all of your "voices" again and being reminded what a great number of triple great minds there have been and continue to be in leadership positions for the Society. It is never a bad idea to revisit procedures and processes, even revered traditions, from time to time. If nothing else, it helps everyone to be reminded of the reasons they were instituted in the first place. In this instance, I have to agree that if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it. There are numerous ways to bring in more nominations without changing the way the Wells Key winner is selected. The more people involved, the more risk of a leak. Much is made, of course, of the honor of this award and rightly so. But sometimes we recipients don’t get around to talking much about the true joy of this award. The main ingredient of that joy is the complete surprise when one's name is read. Please don’t spoil that.

Ian Marquand (2004):
I'm late to this party, but I've read all the comments. I've never helped select a Wells winner but I trust the executive committee's institutional knowledge and wisdom. To me, the current process isn't broke and doesn't need fixing. That said, if the committee isn't getting enough input on candidates, then that's the part of the process to be addressed.

Betsy Ashton (2007):
I agree wholeheartedly ... about the desire for secrecy and the potential problems that opening up the process to a large committee would entail - lobbying, etc. In all my years on the SDX Foundation Board the most frustrating things were the interminable joint meetings with the SPJ Board that rendered much blather and no results. If needed, open up nominations, not the deliberative process.

Marta Bender (former member of SPJ and SDX boards):
I believe there is a provision that nominations are kept alive only for two or three years. Is that long enough? My concern is that if someone is not chosen at a time when their activity is greatest, they may be passed over permanently. (Dick Kleeman is a great example of someone who finally received the key, despite his many years of activity.) Also, we may be honoring only "shooting stars" and ignoring members whose contributions may be significant but not always visible.

I have no problem with the final selection made by the officers or the executive committee. I don’t see any rationale for involving the full board. I think that would just make the process more cumbersome.

Sonny Albarado (SPJ president, 2012-13):
My short answer: The process works fine the way it is.
My longer response: This proposal grows out of the larger "inclusiveness" and "transparency" movement within SPJ, a movement I endorse and encourage. This movement tends to regard "tradition" as anti-transparent and exclusionary.
I disagree that such is always the case. Tradition can stand in the way of progress, but sometimes tradition, like ritual, reminds us of truths and transcendent values. While SPJ can improve how it explains the value of the Wells Key to members and how it seeks out candidates to help diversify the pool, I believe the decision should remain in the executive officers' hands.

**Lucy Dalglish (1995), the only recipient not to oppose the idea out of hand:**
I wouldn't oppose the process. But I think you're going to have a monstrous “leak” problem. (Unless you figure out a way to have the board vote, but keep the results closely held by the executive committee until the winner is announced.) And in that case you've probably already discussed the issue of board members engaging in Academy Award-style “lobbying.”

**Sally Lehrman (2003):**
I worry about the lobbying aspect, too, and the potential for this award to turn into a popularity contest. Another way to open up the process would be to create a rotating committee (perhaps including former Wells Key winners and former presidents?) that recommends and/or selects the winner.

**Robert Leger (2012):**
I intentionally kept my opinion out of the initial note, so as not to poison the conversation.

I think this is a dumb idea, and I spoke rather passionately against it when the idea surfaced at the post-convention meeting of the SPJ board. The idea is to have the board decide all SPJ awards. I have no opinion on what they do with the rest, but I firmly believe the Wells Key should remain with the officers.

- The full SPJ board is a mix of veterans and people who have cut their teeth at the local level. At the end of my first year on the board, Paul Davis received the Wells Key. I had only a vague idea of who he was, and would not have been qualified (at my first full board meeting) to select between him and someone who might have been more currently involved.
- It wouldn't be a secret. No way. And that's one of the best traditions about this award.
- Contemplation is a good thing with this award, as Kevin noted from his experience.
- This proposal removes any flexibility in the process. In 2002, Al Cross offered up the idea of giving the key to two people: Kyle, who had led the effort to move HQ from Greencastle to Indy on top of her impressive FOI work, and Julie Grimes for her longtime contributions most recently marked by holding the office together after the exec director was shown the door. It made sense to break the tradition of awarding a single Wells Key for that year. But that would be difficult to do under this proposal.
- Encouraging nominations from a wide swath of SPJ is a good thing. But I would also argue (and I may be in the minority on this one) that the officers should be free to go beyond the nominations. What if the nominations are uniformly weak, and everyone around the table knows there are highly qualified candidates who, for whatever reason, were not nominated? They should have the freedom to extend the field. Under this proposal, that couldn't happen.
• The Wells Key is the highest honor we give to a member. The manner in which it is selected should reflect that. Making it like all the other awards diminishes rather than enhances the Wells Key.

Dave Carlson (2013):
Hear, hear, Robert!

Al Cross (2011):
Yes, letting the board do it would be dumb, and I agree with almost all Robert has said. But if the board seems to be headed in that direction, the alternative of the executive committee should be offered, especially because that seems to have been done at times. I suspect that the selection may have been limited to the officers in order to make it easier to give the key to the immediate past president.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 18, 2015
FROM: Steve Geimann
SUBJ: ACCREDITING COUNCIL ON EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS – SPRING 2015 REPORT
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

The Accrediting Council is poised, at a May 1-2 meeting in Phoenix, to double its international ranks, add another school in the New York metropolitan area and start a project to put program statistics on a searchable database. The Council also is under fire from three deans.

ACCREDITATION DECISIONS

Five programs, including three outside the U.S., were recommended for initial six-year accreditation March 21-22 at a committee meeting in Chicago. To fix deficiencies, three units including a California school that passed the first step but was deemed weak by the committee may get two more years. The Council will vote on 21 recommendations for reaccreditation.

The five schools recommended for initial accreditation:

- Stony Brook, part of the State University about 50 miles from Times Square on Long Island, in its initial effort fell short on scholarship. The unit with 200 majors has 13 full-time faculty, including five professors, along with 23 lecturers, including 17 with ties to Newsday such as former SPJ at-large director Carl Corry. Visiting professors include Alan Alda.
- North Alabama has 133 majors and a site team found it provided good job training. The department, seeking accreditation for the first time, was weak on scholarship, although recent hires could increase output. Its assessment process lacked input from practitioners.
- The American University in Dubai is a U.S.-style journalism school training students to “change journalism in the Arab world,” the head of the initial site-visit team said. Classes for 240 students are taught in English and Arabic.
- Zayed University in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, seeking first-time accreditation, has as its mission to elevate women to be leaders in the United Arab Emirates. Zayed also segregates men and women in classrooms, in recognition of cultural traditions.
- Anahuac University in Mexico, affiliated with a Catholic order, sought first-time accreditation for its program, which requires the equivalent of 180 U.S. credit hours. Classes run from 7 a.m. and into the night. The team lamented a lack of student media for 750 majors.
ACEJMC accredits Qatar University, Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile and Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey in Mexico. Stony Brook is the second Long Island program, after Hofstra, and sixth in metro New York, with City University, NYU, Columbia and Iona College.

Three schools were recommended for provisional, triggering a review in two years.

- The committee overturned a site team recommendation to reaccredit California State-Fullerton, with 2,200 majors, citing fundamental shortcomings from inconsistent syllabi and lack of adequate computer labs to a dated curriculum. Some of the 33 faculty were “obstructionist” on assessment. The committee unanimously voted for provisional.

- Wisconsin-Eau Claire failed on assessment and was found out of compliance on diversity for a second time, suggesting the school lacked a commitment to diversity. The unit also lacked a strong strategic plan and mission statement. This is the second time it failed to meet two of the nine Council standards.

- San Jose State failed on curriculum and assessment. Skills classes often had more than 30 and sometimes as many as 40 students, double the Council’s maximum of 20. In response, San Jose administrators adjusted class sizes and pledged steps to resolve assessment issues.

Reaccreditation was recommended for Abilene Christian (after diversity deficiencies were fixed), American, Arkansas State, Baylor, Brigham Young, Central Michigan, Connecticut, Florida International, Indiana, Iona College, Kent State, Kentucky, Marshall, North Carolina, Oklahoma, San Diego State, South Dakota, Texas-Austin, Texas State, Washington and Winthrop. Graduate programs were reaccredited at AU, Iona and UNC.

The 9-5 vote to reaccredit Marshall will draw Council attention and may be reversed. The site team found a lack of converged curriculum, more skills than theory classes and an unsettled environment lingering from a merger into the College of Arts and Media.

**NOTABLE TRENDS**

Assessment remained troublesome, with six – CalState-Fullerton, North Carolina’s graduate program, Oklahoma, San Jose, South Dakota and Wisconsin-Eau Claire – failing. Diversity fell short at Oklahoma, San Jose and Wisconsin-Eau Claire. San Jose and Marshall failed on curriculum, Kentucky was out of compliance on resources and two new schools – Dubai and Stony Brook – were deficient on scholarship.

Oklahoma and Eau Claire were out of compliance on diversity and assessment – yet Wisconsin drew a provisional decision while Oklahoma was recommended for reaccreditation. The Council tends to examine such inconsistencies, and may reconsider the determinations.

Committee recommendations were unanimous, except at Oklahoma and Marshall.
ASSESSMENT
The Council plans to discuss in Phoenix the inconsistent application of the assessment standard, which was added in 2001 in response to demands from policymakers, parents and the industry. The standard, which requires evaluation of student learning based on tests, portfolios and in some cases internships and job placement, has been resisted at some institutions.

Since 2008, more schools are out of compliance on assessment than any other standard. In six years, 58 programs failed, about 35 percent of all units reviewed. In 2008-09, almost half the schools – 43 percent – failed assessment, a rate that fell to 22 percent by 2013-14.

DATA PROJECT
The Council will embark this year on a process to build a searchable database for statistics on enrollment, budget, per-student spending, fees, financial aid, student-faculty ratio, retention rates, placement statistics and other information. Currently, this data is in site-visit team reports and self-studies at Council headquarters and not online. While the statistics are available from each unit, it’s impossible to draw comparisons or measure schools on multiple data points.

Each accredited program would enter data annually, a vast improvement from the once-in-six-years update. Units would be encouraged to keep the information accurate and may face stiff penalties – including possible loss of accreditation – for providing misleading data. A committee on which I serve is reviewing proposals for the project.

CHALLENGES TO ACCREDITATION
The Accrediting Council is being challenged by three administrators suggesting the process is cumbersome, expensive and opaque. The deans from Illinois and Wisconsin issued recommendations last fall and continue to discuss alternatives.

The complaints: The Council office at the University of Kansas, an accredited program, “presents the inherent appearance of a conflict of interest,” while part of the salary of the executive director, a Kansas faculty member, is paid by the university, “a fairly obvious conflict of interest.” They urged the Council to find space away from an accredited unit, and suggested a move to the South Carolina office of the educator and administrator groups.

The dissidents urged that data for accreditation visits be available online, in a searchable format, and endorsed submission of shorter annual reports to replace the voluminous self-study.

They urged greater diversity and transparency in picking site-team leaders, and filling seats on the mid-level review committee and Council (where groups select representatives). The deans said from 2004 through last year, 35 percent of team leaders were women, 1 percent were people of color. The 29 site-visit teams this year were led by 13 men and 6 women, or 32 percent. The deans said some academics were trained “but they have never been asked to be on a team. Other team members go on multiple site visits. It’s an arbitrary process
that should be democratized and explained thoroughly.”

Former Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communications President Don Heider posted complaints on the administrators’ website. Heider, dean of the non-accredited Loyola University Chicago’s School of Communication, was joined by Lori Bergen from Marquette and Bradley Hamm from Northwestern.

“An accrediting body must avoid reputation bias,” the group said. “There was the strong impression that currently big programs with a well established reputation appear to be sacrosanct, or ‘too important or valuable to be interfered with’. People also felt there is evidence of ‘flawed’ programs passing accreditation review with flying colors.”

In response, Council President David Boardman, dean of Temple’s School of Media and Communications, acknowledged previous informal discussions of the points that were raised.

“ACEJMC is committed to continually improving the accreditation process. In fact, what we consider to be the committee’s most meaningful suggestion – making the process more digitally based and creating a searchable database of information of value to both educators and consumers – had been discussed for some time and is now under way,” Boardman wrote.

Heider, whose program isn’t accredited, had been on the Council representing non-accredited programs. In 2011, the Council changed policy and required that representatives be from accredited schools, to avoid having decisions made by individuals with no investment in the process. It’s been suggested the dissident’s initiative also may be driven by personal issues such as assignments to site-visit teams.

MORE PROGRAMS
The Council is on track to accredit more than 120 programs by the end of this decade. Five programs were added in 2014, and five are being considered this year. Next year, the Council will consider applications from High Point in North Carolina, Massey in New Zealand and University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. This academic year, Jackson State in Mississippi and Southern Indiana will let their accreditation lapse.

MEMBER MOVES
Marie Hardin, dean at Penn State, will become vice chairman of the Accrediting Committee, succeeding Arizona State Dean Chris Callahan, who becomes chairman. Long-time Council member Jan Dates, former dean of Howard’s School of Communications, retired as representative for the Black College Communications Association. Valerie White, the group’s chairman and associate professor at Florida A&M in Tallahassee, will replace Dates, who led numerous site-visit teams. I was a member of several of her teams.

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ACEJMC meets twice a year to set policies, and review and accredit programs for six years. Each year, teams of educators and practitioners visit schools to assess their
compliance with nine standards. A Council seat costs $3,000 a year. School annual dues are $2,000.

I visited Central Michigan University in October. I have participated in 21 site visits to review 19 schools in 15 states. I lead the Council’s finance committee.

The Council, founded in 1945, currently accredits 116 journalism, public relations, advertising or telecommunications programs, and has representatives from 11 industry and six educational groups. SPJ has been a member since 1996. After 18 years, I am among the senior Council members.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 29, 2015
FROM: Andy Schotz, Awards and Honors Committee chairman
SUBJ: Awards and Honors Committee report
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

The SPJ Awards and Honors Committee is: Andy Schotz (chair), Sarah Bauer (co-chair), Rebecca Baker, Jay Evansen, Sue Kopen Katcef, Mark Lodato. (Lisa L. Rollins was a member of the committee, but she died in November 2014.)

The structure of the committee changed this year. Oversight of the SPJ chapter contest database system was folded into the committee. Committee Co-chair Sarah Bauer is overseeing that system.

From Sarah: There are 23 chapters participating in the organized swap process. Swaps were sent out to chapters just before the Christmas holiday. Response from those participating has been positive thus far and chapters appreciate the help with organizing the swap process.

- The committee met during Excellence in Journalism 2014 in Nashville, mainly to review SPJ/SDX awards. We talked about possible changes and improvements in several areas.

Most notably, we decided to create a “best in show” for the Mark of Excellence Awards, starting in 2015. It will be the top winner across all media and platforms.

SPJ headquarters staff has worked on the specifics and has been publicizing the new award.

- In the spirit of diversity of people and platforms appropriate for the New America award, this year's judging panel, for the first time, included representatives from:
  - the National Association of Hispanic Journalists
  - the Native American Journalists Association
  - the Asian American Journalists Association
  - the National Association of Black Journalists

They joined members of SPJ (including two from the Diversity Committee) in the pool of judges. As of the last weekend in March, the first round of judging was wrapping up. The judging corps then will review the finalists as a group. It should be done by the time of the board meeting.
The processes for the New America award and the SDX awards were revamped because of comments during the SDX board meeting in Nashville. SDX board members said it was important that SPJ have a judging structure in which multiple people worked together on judging, rather than having just one person judging a category.

SPJ Awards Coordinator Abbi Martzall did an excellent job of carrying this out, setting up teams that often had three or four people for one category. I can attest that this worked very well for the category I judged.

- I worked extensively with Abbi Martzall on numerous questions she received about the MOE, SDX and New America awards during the entry process and while judging was under way. Committee member Sue Kopen Katcef, a past committee chairwoman, helped with some of the questions.

- At the request of SPJ President Dana Neuts and SPJ's headquarters, the Awards and Honors Committee did a review of past SDX awards given to NBC News with Brian Williams. The committee did not find anything that suggested that any past award be rescinded.

However, the work that needed to be reviewed the most – coverage of Hurricane Katrina – was no longer available to review. The VHS tape that was submitted no longer will play for us. NBC said it doesn't have that entry anymore and encouraged to look for clips on the Internet if we want to see them, which produced little for us to review. We will check back with NBC after its investigation of Williams is complete. The committee's report on its review is below.

- The Awards and Honors Committee also:
  - Worked to better coordinate the MOE judging process with the timeline for regional conferences. There was a big improvement this year.
  - Did an overall review of contest categories, criteria and wording of rules, which resulted in some edits.

Minutes of the committee's 2014 meeting in Nashville also are below.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Schotz
Chairman
Awards and Honors Committee
Minutes
SPJ Awards and Honors Committee meeting
Sept. 6, 2014
Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center
Nashville, Tenn.

Present: Andy Schotz (chair), Sarah Bauer (co-chair), Sue Kopen Katcef, Jay Evansen, Mark Lodato, Lisa Rollins, Rebecca Baker; SPJ Executive Director Joe Skeel; Abbi Martzall, SPJ’s awards coordinator; Heather Dunn, SPJ’s director of events (sitting in until Skeel arrived).
Guests: Region 3 Director Michael Koretzky, SPJ D.C. board member Gideon Grudo, New Jersey Pro chapter President Bob Schapiro, SDX board member Steve Geimann

(action/analysis items are underlined)

1. Introductions/new committee structure
Schotz: Bauer, who is new to the committee, is in charge of SPJ’s chapter contest database, which answers contest questions and connects chapters to judge each other’s contests.

2. Mark of Excellence Awards
Schotz: There were some changes this year in how the national Mark of Excellence Awards were given out at the convention. It will change some more this year, when we plan to have a single "Best Of" winner, called the MOEy.
We will work during the year to set up the judging format for the MOEy.
Kopen Katcef has suggested that outside groups, such as RTDNA, be asked to be part of that judging.

A high priority is coordinating the MOE awards process with planning for regional conferences. Last year, in Region 2, some regional award winners didn’t find out about their prizes until after the early-bird registration deadline for the conference had passed.
It will help to add a contact line to the MOE contest entry form. It should ask for contact info for both the adviser and the student.

The committee talked about whether to continue the current format for picking winners.
Does there have to be a winner and finalists? Or could there just be finalists, if no entry is considered strong enough to be a winner?
By a split vote, the committee agreed that there can be finalists in a category without having a winner.
Committee members said they’d like to know how often this happens.

The committee was asked to consider if more attention needs to be paid to community colleges in the MOE contest. A few years ago, the divisions were changed from two- and four-year schools to divisions based on enrollment.
Koretzky has suggested that SPJ create a community college contest that took in schools from across the country, not just for each region.
Skeel said community colleges are welcome to enter now. They compete with four-year schools.
Committee members said they first would like to know how many community colleges enter before considering any changes. Skeel said a box can be added to the entry form.

One entrant in the 2014 contest asked if SPJ could set up a feedback system, in which judges provide students who didn’t win some constructive criticism. The committee decided that it would not be feasible.
But Skeel said there already is a feedback process. If an entrant asks for feedback, HQ asks the judge to provide it. It doesn’t happen often.
3. Sigma Delta Chi Awards (20 minutes)
Schotz said the 2014 awards dinner in Washington, D.C., were impressive. The previous SPJ awards coordinator, Chad Hosier, made some upgrades to the dinner before he left his job.

For both the SDX awards and the MOE awards, committee members should look over the categories to see if there’s anything they think should be changed for next year. It needs to be done soon, though. Skeel said SPJ starts marketing both contests in October. The committee might do a more thorough review after this year's contests are over.

Schotz mentioned two concerns that came up during a 2013 SDX board meeting at the national convention.
One was that the list of judges needs to be publicized. Skeel said at the time that that has been the practice - it was overlooked one year, but will be continued.
The second was that there should never be just one judge for any category. Schotz said this can be fixed easily. Instead of one judging one category and another judging another category, they will be grouped together - both judges will jointly judge both categories. They can split the categories and come up with finalists they will jointly review.
For some heavily entered categories, a judge might be asked to round up a panel.
With that change, SPJ can say that each category is reviewed by a panel of judges.

Kopen Katcef recommended that potential judges be invited - especially members of the SDX board. They also should be recognized afterward. One idea is to give them certificates each year and pins based on their years of service.

Skeel suggested asking other journalism organizations if they'd like to help with SDX judging. The committee liked the idea. He said he would contact other groups.

4. Other SPJ contests
New America awards: Skeel said entries were up this year. The Awards Committee chairman is involved in the judging, along with the Diversity Committee.
High school essay contest: Skeel said it's an SDX program, promoted by SPJ. This year, SDX is working with a high school journalism organization that will run the contest.

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Notes/edits/observations from our contest rules and categories (incorporated into meeting minutes):

SDX:
— Supporting materials should be limited to 10 pages [PDF or Word document] per entry. Combine PDFs into one file, if possible.
(Do people need to submit that much?)

Also, copies of any written challenges to the report's accuracy sent to the entrant or the news organization by or on behalf of those mentioned — including but not limited to letters, e-mails or legal papers must be included with the entry.
(There's a missing dash - between "papers" and "must")

— Materials will be judged by distinguished, veteran journalists. All decisions are final except that the Board of Directors of SPJ may decide not to make an award in a particular category if doing so would
compromise the award program.
(This is where we would mention the panel. It could be: "Materials will be judged by a panel of distinguished, veteran journalists."
Is it actually the SPJ board that could intervene, not the SDX board?)

— The authority for circulation is "Editor and Publisher Yearbook," for radio market size, "Arbitron Radio" and for television market size, "Broadcasting and Cable Marketplace."
(The punctuation makes it a little confusing. How about: — Authorities are "Editor and Publisher Yearbook" for circulation, "Arbitron Radio" for radio market size and "Broadcasting and Cable Marketplace" for television market size.)

Print Entries (Newspaper and Magazine Categories)
— Supporting material should be limited to 10 pages.
(Same question that I raised above.)

— Submitting the actual digital photo/cartoon/graphic for clearer viewing optional.
(It's missing the verb "is." Better yet, recast - "It's optional to submit the actual digital/cartoon/graphic for clearer viewing." )

Magazine Investigative Reporting
This award is given to a magazine reporter or reporting team for investigative reporting. Entry may be a single article or a series of no more than five articles. Sidebars may be included.
(We should explain whether sidebars count toward the limit of five. I think they do, or else you get peppered with a bunch of them.)

Public Service in Newsletter Journalism
This award recognizes a newsletter that renders outstanding public service through extensive coverage of an issue facing the community it serves. Entry may be a single article or a series of no more than five articles. Editorials and commentaries may be added. (Entries are limited to independent newsletters that have been issued regularly for more than one year and are supported by advertising, paid subscriptions or non-profit institutions.)
(Same as above. We should state that editorials and commentaries may be added and count toward the maximum of five pieces.)

Research
This award recognizes an investigative study about some aspect of journalism. The entry must be based on original research; either published or unpublished, and must have been completed during the 2013 calendar year.
(It should be a comma after "research," instead of a semicolon)

Mark of Excellence
General Rules
Entrant will not be notified of such disqualification nor will their entry fee be refunded.
(Should be: "Entrants will not be notified of such disqualification and their entry fees will not be refunded."

Fees
— When an entry by more than one person is submitted, a $9 fee will be acceptable if at least one person on the team is a member of SPJ. The member must be identified and supply their membership number. Your adviser's membership number may not be used for any entry.)
Judging/criteria

First, second and third place winner will be chosen unless the judges find that the entries do not meet the overall standard of excellence required. No ties or honorable mentions will be awarded. The winners in each region will be honored at their regional conference in the spring of 2014. The first-place winning entries from each region will go on to compete at the national level, with different panels of national judges selecting one national first-place winner in each category. These winners will be featured on spj.org.
(The wording needs to change to reflect the new structure - winner/finalists, instead of first, second, third. Also, to note that a category might have finalists, but not necessarily a winner. Only winning entries advance to national judging. The same reference to “first place” winners is at the top of the MOE page and under “About the awards”)

Best Use of Multimedia

Submit ONE URL to a multimedia element on a new organization’s website. Multimedia includes — among other things — any piece of reporting that brings together various media, including text, audio, video and other interactive elements.
(there’s a hyphen and a long dash in the sentence - they need to match)
Report on Sigma Delta Chi Awards given to NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams
March 2015

In response to a reporter's question to SPQ headquarters, the SPJ Awards and Honors Committee was asked whether SPJ should consider rescinding any past awards given to NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams. All were team awards; Williams had either a small role or none in each entry.

We know of nine Sigma Delta Chi awards that went to Williams' news programs, starting in 2005. SPJ headquarters staff reviewed most of these reports before sending links to the committee for our review.

The award-winning entries and notes about each are:

2005
BREAKING NEWS COVERAGE (NETWORK/TOP 25 MARKETS) “After Katrina: A Disaster Unfolds,” Staff of NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams, New York, N.Y.
Staff notes: This should be investigated, as it's a topic of discussion in the journalism community. Unfortunately, however, the entry is on a VHS tape that won't play. We would need to do research online to find clips.
Andy Schotz: I looked around and don't see original clips online.

2006
BREAKING NEWS COVERAGE (NETWORK/TOP 25 MARKETS) “West Virginia Mine Disaster,” Staff, NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams, New York
Staff notes: Not heavily involved. No need to investigate.
AS: I looked around and don't see original clips online.

2007
Staff notes: Should investigate if we go that route: Brian Williams reported on site at Virginia Tech for and interviewed several students and witnesses. He also made some statements about the killer's multi-media package that was sent to NBC headquarters.
AS: Without knowing which clips were in the entry, it's hard to know what to review.

2008
Staff notes: Not heavily involved. No need to investigate.
AS: I looked around and don't see original clips online.
Note: NBC credited Williams for being anchor and managing editor of this package. But the Peabody Awards did not include him as part of the winning team.

Tip of the Spear
Richard Engel’s time spent with “Viper Company,” an American unit fighting in a remote cluster of mountain outposts in Afghanistan's Korengal Valley, is yet another powerful account of young men placed in deadly circumstances.

Executive Producer
Alexandra Wallace
Senior Broadcast Producer
Bob Epstein
Senior Foreign Producer
Mary Laurence Flynn
Producers
Madeleine Haeringer, Joo Lee, Michelle Neubert
Anchor and Managing Editor
Brian Williams
Director
Brett Holey
Correspondent
Richard Engel

According to Peabody Awards:
Credits

2009
Breaking News Coverage (Network/Syndication Service/Program Service) “Miracle on the Hudson,” Staff, NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams, New York

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDCauhQ1rGQ

Staff notes: Brian was heavily involved. However, it was mostly live interviews. Joe doesn’t see a need to investigate as there was no “personal” interpretation.
AS: I agree with staff summary.

Public Service in Television Journalism (Network/Syndication Service/Program Service) “Making a Difference,” Staff, NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams, New York

• http://www.nbcnews.com/id/40153870/#56879235

Staff notes: No involvement by Brian.
AS: He introduced one clip that I watched and voiced another one, but was otherwise not involved.

2010
BREAKING NEWS COVERAGE (NETWORK/SYNDICATION SERVICE/PROGRAM SERVICE) Chilean Mine Rescue - by Natalie Morales, Kerry Sanders and Staff, NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams

• http://www.spj.org/sdxa10-video.asp?v=tv-breaking-network&w=320&h=265

Staff notes: No meaningful involvement by Brian. Intro and tosses to reporters.
AS: I agree with staff summary.

2012
BREAKING NEWS COVERAGE (NETWORK/SYNDICATION SERVICE/PROGRAM SERVICE) “Hurricane Sandy,” by Staff of NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams, NBC Nightly News

What's most important is what we don't know and what we have no reason to challenge.

In some contests, awards have been rescinded because of evidence of wrongdoing. The Connecticut Pro chapter of SPJ handled a situation like this in 2012, when a newspaper dismissed a reporter whose newspaper caught him making up sources in 25 stories. Some of that reporter's work already had won a first prize and a third prize in the Connecticut Pro chapter's annual journalism contest. The chapter hired a Syracuse University professor to investigate the legitimacy of the award-winning entries. Based on the findings, the chapter revoked the first-place award, which was based on stories with fabricated sources, and let the third place stand.

What happened in Connecticut is substantially different than the awards given to Williams’ news programs. In almost every instance involving SDX entries with Williams’ name on them, we don’t know of any indications of wrongdoing. Williams’ involvement was minimal in most entries. In some, he apparently had no involvement, other than his name being in the program's title.

The only possible exception is the 2005 SDX award for coverage of Hurricane Katrina. The problem, as Executive Director Joe Skeel points out, is that SPJ no longer can watch that report, which was submitted on a VHS that doesn’t play anymore. The work can’t be found online.

The topic of this entry is significant. Recent doubts about Williams’ work has focused on three topics — Katrina, the war in Iraq, and the war between Israel and Hezbollah.

Williams has admitted that details of a story he has told about his time in Iraq are not true. He was not in a helicopter that was grounded when it was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade. Actually, his helicopter was traveling behind the chopper hit by an RPG — possibly an hour behind. This is the story for which NBC suspended Williams for six months.

That discrepancy sparked questions about other accounts Williams has given. One is his description of Katyusha rockets passing near his helicopter while covering the war between Israel and Hezbollah. Also, his coverage of Hurricane Katrina and stories he told about his experience have prompted questions about four details he has described: whether he saw a body floating in the water in New Orleans, whether he contracted dysentary after ingesting storm water, whether his hotel was overrun by gangs and whether he watched a man commit suicide at the Superdome. It’s unclear if any or all of these accounts are true. For that reason, it would be important for us to review NBC's Hurricane Katrina SDX entry to see if it includes any of those details.

Members of the Awards and Honors Committee suggested waiting for more information before deciding whether SPJ needs to take any action on past SDX awards that were given to Williams’ program.

SPJ Ethics Committee Chairman Andrew Seaman had the same reaction.

Staff notes: Brian heavily involved. Should investigate if we go that route.

AS: Williams anchored the coverage, but didn't do any reporting of his own.

2013
Breaking News Coverage (Network/Syndication Service/Program Service)
Boston Marathon Bombings — NBC News Specials
http://www.nbcumv.com/node/879336
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTqkNO_Kbl0

No staff notes
AS: Williams anchored the coverage, but didn't do any reporting of his own.
"My suggestion is to wait for NBC to finish its investigation. If any of the affected stories are cited in
the network's report, then revoke those awards. Obviously the Katrina coverage will be the story to
watch. Unless SPJ wants to invest in its own rigorous fact checking process, I'd say any other decisions
would likely be based on ill-informed decisions."
- Andrew Seaman

"I agree with Andrew...especially since some of those awards were group efforts. And, in TV, quite
honestly, the real work is often done by anyone BUT the face in front of the camera. And I would be
loathe to take away an honor for what could be (in essence) a 'bit' player. Best to let this play out,
however long it takes."
- Sue Kopen Katcef

"Yes, agree ... Let's wait and see what they learn. I, too, am loathe of stripping a team award away
from a whole group based on one person's possible diminished contribution. But we can take it one
step at a time."
- Mark Lodato

"I concur. Not a situation in which to react hastily."
- Sarah Bauer

The Deadline Club of New York, which has held local contests that might have given awards to
Williams, is not considering rescinding awards given to his news program, according to board
member Alex Tarquinio, who also urged a cautious approach.

"Thanks for getting in touch. This issue has not been raised with the Deadline Club board, and my gut
tells me that our board would not be in favor of such a move if the matter ever came up. It is important to remember that when TV news programs receive awards, they go to the whole team
that worked on the program. At this point, there is no implication that the NBC team had some deep
problem of corruption or fabrication during the Williams years. In fact, in all that I have read on this
matter, it appears only that Brian Williams may have exaggerated instances of personal danger while
in the field. Stripping NBC of awards that it received 10 or 20 years ago because of comments that
Williams has made since then would be very poor form. I would suggest that we be prepared to answer questions, should they arise, about which NBC programs have won awards and the reasons why we have decided not to pull those awards, if that is
the leadership's decision."
- Alex Tarquinio

As Awards and Honors Committee chairman, I agree with the sentiments expressed by others.
There currently is no basis for SPJ to rescind any of these awards, but it was important for us to
review and discuss them.

We should:
1. Ask NBC to provide a copy of its Hurricane Katrina coverage that won an SDX award in 2005.
2. Ask NBC if it still stands by all of the work that won SDX awards for Williams' program in past
years. Is any of this work part of its investigation of Williams?
3. Ask NBC if it stands by the work it submitted on behalf of Williams' program for this year's SDX
awards. Contest Coordinator Abbi Martzall said the network submitted dozens of entries. There is no
need for the Awards and Honors Committee to review all of that work. This year's judges should
decide for themselves if the reports are credible based on the questions that have been raised about Williams' work.
4. Wait until NBC announces the results of its investigation into Williams before considering any further action.

Andy Schotz
Chairman
SPJ Awards and Honors Committee
MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 7, 2015
FROM: Taylor Mirfendereski & Alex Veeneman, SPJ Digital Community
SUBJ: SPJ Digital Community report
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

From Taylor (March – April activity):

As of March 13, Brandi Broxson and I officially assumed the role of SPJ Digital co-chairs following Alex Veeneman’s resignation from the position.

SPJ Digital members were notified of the leadership changes via e-mail on March 24 and also via the Net Worked blog on March 27.

The new executive board is composed of myself, Broxson, Michelle Sandlin, Beth O’Malley, Bethany Bella and Taylor Barker. We are currently learning our new roles and planning tangible benefits for members of SPJ Digital.

Our social chairs are creating new plans to regularly share original content, digital journalism tips and job postings on our social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus and LinkedIn). We continue to write several posts a week on the Net Worked blog, which gives our members a chance to read varying perspectives on digital media issues, industry news and journalism topics.

In addition to increasing our presence on social media and the Net Worked blog, the executive board intends to develop original programming for members of SPJ Digital. Conversations are on-going at this time, but we’re brainstorming everything from web conferences and Twitter chats to digital skills workshops and guest speaker sessions.

As of March 16, SPJ has 75 members, an increase from 55 members since the report in January to the Executive Committee. All 75 members are SPJ members.

I look forward to helping SPJ Digital grow during my time as co-chair. I am confident that my executive board colleagues are among SPJ’s best and are more than qualified to lead the digital community to success.

From Alex (September – March activity):

I am delighted to present the progress of the SPJ Digital community as we look ahead to the Excellence in Journalism conference in Florida this September. I was elected to serve permanently as chairman of the Digital community in the recent elections, and the term of the executive began Feb. 1.

The posts of Net Worked blog Managing Editor and Editor, Programming did not
have any candidates standing for those roles. Shortly after the election, I appointed Taylor Mirferendeski as Editor, Programming, and I added the role of Net Worked blog Managing Editor to my duties.

Our presence on social media platforms is strong and allows us to expand education on digital journalism, through our efforts on Facebook (led by Michelle Sandlin), Twitter (led by Beth O’Malley), Google Plus, and most recently, LinkedIn (both led by Brandi Broxson). I am also proud of what we have done on Net Worked, where a goal has become to ensure there are differentiating voices available to SPJ members and to members of the public who read it.

To that end, in order to ensure that is possible, the role of Managing Editor has changed. The role of Managing Editor will no longer be an elected position, and the duties of Blogger at Large will be added to the responsibilities of the Chair, where he or she will be required to submit one blog post per month to Net Worked. The Chair is welcome to write more posts as he/she fits.

Additionally, Bethany Bella, a student at Ohio University, has been writing as a columnist since February. Guest posts from contributors have also been made available, and further measures are being considered by the Chair to ensure more voices available in Net Worked. Any columnist is appointed, and he/she can serve in that role as long as he/she wishes.

With our work on these platforms, membership has continued to grow. As of March 3, SPJ Digital has 72 members, an increase from 55 members since the report in January to the Executive Committee. All 72 members are SPJ members.

In addition to maintaining these platforms, we are also looking ahead. As specified in the report to the Executive Committee, I said I would appoint two student representatives to work with us to develop programming and outreach activities on social media and other appropriate aspects to the SPJ’s student chapters. Taylor Barker of Ithaca College in New York, as well as Bella, were appointed to those roles, and both have active roles in their SPJ chapters. These positions are volunteer positions and are not elected. They are welcome to serve for as long as they wish.

Conversations are also being held with regard to programming. At this time, they are ongoing.

As we look ahead on the work we can do for digital journalism, we also are looking ahead to those who will be at the helm of that strategy. On March 9, I notified the executive of my resignation as chairman of SPJ Digital. I will continue to serve as a contributing columnist for the Net Worked blog, as well as Community Coordinator for SPJ.

Following a telephone conversation with President Neuts, I wrote a resolution, which proposed a new structure for the role and recommended three people to take over the places being left vacant. I recommended a co-chair structure, one to oversee wider programming and strategy, and the other to oversee our interactive and social media platforms. I
recommended Mirferendeski and Broxson to take over as Co-Chairs, and for Bella to replace Broxson as Google+ and LinkedIn coordinator.

This structure was proposed in order to ensure efficient collaboration and a seamless transition to the new executive, and to avoid major disruption to the work of SPJ Digital. The resolution was approved unanimously on March 13, taking effect immediately.

Collaboration is imperative to the success of SPJ Digital, and I have been proud to have established and served as founding chair. With collaboration at the helm, I am confident that the digital community can thrive and be an essential resource for the SPJ going into EIJ. I am grateful to President Neuts and to her colleagues on the Board for their continued support of this work and of my chairmanship, and I hope SPJ Digital can continue to be of service under the new executive.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 30, 2015
FROM: April Bethea, Diversity Committee Chairwoman
SUBJ: Diversity Committee Report
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

COMMITTEE MEMBERS
April Bethea, chair; Georgiana Vines, vice chair; Athima Chansanchai, Tracey Everbach, Sandra Gonzalez, Sally Lehrman, Walter Middlebrook, Robert Moran, Jocelyn Pruna and Rebecca Tallent.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES/WORKS IN PROGRESS SINCE JANUARY

● MANAGEMENT TRAINING: After receiving support from the SPJ executive committee, we formally submitted our application for the 'Reginald Stuart Fellowship Program' to SDX. Unfortunately, we learned that AAJA is not offering their executive leadership program this year. We've had initial positive feedback from Poynter about having our committee nominate a candidate for Poynter's annual Leadership Academy in October, but are still awaiting final confirmation for that.

● COMMUNICATIONS: Since January, three committee members have contributed posts to our 'Who's News' blog, including a tribute to Dori Maynard. Also, our committee has been approached at least twice to comment on diversity issues in the news. Finally, vice chair Georgiana Vines will attend the UNITY Diversity Caucus in DC on April 11.

● DIVERSITY FELLOWS: We have not yet started our survey of past diversity fellows to find out their current involvement with SPJ and what, if anything, could make them be more active with the organization. This is a priority for the next couple months so we can have results in well before the EIJ. Also, we're still hoping to have a gathering of past fellows during the convention.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 5, 2015
FROM: Andrew Seaman, Ethics Committee Chairman
SUBJ: Ethics Committee report
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

Committee Members: Lauren Bartlett, Elizabeth Donald, Mike Farrell, Carol Feldman, Paul Fletcher, Irwin Gratz, Hagit Limor, Chris Roberts, David Cohn, Lynn Walsh

1.) Activity Since Excellence in Journalism 2014
   • Education – Members of the committee – along with the Society’s staff – presented and sent information on the Code and its recent revisions to people around the country. Recent sessions include discussions at the College Media Association conference in New York City and the Region 2 conference at the University of Maryland.
   • Rebranding – Headquarters continues to send bookmarks and posters of the Code to people around the country. Copies can be requested through Indianapolis or be printed offline.

2.) Major Works In Progress
   • Translations – The Ethics Committee is partnering with the International Committee to translate the Society’s Code into several languages. Several translations are complete and are currently undergoing proofreads.
   • Supporting Documents – The committee’s members were assigned two or three principles from the Code. They are tasked with creating starting points for people looking for additional resources. The supporting documents should debut on SPJ.org before May.
   • Ethics Week – Planning for Ethics Week, which occurs at the end of April, will continue. The theme of the week is minimize harm. It will feature several blog posts, Twitter discussions and the introduction of the Code’s supporting documents.
   • Additional Outreach – The committee will continue its outreach and services through the Ethics Hotline and through presentations. In addition to Excellence in Journalism 2015, the committee will be represented at the College Media Association’s annual conference in New York City.
In January, a new executive committee for SPJ’s Freelance Community was elected by the membership. It’s the first time that the Community has held elections, having just transitioned from the committee to community structure. Billy O’Keefe and Dana Neuts were instrumental in establishing the Community, and they provide ongoing support, as does Alex Veeneman.

Community Leadership – The leadership structure currently has changed with the new community structure. We have in place a chair, Anna Pratt; a vice chair, Michelle Donahue; an events coordinator, Amy Ritchart; a resources coordinator, Hazel Becker; and two at-large members, Michael Fitzgerald (former chair) and Michelle Sandlin. After the elections, a couple of positions went unfilled, including secretary/outreach coordinator and membership coordinator. The executive committee has appointed Julie Walmsley into the position of secretary/outreach coordinator. It’s currently reaching out to people to fill the membership coordinator role. The executive committee, then, is comprised of a mix of veterans of the old committee and members who are new to the body.

Committee/community activities – Following the elections, the Freelance Community’s executive committee began planning programs for the coming months. In March, the Community hosted a Google Hangout. We ran into some technical issues, but the Hangout was well attended, and it engaged new members. It was a fruitful meeting. Participants got the chance to introduce themselves and to “meet” one another. Julie Walmsley, who attended the Hangout, volunteered to help with our secretarial needs. We also tapped members for ideas about what they would like to see in future programs. Participants voiced a desire to learn more about how to break into freelancing, making ends meet and carving out a niche for oneself. A number of people voiced the desire to meet socially, and we will be holding virtual meet-ups to facilitate that. Some people who were unable to attend the Hangout also got in touch with the executive committee, and contributed programming ideas. Their feedback is helpful as the executive committee continues to flesh out a calendar of regular Hangouts, online chats and webinars.

Over the past several months, the Community has grown; 105 SPJ members currently belong to the group (we do not have a tracking mechanism for non-members joining). As has been noted previously, we hope that special interest groups will emerge through the Community. That could be around international, multimedia and other non-print, editor and copy editor groups. However, this is
tough to gauge, as some people may congregate outside of the confines of the Community.

Also, some portions of the revised guide to freelancing titled, “On Your Own: A Guide to Freelance Journalism,” have been published on the Community website — we are releasing these incrementally — and additional updates are in progress. (Sections available online include “Freelance Journalism 101,” “Business Matters,” “Making a Living,” “Finding Work,” “Marketing Yourself” and “Tools of the Trade.”)

At least two of our executive committee members have helped to ensure that their regional conferences speak to freelancer needs.

As was noted in the January report, the Freelance portion of the SPJ’s website has been completely revamped, to reflect the needs of a community. We link prominently to a community discussion board, the Independent Journalist Blog, a Jobs Board, the Freelance Directory and a Chat tool. We also feature on our home page SPJ resources for freelancers, including the Online Guide to Freelance Journalism, SPJ Video-on-Demand for freelancers, and the SPJ Reading Room. The SPJ Freelance Twitter feed is on the home page, along with recent comments and posts from our Community Boards, which has seen members post 60 discussion topics.

Over the past several months, the Community has served as a resource to SPJ members and non-members seeking information about freelancing. These questions have arisen through various channels. As usual, we continue to use social media and to write for the Freelance Toolbox column of Quill. (And, with a new secretary/outreach coordinator now in place, we want to resume weekly deadlines for the Community’s blog, the Independent Journalist.)

What’s next? – We are fleshing out new offerings and strategies for bringing more people into the fold. Another Google Hangout, plus an online chat and webinar are in the works. (We are hashing out a schedule for regular events.) We are promoting the Community and taking advantage of social media and other tools to keep people up-to-date on our activities. At last year’s Excellence in Journalism convention, we discussed moving forward with gaining a formal board seat, as a Community, and we are looking into what’s needed to make that happen. Also, at the upcoming Excellence in Journalism convention, we will hold another round of elections, consistent with the cycle initiated by the Freelance Committee. In terms of support, the Community needs to continue to work with SPJ staff and other leaders on outreach and communications. That includes looking to them for assistance as we develop concrete goals for growing membership, keeping in touch with freelancers, enhancing offerings and fielding technical questions.

Summary – As the Freelance Community becomes increasingly visible we want to ensure that we are doing our best to be responsive and inclusive to freelancers, whose needs vary widely. It means offering valuable ways for freelancers to connect with one another and providing useful programs and other resources.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 29, 2015
FROM: David Cuillier, FOI Committee Chairman
SUBJ: FOI Committee Report
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

Here are some of the FOI Committee activities since January:

**Combined War Chests.** We announced on March 23 the memorandum of understanding between SPJ and the National Freedom of Information Coalition in teaming on access litigation. When both organizations agree to collaborate, NFOIC can cover court courses from its Knight litigation fund and SPJ can help with attorney fees through the Legal Defense Fund. We see the possibility of combining efforts with other organizations, as well, such as the Student Press Law Center and the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press. More information at http://www.spj.org/news.asp?REF=1319.

**Black Hole Award.** Kudos to FOI Committee member Mike Farrell for coordinating the Black Hole Award announced during Sunshine Week in March. The winner was the U.S. Forest Service for impeding information flow on water quality, as well as other issues. We briefly discussed giving one to Hillary Clinton for emailgate, but figured the separate SPJ statement on that would be sufficient. Since the Forest Service “award,” we did receive some comments from people wanting to write about the secretive agency, and one employee contacted us to find a reporter to provide more dirt (I forwarded the email to some national AP writers). See http://www.spj.org/news.asp?ref=1317.

**FOI Survey.** FOI Committee member Carolyn Carlson finished her survey of science writers to find that they too are encountering a lot of problems with excessive PIO tactics at the federal level. The survey was conducted in conjunction with the Center for Science and Democracy at the Union of Concerned Scientists. Summary results were released March 17, and the full report was scheduled to be released April 9 at a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., with Carlson and FOI Committee member Kathryn Foxhall, who has been pressing the issue for years. See http://www.spj.org/news.asp?ref=1316.

**Advocacy Fund.** I am coordinating with the SDX Foundation on fundraising for the fund (SDX Development Committee meeting planned in early April). Also working with staff on the webpage and promotional materials. In the board packet will be a request to apply $30,000 toward the fund available from year-end gains, bringing the endowed fund to $105,000, which will yield more than $5,000 a year to begin advocacy activities in 2015-16. These activities, which should build support for giving, could include creation of a J-Team with IRE and SPLC,
funding trips to Washington, D.C., for educating members of Congress, or other initiatives of interest to SPJ leadership.

**Speaking Out.** The committee continues, also, to help with advocacy letters, statements, op-ed pieces, and amicus brief sign-ons, providing information and suggestions for Jennifer and Dana. The organization has provided more statements than usual, much to the credit of Jennifer, Dana and Paul for jumping on issues as they emerge. Also, some FOI Committee members have been vocal in their own areas on FOI issues. Some advocacy efforts have included:

- Washington Post story March 30 about PIO controls, quoting FOI Committee member Kathryn Foxhall and mentioning the SPJ PIO study and letter to Obama. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/access-denied-reporters-say-federal-officials-data-increasingly-off-limits/2015/03/30/935b4962-c04b-11e4-ad5c-3b8ce89f1b89_story.html?hpid=z4](http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/access-denied-reporters-say-federal-officials-data-increasingly-off-limits/2015/03/30/935b4962-c04b-11e4-ad5c-3b8ce89f1b89_story.html?hpid=z4)
- Quill Toolbox column by me on keeping records safe and one by Lynn Walsh on FOI trackers, coming up in next issue.
- IRE Journal column on good FOIA provisions in other nations that we could borrow.
- Interviews for stories about FOI issues with the Concord Monitor, Raleigh News & Observer, Columbia Journalism Review, and other publications.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 7, 2015  
FROM: Claudia Amezcua, Generation J Community Chairwoman  
SUBJ: Generation J report  
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

As of 3/30 we have 18 members sign up for the community. I am confident that by my next report, I shall have all the members I need to move forward in completing our paperwork to become a community.

I will be reaching out to the those interested in the community to begin generating ideas and begin working to become an asset to SPJ.

The committee members will continue contributing to The Quill Tool Box and blogging.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 19, 2015  
FROM: Carlos Restrepo, SPJ International Community Chairman  
SUBJ: International Community Report  
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

There are currently 30 members in the SPJ International Community. A total of 21 out of the 30 members of the International Community are SPJ members. Nine are non-members.

ACTIVITES SINCE JANUARY

1. We have set up social media accounts that are active and growing:
   www.facebook.com/SPJInternational
   www.twitter.com/SPJ_IJC
2. Members have translated the SPJ Code of Ethics into multiple languages, including French, German, Chinese and Spanish.
3. Blog post is up and running again, with posts about the Charlie Hebdo massacre, as well as the strife of journalists in Paraguay
4. A list of international journalism organizations has been compiled and is awaiting inclusion on the website.
5. Members continue to work on assignments pertaining to the development of the International Journalism Community
DATE: March 30, 2015
FROM: Butler Cain, Journalism Education Committee Chairman
SUBJ: Journalism Education Committee Report
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

Committee Meeting
The Journalism Education Committee met via teleconference on Monday, February 9, 2015. We continued to discuss the progress of our Still Captive? research project. The book has since published, and SPJ released a press release about it on March 26. Committee members are now busy promoting the book through their professional networks and social media.

Mentor Database
Other SPJ members have submitted their names for the Mentor Database. The committee also discussed ideas to work with JEA to train mentors in a collaboration that would benefit members of both organizations. The J-Ed committee supports this idea and will follow up with JEA once the database launches publicly.

Publications
Committee members continue to produce regular Toolbox articles for Quill. I have encouraged committee members to become comfortable writing for our blog. That hasn’t happened yet, but I’m still working on that aspect of committee service.

Next Meeting
Several members of the committee expressed interest in holding a mini meeting whenever the SPLC holds its anniversary celebration and launch party for Still Captive? We are awaiting a definitive date on when that will be, but it should be sometime this spring. Once that date is confirmed, we will schedule another teleconference to follow up on that meeting in order to include everyone.

*********************************************************
Committee Report
Butler Cain, chair
1/9/15

Committee Meetings
The Journalism Education Committee has had two committee meetings since September 2014. The first was held at EIJ 2014 in Nashville. This meeting consisted primarily of (now) former chair Becky Tallent updating everyone on the progress of the committee’s forthcoming book, Still Captive? History, Law and
the Teaching of High School Journalism, and handing over the leadership reins to me.

The second meeting was held via teleconference on Wednesday, December 3, 2014. Becky provided the committee with an update on the Still Captive? research project. The committee also confirmed a list of authors for the J-Ed Committee’s Toolbox section for all of Quill magazine’s issues for 2015. The committee also approved the idea of creating a database of SPJ members who are willing to be mentors for students and teachers in elementary, middle, and high school journalism programs. The next committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for February.

**Mentor Database**
Announcements have appeared in the SPJ Leads email and on SPJ’s website for this initiative, and several members have already volunteered to participate. The committee will continue collecting information – and promoting the database – for several more weeks before launching its first version.

**Still Captive?**
Still Captive? is in the final stages of editing and is expected to be released in January 2015 to much fanfare. The publisher has indicated that there is already a significant amount of interest in it. The Student Press Law Center also has plans to give the research a “launch party,” which is tentatively scheduled for March 2015 in Washington, D.C.

**J-Ed Blog**
Classrooms and Newsrooms, the J-Ed blog, has received an updated look and has several new posts on it (all by me). My plan is to submit at least a couple of times a month while also encouraging other committee members to participate.

**Membership**
There are currently 14 committee members, and I received a couple of interest emails during the holiday break from people asking about ways in which they can participate. Current members include:

- Butler Cain, West Texas A&M University (chair)
- June Nicholson, Virginia Commonwealth University (co-chair)
- Tracy Ann Burton, Central Michigan University
- Meredith Cummings, University of Alabama
- Kym Fox, Texas State University
- Suzanne Lysak, Syracuse University
- Adam Maksli, Indiana University Southeast
- Jimmy McCollum, Lipscomb University
- Ryan Parkhurst, James Madison University
- Pat Sanders, University of North Alabama
- Jeff South, Virginia Commonwealth University
- Leticia Steffen, Colorado State University-Pueblo
- Becky Tallent, University of Idaho (immediate past chair)
- Peggy Watt, Western Washington University
MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 1, 2015
FROM: Hagit Limor, LDF Committee Chairwoman
SUBJ: LDF Committee Report
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

The Legal Defense Fund Committee has considered six actions since the new term began in September. None have involved any expenditure in funding. Perhaps the last item on the list below may entice greater participation in the future. Certainly, I would encourage conversation among the board as to how to make the fund more known in the journalism community.

In order of consideration, here are the items the committee deliberated:

10/15/14 National Council of Teachers Quality Inc vs Curators of the University of Missouri
The LDF Committee joined the SPLC in an amicus request before the Missouri Supreme Court to appeal a decision by a lower Missouri Court of Appeals that denied an education watchdog group’s public records request to the University of Missouri seeking access to class syllabi. The Court of Appeals held that the records request was properly denied on copyright grounds, saying the Copyright Act prohibits the University from making copies of those or any other public records protected by copyright. The court ruled the act of duplication is itself an infringement. The amicus argues that this is a dangerous precedent for FOI laws. If allowed to stand, any email, letter or memo could be equally subject to an assertion of copyright protection. This could severely hamper the work of data journalists seeking to analyze large databases.

1/16/15 North Wind newspaper at Northern Michigan University
The LDF committee stood at the ready to help a collegiate newspaper (referred by Frank LoMonte of the Student Press Law Center) held hostage by a FOIA request, asked to front $150 of a bill for what should have been free public documents from their university. The editor and adviser (Cheryl Reed) at the North Wind newspaper at Northern Michigan University had requested emails of six university administrators. NMU administrators sent a bill of $613 to the campus newspaper even though the request is covered under the state Freedom of Information Act. The students pared their request but still faced a $300 tab. The university's student media board denied funding because "they're not convinced the reporters are pursuing a meritorious story." Coincidentally, one of the members of that board who voted down the expense is also one of the administrators whose emails were FOIA'd. SPJ was ready to write the check when the school's president backed down, waived all fees and released the requested documents at no charge.
2/3 U.S. v Blankenship
The committee voted to join the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the press in an amicus brief supporting the Associated Press, NPR, the Wall Street Journal, the Charleston Gazette and Friends of West Virginia Public Broadcasting. The news organizations intervened to challenge the sealing of information in a West Virginia criminal trial after a deadly mine disaster in 2010. Ex-Massey Energy CEO Don Blankenship was charged with conspiracy to violate federal mine safety and health standards at the Upper Big Branch mine. The district court sealed records and issued a gag order. The news organizations appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. A federal judge is delaying Blankenship’s trial until April 20.

2/19 Krakauer v. State of Montana
The committee joined the Student Press Law Center in an amicus brief over an open records case before the Montana Supreme Court. The case involves access to campus disciplinary appeal records in a sex assault case involving a University of Montana football player in 2012. Author Jon Krakauer, working on a book about sexual assaults at universities, was looking for records from the hearing that found the player "responsible." The university chancellor overturned the disciplinary decision. Krakauer won at trial a limited application of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act but the U.S. Department of Education filed a brief supporting the university that student disciplinary files are always protected from disclosure by FERPA. In this amicus, SPJ, SPLC and the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press argue for the lower court’s limited interpretation of FERPA.

March 18 NFOIC Partnership
The committee commented per President Dana Neuts' request on a proposed partnership between SPJ and the National Freedom of Information Coalition in litigating for access to public records. As authored by former president Dave Cuillier, "Both organizations will seek out worthy cases and, when agreed upon, team up to provide court fees through NFOIC and attorney fees through SPJ, as well as joint publicity to highlight the need for government transparency and set strong case law nationally… Together, NFOIC and SPJ can be more effective by combining efforts to support important access cases through cooperation and coordination." This item is on the agenda for the April Board Meeting.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 6, 2015
FROM: Brett Hall and Jordan Gass-Pooré, SPJ Student Community
SUBJ: Student Community Report
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

Outreach:
- Involve SPJ Students Community student representatives: send them e-blast to forward to students and create Facebook group for community and invite them. (Jordan: created Facebook group, will add photos, etc., added Alex.)
- Jordan was a guest speaker at a University of North Texas SPJ chapter meeting.

Projects:
- Student video/written testimonials about their internship experiences: outreach via social media and email.
- Internship project continued: contact university/college internship coordinators to discuss their internship-for-credit programs (are internships required to graduate? how are the programs set up, i.e., how are credit hours determined, who determines the grade, who chooses what outlets? is the internship-for-credit programs the same for all sequences? etc.) ***compile this information, which could be useful for those high schoolers considering what university/college to attend, and eventually post on SPJ website.***
- Internship project continued: we have compiled a list of various U.S. media outlets to determine which ones offer paid/unpaid/for credit/no internships with a brief job description.
- Internship project continued: *** Solicit input from Sue: “engaging and/or partnering with other organizations like RTDNA and having discussions with NAB (the National Association of Broadcasters).” Contact representatives with ACEJMC (Sue suggested starting the discussion with Steve Geimann “for his guidance, since Steve reps SPJ on the ACEJMC board.”) ***
- Internship project continued: *** Solicit input from Andy about an apprentice model for journalism internships. ***
- Internship project continued: *** Solicit input from Dana about legal advice or guidance (Joe Skeel and Laurie Babinski) on unpaid internships. This information could possibly be used for an internship fact sheet that can be posted online and distributed. ***
  http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm
- Internship project continued: *** Solicit help from Butler Cain and J Education Committee. ***
- Professional journalist video/written testimonials about their internship experiences
- SPJ The Campus Copy blog:
  - Jordan: high school journalism advisers and journalists to write guest blog posts.
  - Profiles of members of Students Community. Request that they take photos of a day-in-the-life and send top 10 to student representatives to be published on the blog.
  - Post student video/written testimonials about their internship experiences. *** Solicit help from members of the SPJ Students Community. ***
  - Post professional journalists video/written testimonials about their internship experiences. *** Solicit help from SPJ members. Include information on how and where to send these testimonials in SPJ Leads. ***
- Dual Chapter Skype Programs: *** Solicit help from SPJ members. Include information on how people can register and be paired for event in SPJ Leads. ***

**High School Outreach:**
- Blog program: college journalists collaborate with high school journalists on creating a blog.
- Newspaper exchange: college and high school journalists swap newspapers.
- Have high school journalists attend SPJ college chapter meetings.
- High school journalists write a guest column for college newspaper and/or help with college radio station as a guest (______).
- “Why do you teach journalism?” Pose question to journalism advisers/teachers and ask for them to write/send video with their response that may be posted on the SPJ website and/or blog(s).
- Start a news service for high school media outlets through the SPJ Students Community.