The Society of Professional Journalists

Board of Directors Meeting

Sept. 5, 2019
8 a.m. to Noon CDT

San Antonio Grand Hyatt, Travis A/B
San Antonio

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.
AGENDA
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS BOARD MEETING
SAN ANTONIO
DATE: SEPT. 5, 2019
TIME: 8 a.m. – Noon Central Time

1. Call to Order – Tarquinio

2. Roll Call – Hall
   a. Tarquinio
   b. Gallagher
   c. Hall
   d. Kopen Katcef
   e. Bartlett
   f. Davila-Richards
   g. Fox
   h. Hernandez
   i. Kissel
   j. Koretzky
   k. Kroll
   l. Meyers
   m. Radske
   n. Reilley
   o. Savino
   p. Schotz
   q. South
   r. Walker

Enter Executive Session


Exit Executive Session by 9 a.m.

4. Introduction of Staff Members – Tarquinio

5. Public Comment Period

6. SPJ President’s Report – Tarquinio

7. Foundation President’s Report – Irwin Gratz

8. Journalist on Call’s Report – Rod Hicks

9. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Tarquinio
   a. Jan. 27, 2019 – Executive Committee Meeting
   b. June 1, 2019 – Full Board Meeting
   c. July 13, 2019 – Executive Committee Meeting


11. National Committee/Task Force Reports – Tarquinio


15. Adjournment

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Colleagues,

At this crucial moment for our Society, we should not rush headlong into the future without pausing to reflect on the accomplishments made during this pivotal year. Despite the challenges of operating without a permanent executive director, our tireless volunteers and staff have achieved great things in this, the 110th anniversary of the Society of Professional Journalists.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

The national committees have been going full steam ahead. Here are some top-level highlights from the reports to follow in this packet:

- **Membership:** Colin DeVries, the committee chair who took charge midterm, created a successful summer membership drive that resulted in 220 new members (versus 148 in the same period a year ago) and 607 renewing members (versus 296.)
- **Diversity:** Rebecca Aguilar and Ivette Davila-Richards, the new committee chair and vice chair, have revamped the Dori Maynard Diversity Leadership Program from top to bottom. The committee is hosting six extraordinary Fellows out of a pool of 21 applicants.
- **Ethics:** The committee chaired by Lynn Walsh has created a 45-minute presentation that can be shared with non-journalists. Once again, SPJ’s Ethics Week was promoted on the Reuters billboard in Times Square.
- **Generation-J Committee:** Tess Fox revived the committee, which has decided to focus on two projects going forward: a student chapter guidebook and a mentorship program.
- **Education Committee:** Under the leadership of co-chairs Rebecca Tallent and Leticia Steffen, the successful #Press4Education program continues to grow, matching 186 volunteers with teachers to date.
- **Legal Defense Fund Committee:** The committee, chaired by Hagit Limor, acted on more than 55 cases and resurrected the silent and live auctions.
- **Freelance Community:** The community, chaired by Hilary Niles, continues to grow, primarily through Facebook and Twitter, and is seeking greater awareness within SPJ.
- **International Community:** The community, which is led by co-chairs Elle Toussi and Dan Kubiske, has forged new partnerships with One Free Press Coalition and the International Senior Lawyers Project.
Meanwhile, the national board has begun some painstaking and important transitional work, some of which will continue into the new term.

- **Policy Review Task Force:** The task force, chaired by Matt Hall, conducted a thorough inventory and review of national board policies.
- **Strategic Planning Task Force:** The task force, chaired by Victor Hernandez, initiated work on the first strategic plan since 2006, an objective that our executive search consultants advise us would be best to attain sooner rather than later, with the involvement of our new full-time executive director.
- **Executive Director Search Committee:** The SPJ board unanimously decided to go forward with a professional search firm, rather than to lead the search process itself, as SPJ has done in the past. Search Committee Chair Hagit Limor is the point of contact for the consultants. The board policy review and the drafting of a strategic plan are integral to this search, as many qualified applicants would view the lack of strong policies or planning as a negative.
- **The 110th Anniversary Task Force:** On a lighter note, this task force chaired by Yvette Walker has generated some fun ideas, such as a Spotify list of songs about news.

Furthermore, despite the high turnover at HQ in the first half of the 2018-2019 term, I was determined not to drop the ball on the key goals I had set when I ran for this office two years ago—improving diversity at all levels of the Society, while increasing our press freedom advocacy and forging new partnerships. Some highlights of these goals:

- We obtained a generous $25,000 grant from the Craig Newmark Philanthropies to hold a journalism nonprofit summit ahead of World Press Freedom Day. Held over two days in New York, 82 people from more than 30 press freedom groups attended the summit and helped craft a joint resolution.
- On World Press Freedom Day, May 3, I spoke on a panel at the United Nations before an audience of 400 to discuss the SPJ journalism nonprofit summit the week before, which had focused on threats to journalism and democracy in a time of disinformation.
- Bryan Carmody, the San Francisco journalist whose home was raided by the police in search of clues to a confidential police source, spoke for the first time publicly about the case at an event that I moderated, which was hosted by the SPJ NorCal Pro chapter at the Medill School in downtown San Francisco. This was an example of a successful collaboration between SPJ local and national leaders and our partners.
- I served as a drafting committee member in the Journalism Trust Initiative, a project of the Reporters Without Borders/Reporters sans frontières (RSF).
- Along the way, key SPJ leaders—including Rod Hicks, Lynn Walsh, Paul Fletcher, Danielle McLean and myself—have issued a steady stream of advocacy statements and media interviews. See Addendum A.
INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

On May 13, two weeks after the departure of the SPJ executive director, the executive committee of the SPJ national board and the top two officers of the SPJ Foundation held a conference call to determine what to do while SPJ searched for a permanent executive director. The President-Elect had done research on hiring an interim executive director. However, the leaders from both boards on the May 13 call determined that SPJ could not afford to take this step, so they asked for a report focused on having the SPJ President continue as acting interim while hiring business consultants to do two things: search for a full-time executive director and draft an on-site managerial assessment of headquarters to inform this search and help guide the next full-time executive director.

I prepared this report based on advice from SPJ Legal Counsel Mark Bailen and numerous interviews with executive consultants. The report was unanimously approved in a meeting of the full SPJ national board on June 1. SPJ Foundation President Irwin Gratz also approved this report, which detailed a financial analysis by SPJ Controller Jake Koenig that showed the cost of hiring a consultant for both the executive search and the on-site assessment would largely be offset by not paying for an interim executive director. A public version of the report, which excluded just the private bids and financial analysis, was shared with SPJ members via the Freedom of the Prez blog on June 5. See Addendum B, or this link: https://blogs.spjnetwork.org/president/2019/06/05/executive-director-transition-plan/

The staff has performed heroically over the past four months, despite the lack of a permanent executive director on site. After a year of intense turnover in Indianapolis through April, we’ve had no staff departures other than the communications employee who left to get married and move out of state, which had been expected. Meanwhile, we have added three new employees since April, Zoë Berg and Ashlynn Neumeyer, two communications interns, and Kathy Parker, a full-time accountant.

The staff, both old and new hires, have bonded together as a team and their positive attitude has ensured the smooth execution of the SDX banquet in June and the Excellence in Journalism Conference. We are expecting about 1800 attendees in San Antonio, about the same as the last time we had all three conference organizers in 2017. Additionally, we’ve brought back some of the cherished traditions that we had to forego last year because of the staff turnover at that time, such as the Legal Defense Fund auction and the Pro Chapter Leaders meeting. The staff has also negotiated new agreements with some of our existing partners, without losing a single partner despite being in a transitional period.
Here are some top-level highlights of the staff’s recent accomplishments:

- EIJ is expected to have 1800 attendees, more than 70 sessions, and 92 exhibit booths. Key events that have been arranged by the staff include breakout sessions, super sessions, the J-Expo, opening night reception, President’s Installation Banquet and reception, Scripps reception, Student Union, donor reception, LDF auction, three board meetings, 10 committee meetings, 9 Regional meetings, Freelance Corner meetings, EIJ News, 110th committee table and SPJ tee-shirt sales.
- The Knight Foundation approved a $45,000 ($15,000 per year over three years) grant to support the Excellence in Journalism Conference.
- More than 70 awards were presented, and we had 170 guests at the SDX banquet on June 21 at the National Press Club, which ran like clockwork, despite the fact that many of the new staff were working the banquet for the first time.
- The Communications team managed by Jennifer Royer issued around 20 advocacy statements on press freedom issues. (See an advocacy list as an addendum to this report.)
- The Quill magazine redesign is going well under new editor Lou Harry. Quillmag.com had its highest monthly views ever in June with 6695 hits.
- Rod Hicks wrapped up the SPJ Foundation-funded Casper Project with a well-attended public forum in Casper Wyoming, where Irwin and I both gave brief introductory remarks.
- Caroline Escobar managed a summer membership drive amid EIJ preparations that resulted in a 47% increase in new members and twice as many renewing members compared to the same period last year.
- At the April mid-year board meeting, the SPJ board decided to move the 2021 conference to New Orleans. Basharat Saleem negotiated a new contract with the Hyatt Regency New Orleans. The room rate will be $149 (compared with a $198 four-year average) with a total of 1193 hotel rooms.
- In addition to the usual graphics and website updates by Tony Peterson and Billy O’Keefe, both worked on special projects this year: to include the World Press Freedom Day Summit; the redesign of the SPJ Foundation logo and branding, due to the name change; and the 110th Anniversary celebration, which required the logo, pin, ads, thank you cards, Quill addition, conference ribbon and step and repeat banner.
- SPJ is to provide complete event support for the JAWS CAMP in late September, with Basharat and Matt Kent from the staff to be on site.
- The Google program, now managed by Lou, is on track. So far in 2019, 2562 journalists have been trained through the SPJ Google Tools training program and it is closing in on the projected total of 4000 for the year.
- Facebook agreed to provide further funding to carry their Journalism project, managed by Lynn Walsh, through to the end of 2019. Since the program was launched in March 2018, SPJ and Facebook have led more than 150 trainings in newsrooms, classrooms and at conferences in Puerto Rico, Washington, D.C. and 41 of the 50 states. To date, the program has trained more than 4,000 journalists and counting.
- Controller Jake Koenig hired a full-time accountant, which I approved during my first trip to Indianapolis as acting interim executive director, based on his identifying understaffing as the reason for slow financial reporting. Jake and Kathy, the new full-time accountant, and Toni Sculky, the part-time accountant, are now working together to bring reporting up to date.
• Despite all the hard work and many distractions, both the staff and volunteers found time to plan for and celebrate SPJ’s 110th Anniversary, which culminated in a ceremony organized by Larry Messing at DePauw University just steps from the spot where SPJ was founded.

• Last but certainly by no means least, none of this would have been possible, throughout this demanding interim period, without the stalwart Linda Hall keeping the staff on track. It is hardly surprising that they refer to her as their “den mother.”

In closing, amid the current climate of uncertainty for our profession, we, nevertheless, have ample reasons to look optimistically towards SPJ’s future. Our mission to educate the current and future generations of journalists, while defending journalism ethics and advocating for open government and press freedom, has never been more relevant and worthwhile. I’d like to end by saying it has been a privilege to pilot SPJ through this challenging transitional period. It is my fervent hope that the swift resolution of the executive director search and the realization of the strategic plan will steer this organization, which has meant so much to me in the 12 years that I have served it as a volunteer, into a brighter tomorrow.

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ADDENDUM A

Advocacy

Media Interviews by SPJ National Leaders

August 2019

- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio quoted in an article about John Ensslin’s death in Colorado Politics, Aug. 5. 
  https://www.coloradopolitics.com/denver/colorado-journalism-legend-john-c-ensslin-dies/article_4aa68b72-b7c8-11e9-a61a-0fe5ab4dcd55.html

- Past SPJ National President Paul Fletcher quoted by Inside Higher Ed regarding professor’s op-ed about Amazon, Aug. 13, 2019. 

- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio’s live interview with Bryan Carmody covered by the San Francisco Examiner, Aug. 13. 

- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio’s live interview with Bryan Carmody covered in a San Francisco Chronicle article, Aug. 14. 


- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio quoted in The Hill about the threat of deep fake videos to elections, Aug. 15, 2019. 

- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio quoted in Huffington Post about Oregon officials who sought to investigate reporters, Aug. 20, 2019. 
  https://www.huffpost.com/entry/oregon-newspaper-investigation-media-law_n_5d5bfadfe4b05f62fbd578a7?btkp

- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio quoted in local stories regarding SPJ celebrating 110 years at DePauw University on, Aug. 23. 
  https://www.bannergraphic.com/story/2629552.html

- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio spoke to the Jim Bohannon Show to talk about EIJ19 and the Fox sponsorship, Aug. 26. 
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-CDxLlpIVo

- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio quoted in article about Maria Ressa being named a Fellow of the Society, Aug. 29.
June 2019

- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio speaks with CBS News Radio about the media access concerns surrounding First Net for first responders, June 14, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRECVSQHWBw&feature=youtu.be

May 2019

- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio quoted in New York Times article about Bryan Carmody, the San Francisco journalist whose home was raided by the police in search of clues to a confidential police informant, May 25, 2019. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/25/us/san-francisco-police-chief.html#click=https://t.co/CuwLZNkEn0

April 2019

- SPJ Ethics Committee Chair Lynn Walsh in the Columbia Journalism Review about a proposed journalism registry by the Georgia state legislature, April 8. https://www.cjr.org/united_states_project/ethics-journalism-act-georgia-welch.php
- Live interview with SPJ Ethics Committee Chair Lynn Walsh on the Jim Bohannon Show for Ethics Week, April 30. https://omny.fm/shows/jim-bohannon/jim-bohannon-04-30-19#description

March 2019

- Live interview with SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio in an hour-long segment on the Jim Bohannon Show for Sunshine Week, March 14, 2019. https://omny.fm/shows/jim-bohannon/jim-bohannon-03-14-19/embed?source=twitter&amp;size=square&amp;style=cover
February 2019

- Live TV interview with SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio on Univision about the expulsion of Jorge Ramos and his TV crew from Venezuela, Feb. 1, 2019.
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mru-TBasU0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mru-TBasU0)

- SPJ Legal Counsel Mark Bailen in an interview to the Daily Signal about Clarence Thomas’ call for reconsideration of the libel ruling in the Bill Cosby case and the Covington High School student suing media outlets.

- SPJ Freedom of Information Committee Chair Danielle McLean in an interview with the Columbia Journalism Review about public records, Feb. 21, 2019.

- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio quoted in Associated Press article about Hilde Lysiak.

January 2019


- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio quoted in Committee to Protect Journalist story about female journalists’ safety, Jan. 17, 2019.

- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio quoted in Crain’s NewsPro January Magazine issue about the outlook for journalists.

November 2018

- Live TV interview with SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio on Armistice Day about the threats to war correspondents on Australian ABC-TV’s Weekend Breakfast Program, Nov. 11, 2018.
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJMQV3zEY8U&t=5s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJMQV3zEY8U&t=5s)

  [https://www.voanews.com/media/1357301/embed](https://www.voanews.com/media/1357301/embed)
October 2018  
- Live TV interview with SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio about the threats to press freedom on Australian ABC-TV’s Weekend Breakfast Program, Oct. 27, 2018.  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jv7oeJh5ZaA

September 2018  
- Live radio interview with SPJ National President-Elect J. Alex Tarquinio about the First Amendment and Open Government on Court Radio, WRNB 100.3 FM Philadelphia, Sept. 1, 2018

Public Appearances by SPJ National Leaders

August 2019  
- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio gave a press briefing for journalists visiting from Uzbekistan at the U.S. State Department’s Foreign Press Center at the United Nations, Aug. 5.  
- Lynn Walsh organized a Facebook “Train the Trainers” program from Aug. 15 to 16. SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio gave opening remarks.  
- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio and SPJ Indiana State Pro Chapter President John Russell gave remarks at the 110th SPJ Anniversary event at DePauw University.

July 2019  
- SPJ Journalist on Call Rod Hicks hosted the final session of the Casper Project, with Foundation President Irwin Gratz and SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio giving opening remarks, July 16.  
- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio represented the Society at a forum on journalist saftey at the United Nations, July 17.  
- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio gave opening remarks at a D.C. Pro chapter event about Whistleblowers, July 31.

June 2019  
- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio gave opening remarks at an SPJ Google News Institute event before the SDX Banquet, June 21.

May 2019  
- SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio delivered prepared remarks and participated on a panel with Steven Adler and Warren Hoge before an audience of 400 at the United Nations headquarters in New York on World Press Freedom Day, May 3.  
• SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio spoke to Hatice Cengiz, fiancée of the late Jamal Kashoggi, and Congressman Adam Schiff, D-California, at a House Foreign Affairs Committee meeting, May 16.
https://blogs.spjnetwork.org/president/2019/05/19/witnessing-the-testimony-of-jamal-khashoggis-fiancée/

April 2019
• SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio produced and hosted a World Press Freedom Day Summit from April 26 to 27 with a generous grant from Craig Newmark. The theme of this gathering of journalism nonprofit leaders was the threat of disinformation to journalism and democracy.
Videos: https://www.spj.org/wpfd-summit.asp

March 2019
• SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio made a lobbying trip to Capitol Hill ahead of Sunshine Week, March 10.
https://blogs.spjnetwork.org/president/2019/03/10/sunshine-week-begins-early-this-year/
• SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio delivered prepared remarks and participated in a panel at the World Journalists Conference in Seoul, South Korea, March 25.
Tweet: https://twitter.com/alextarquinio/status/1110141438942052354

November 2018
• SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio represented the Society at the Day to End Impunity event at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, Nov. 2, 2019.
https://blogs.spjnetwork.org/president/tag/truthneverdies/
• SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio represented the Society at the Paris Peace Forum, Nov. 11, 2019. Her article about it was picked up by the Associated Press.
https://apnews.com/a73b83d7355b41928989b44d5f173abc

October 2018
• SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio and RTDNA Executive Director Dan Shelley spoke to a group of 25 global journalists at the U.S. State Department’s Foreign Press Center at the United Nations, Oct. 5.
• SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio participated on a panel at an annual conference of Connecticut Broadcasters Association, Oct. 11.
• SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio gave remarks at the SPJ Google News Institute election training event in Washington, D.C., Oct. 16.
September 2018

- Remarks by newly-inducted SPJ National President J. Alex Tarquinio at the President’s Installation Banquet, Sept. 30, 2018.  
  https://blogs.spjnetwork.org/president/2018/10/19/presidents-installation-banquet-speech/

Advocacy Statements

The Legal Defense Fund Committee

Signed 55+ (some are in process) Friend of the Court briefs and advocacy letters and statements since October 2018, which can be viewed here: https://www.spj.org/ldf-a.asp#2018

Press Releases

July 2019

- SPJ optimistic about reopening of Duran case  
  https://www.spj.org/news.asp?ref=1657

May 2019

- SPJ celebrates release of Reuters reporters, remains concerned about hundreds of journalists still imprisoned  
  https://www.spj.org/news.asp?ref=1648
- SPJ president: ‘Stop playing games with White House press credentials'  
  https://www.spj.org/news.asp?ref=1649
- SPJ condemns San Francisco PD’s home raid to obtain source’s name  
  https://www.spj.org/news.asp?ref=1650
- SPJ, 59 other groups, urge court to order return of journalist’s equipment and work  
  https://www.spj.org/news.asp?ref=1651
- SPJ: Assange indictment raises serious concerns for press freedom  

March 2019

- SPJ strongly supports the Journalist Protection Act  
- SPJ outraged by discovery of secret database, excessive screening and questioning of journalists at the border  
  https://www.spj.org/news.asp?ref=1624
- SPJ: Deportation of journalists in Venezuela must stop  
  https://www.spj.org/news.asp?ref=1625
February 2019

- SPJ condemns recent attempt to silence journalist Maria Ressa
  https://www.spj.org/news.asp?ref=1623

January 2019

- SPJ is here to help (newsroom layoffs)
  https://www.spj.org/news.asp?ref=1618

December 2018

- SPJ urges Philippine government to drop charges against Rappler and Maria Ressa
  https://www.spj.org/news.asp?ref=1616

November 2018

- SPJ supports NAJA in urging reinstatement of free press ordinance
  https://www.spj.org/news.asp?ref=1615
- SPJ applauds judge’s decision to reinstate Acosta’s press pass
  https://www.spj.org/news.asp?ref=1614
- SPJ stands in solidarity with Acosta and CNN
  https://www.spj.org/news.asp?ref=1613

October 2018

- SPJ demands Khashoggi’s killers be brought to justice
  https://www.spj.org/news.asp?ref=1612
- SPJ, coalition of 44 other groups, call for full investigation into Saudi Arabian journalist’s whereabouts
  https://www.spj.org/news.asp?ref=1611

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I am pleased to report that the SPJ national board of directors unanimously approved a plan for the executive director transition that I presented in our June 1 board meeting. The plan includes hiring an outside search firm to work with the Executive Director Search Committee and a consultant to work on an organizational assessment, which among other things, will aid the new executive director.

Naturally, hiring an outside consultant will result in a higher cost than doing the search entirely on our own. However, a financial analysis shows that much of this cost will be offset by not having to pay salary and benefits to a full-time executive director for several months.

These consultancy fees will need to be shared by the Society and the Foundation. The next step is for SPJ Foundation President Irwin Gratz to present the plan to his board. I reached him by phone while he was on vacation, and he approved of the memo below. He plans to present the plan to his board upon his return.

The original memo, which was discussed in executive session, has been edited to remove confidential details about contract proposals, salary and other human resources information. The names of specific consultants who submitted proposals have also been removed. We will announce a consultant once one has been hired. Nothing has been added to the memo below that was not in the original memo approved by the board.
From: J. Alex Tarquini, SPJ National President  
To: SPJ Board of Directors  
Re: Executive Director Transition Plan  
Date: May 31, 2019

This report provides the following:

A) An overview of the leadership transition process if consultancy services are retained;

B) a recap of the evaluation of the firms examined, including one recommendation for an organizational management consultant for the interim, and two options for executive director search consultants;

C) a financial analysis of the project; [Not Included in Freedom of the Prez]

D) personal recommendations;

E) work proposals from the consulting firms. [Not Included in Freedom of the Prez]

A) An Overview of the Recommended Executive Director Search Process

The circumstances leading to this executive director transition and the immediate and long-term needs of the staff and the organization should lead the board to adjust its approach.

The core of this search process, however, will remain the same. This has been clearly identified in Bylaws and policy, namely: “The Presidents of SPJ and the SDX Foundation shall appoint an equal number of members to a search committee. The SPJ President shall appoint one additional member to serve as committee chairman with voting privileges. The committee will forward a list of one or more candidates it deems qualified, from which the SPJ Board of Directors will vote to hire the Executive Director. The SPJ Board of Directors shall immediately notify the SDX Foundation of its decision.”

Irwin and I were in touch about this before his departure, and I am pleased to announce the Executive Director Search Committee at this time. Irwin has appointed himself, Dr. Battinto L. Batts Jr. and Michael Bolden. I have appointed myself, Patti and Matt. Finally, I have invited Hagit to chair the committee.

In every SPJ executive director search in recent memory, the Executive Director Search Committee has completed the task without the benefit of an outside search consultant. The primary costs included flying in candidates and the committee members for interviews in Indianapolis and a background check of criminal and credit records for the finalist only. While this approach is economical, it is not generally considered among a nonprofit board’s best practices.
After a great deal of study, guided by an ad hoc transition committee, I recommend that the board approve funding for both an organizational assessment and a retained executive director search firm. (Find my specific recommendations at the report’s conclusion.)

An Overview of the Recommended Interim Plan

An ad hoc transition committee with leaders from both boards—which included the six members of the SPJ executive committee, plus Irwin and Hagit—met on May 13. It expressed a strong preference for hiring a consultant to perform an organizational assessment that would benefit the new executive director. They also advised having the management consultant work part time from our headquarters to provide a level of staff oversight and guidance during the interim. This would obviously raise the cost of the study but would be dramatically less expensive than hiring a full-time professional interim executive director.

Under this plan, the management consultant will work in the office on Mondays and Wednesdays. The consultant and I chose these days because they coincide with the days that Jake is on site, and because the weekly staff meetings have been held on Wednesday mornings and we felt it would be best for staff morale to continue familiar routines during the transition.

The consultant plans to meet regularly with the staff while simultaneously developing a long-term organizational assessment that will be completed by EIJ. This assessment will focus on three critical areas: human resources, financial operations and technology. We identified these as most in need of both immediate support during the transition and long-term improvement. The consultant is a human resources expert who will look at work flow, capabilities and communication. The financial assessment will look at current operations and recommend best practices both during the transition and once we have a new executive director. Finally, the consultant has advised clients on implementing new CMS software for HR departments, so although she has not worked with NAME OF SOFTWARE, which has its own support services, she is familiar with best practices for transitioning to a new CMS. (See attached proposal from NAME OF CONSULTANT.)

Additionally, the consultant would be a troubleshooter. She would communicate with me weekly and perhaps more often if she discovers issues that she feels require swift action. Linda will still be the go-to staff member in terms of HR questions. If the staff has top-level questions about programming, they will continue to come to me. I have also told the staff I will be visiting the office more frequently over the summer. (As an aside, it is my hope that my next swing through Indy will be to introduce the new consultant to the staff!)
Recap of the Evaluation Process and Recommendations

1) Organizational Management Assessment (part-time on-site)

One Recommendation: NAME OF CONSULTANT

Patti laid the groundwork for the May 13 meeting by speaking with three management consultancy firms for half an hour each about their rates for three distinct services: an interim executive director, an organizational management assessment and an executive director search.

First, the ad hoc committee discussed the fact that we had no budget for an external ad interim executive director, which came in at a weekly rate of $3,500 to $6,000 (an annualized cost of $182,000 to $312,000). It should be noted this cost would only provide an interim director on site and would not include an organizational assessment. Additionally, the staff had clearly expressed a strong preference for not hiring an outsider to manage them during the transition. Therefore, the ad hoc committee unanimously agreed to continue as we had done since the executive director’s departure. I informed the staff of this decision two days later, during the weekly staff meeting, and Linda explained it succinctly. She told them she would keep the lights on, and if they had programming questions, they should ask Alex. I will also continue to receive regular reports from the staff that will inform the Weekly Reports.

Although the ad hoc committee found the cost of an interim executive director prohibitive, they did think it might be wise to have a management consultant spend two days a week in the office to support the staff and alert me to any unknown issues. Ultimately, the consultant would be working on a report that the ad hoc committee felt was key to SPJ’s long-term success.

Based on Patti’s initial research, we had identified our top two choices, both local Indianapolis firms recommended by our auditor. Patti’s third call was to a consultant in NAME OF STATE. Patti described a general lack of enthusiasm, “as if they were taking the call mostly because NAME OF PERSON asked them to.” We also felt there were advantages to working with a local firm.

I had multiple hour-long phone calls with each of the two Indianapolis firms to describe the project in detail. When I told them about the hybrid role of providing two days of oversight plus a consultancy report, one firm was interested: NAME OF FIRM. The second, NAME OF FIRM, said this would not play to their strengths, but recommended another local consultant. In a phone call with the referral, the owner struck me as disinterested and said she would talk with her associates to determine their capacity. Ultimately, she decided not to submit a work proposal.

In short, only one of the firms canvassed was interested in this hybrid project, but fortunately, it is a terrific fit. The firm was recommended by our long-time auditor. Indeed, NAME OF PERSON, NAME OF FIRM’s owner, used to work for the auditor and participated in an SPJ audit about five years ago. She will oversee the project, and her background in finance complements the HR background of NAME OF PERSON, her colleague who will be on site.
Their office is only a few minutes from our headquarters so it will be easy for her to work from our office two days a week while keeping in touch with her colleague. I believe they will blend in nicely with our staff culture. Even better, they are familiar with SPJ and our mission, and excited to work with us.

When I visited headquarters on Wednesday, I informed the staff that the board was considering hiring a management consultant to do an organizational assessment and to work in the office two days a week. This was my first opportunity to discuss the interim plan with them since the staff meeting two weeks before and I emphasized that it would require budget approval by both boards. I then met off site with the two NAME OF FIRM consultants for 2.5 hours to discuss the project so they can prepare a project plan if budget is approved. I have since followed up with NAME OF PERSON by phone to discuss the proposal she sent late Thursday night.

2) Executive Search Service

Two Options:

- Full-service Retained Search: NAME OF FIRM
- Discounted Facilitated Search: NAME OF FIRM

The ad hoc committee did not reach a consensus about hiring an executive director search service, with some members worrying about the cost while others thought the main benefit would be speeding up the search. The last executive director search required six months, with additional time for a background check and relocation. Both firms listed below said the Sept 5 board meeting was an ambitious goal, and although it may be possible, they would not commit to a project end date. It should be noted, however, the likelihood of meeting that goal by EIJ without a search firm is almost nil.

Below are brief descriptions of the work plans for both firms who submitted work proposals.

NAME OF FIRM

NAME OF FIRM will only perform a full-service “retained” executive search. This means we would retain the firm on a 100-day exclusive agreement, which may be renewed if we have not yet hired a candidate. NAME OF FIRM would work with the Executive Director Search Committee to draft the new job description, including developing surveys for the staff and board to gauge their goals. Based on this input, as well as information from the simultaneous organizational assessment, they would develop the candidate pool by contacting strong candidates at national nonprofits who may not be currently looking for a new job and pre-interviewing them to gauge their potential interest in the opening. They would not passively publish job board ads, although we would be welcome to do so if we so desired, and of course we would notify our members and use our social media to promote the opening.
These candidates would receive the same screening as recruited candidates. Finally, they would guide the Executive Director Search Committee through a series of interviews with the finalists.

NAME OF FIRM

The owner of this firm described it as “more of an alternative to the board doing it themselves rather than a traditional search firm.” NAME OF FIRM would perform a locally-sourced “facilitated” search, contacting nonprofit leaders in the Indianapolis region and telling them about the opening. They would not conduct a national search or do the same level of pre-screening of potential candidates. They would screen the submissions from SPJ networks or job board postings. They would work with the search committee during the interview process but would not “build the candidate pool” in the traditional sense.

C) Project Financial Analysis

The financial analysis of our cost savings was provided by Jake, who as our CPA, believes this plan to be a wise investment of our funds.

First, Jake says both the Society and the Foundation have the assets to fund a robust executive director transition plan. The Society has around $850,000 in a rainy-day fund, and the Foundation has assets of around $12 million.

Furthermore, he points out, there will be considerable cost savings while we are not paying a full-time executive director.


D) Personal Recommendations

My strong recommendation would be hiring NAME OF FIRM to perform both services. This plan would immediately provide the support the staff needs during the transition, while ultimately setting the new executive director up for a higher likelihood of success. Furthermore, retaining the same firm for both services would lead to synergies because the consultants may discover issues during the assessment that informs their candidate pool recruitment.

I do not recommend the second option. However, if the boards decline to fund the full project, my secondary choice would be hiring NAME OF FIRM for the assessment and NAME OF FIRM for the facilitated search. I believe the first option is more likely to secure the best possible candidate.
I strongly advise against foregoing either of these services.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Alex Tarquinio

SPJ National President

— 30 —
Colleagues:

Despite the lack of an executive director, the Foundation’s work has continued apace and our financial condition remains solid.

Our greatest success has been come from our most ambitious project. Journalist-on-Call Rod Hicks has completed a six-month public engagement project in Casper, Wyoming. He’ll be reporting on the details. What I can say is that the project generated terrific publicity locally and is, as we had hoped, sparking some interest among potential funders. During his first year, Rod has also attended, or organized public events elsewhere around the country, and has made connections to other groups. I will make it a personal priority in the year ahead to work with Development Director Larry Messing to identify sources of support that will enable Rod’s work to continue beyond year three.

The Boston Globe is being honored here with the Pulliam First Amendment Award for the work of its “Spotlight” investigative team. My thanks to Robert Leger for stepping in on short notice to lead the judging after Jane Kirtley had to withdraw due to a conflict.

The Pulliam Editorial Fellowship has been awarded to Tim Steller of the Arizona Daily Star in Tucson. He’s been reporting on immigration issues in the past and, for his fellowship year, has outlined a six-part series that will delve deeply into aspects of this issue, which is likely to be top-of-mind as we move into the 2020 Presidential election year. In addition to printed stories, he plans to train himself to produce audio reports. He’s received a pledge of collaboration and air time from his local NPR affiliate.

Editorial and graphic work has been finished on the update of our ethics book.

At the Foundation’s board meeting I will ask for a couple of volunteers to join our officers in a review of project spending with an eye toward outlining priorities for staff to follow when they begin creating next year’s budget.

Speaking of staff, I’m happy to report that they have stepped up magnificently during this interim period. They have not only made sure our awards programs and convention preparation proceeded as scheduled they’ve also dealt with some issues arising at the headquarters building.

Kudos as well to SPJ President Tarquinio who has spent time in Indianapolis, as well as participating in the executive director search, maintaining a travel schedule so that she could speak at the closing session of the Casper project, interview Bryan Carmody about his run-in with San Francisco police, and attend a celebration held last month at DePauw University, marking our 110th anniversary.

We’ll say goodbye at the Foundation board meeting to two board members whose SPJ presidencies bracketed mine. Robert Leger and Dave Carlson. It is my hope that they will remain active members of SPJ and good friends too.
MEMORANDUM
FROM: Rod Hicks, Journalist on Call
TO: SPJ Board of Directors
RE: Update, April - present
DATE: Aug. 19, 2019

This report covers activities of the JoC since the last board meeting in April.

The Casper Project

Much of my time since the April board meeting was spent preparing for the last three sessions of the Casper project and executing them. I did not go to Casper in April, however, participants in the project toured the newsrooms of the Casper Star-Tribune on April 16 and KTWO-TV on April 23 and talked to journalists at each place. In May, the presenter was Howard Schneider, executive director of the Center for News Literacy at Stony Brook University. He led a compelling discussion on bias in news reporting — what it is, what it isn’t and what about the bias we bring to the stories we see. In June, participants got to meet and ask questions of a panel of Casper journalists: Josh Wolfson, editor of the Star-Tribune; Trevor Trujillo, reporter and editor at the online Oil City News; Halle Jones, an anchor at KTWO-TV; and Nick Learned, news director at K2 Radio. I moderated. Many of the questions to these local journalists were about national politics, specifically coverage of President Trump that they see in the local press.

The project wrapped up on July 16 — my one-year anniversary as JoC — with a panel of national journalists at a forum that was open to the public. The panelists were Neal Lipschutz, deputy editor in chief, The Wall Street Journal; Noreen Gillespie, deputy managing editor, The Associated Press; Lori Montgomery, deputy national editor, The Washington Post; and Hayes Brown, world news editor and reporter, BuzzFeed News. Former Gov. Mike Sullivan filled the role of moderator after NBC News correspondent and Casper native Pete Williams canceled because of a work assignment. The forum, which drew 200 people, was livestreamed by Wyoming PBS and will be edited down to a 60-minute show to be broadcast this fall.

Other activities

I was among roughly 65 people invited to participate in a two-day summit, “Truth-Telling in the Modern Age: Strategies to Confront Polarization and Misinformation.” It was held June 6-7 in Arlington, Virginia, and sponsored by the American Press Institute. The group included journalists and related professionals with a broad range of experience that included producing news for polarized audiences and addressing misinformation online. API will outline key ideas that surfaced in the discussions surrounding truth-telling and how journalists can confront polarization and misinformation.

I informally gave an overview of the Casper project to representatives of more than three dozen journalism and open government nonprofits attending a World Press Freedom Day event in New York organized by SPJ President Alex Tarquinio. After concluding my brief remarks, numerous hands shot up to ask questions, indicating a broad interest in media trust among journalists. As a result of my remarks, I’ve been invited to give speeches in October at an environmental journalism conference and next summer at a conference of opinion writers.
I assisted Alex in facilitating discussions that led to the drafting of a resolution by SPJ and 13 other journalism and open government groups to recommit themselves to their watchdog role and guard against misinformation during the 2020 U.S. presidential campaign. The resolution was drafted during the New York summit recognizing World Press Freedom Day.

I wrote a story for Quill after the Pulitzer Prizes were announced, pointing out how exceptional journalism had helped people understand issues that directly impacted their lives. “The work also undermines pronouncements that news is fake and journalists are enemies of their fellow citizens,” I wrote. “It shows the relevance of a free press that continues to work on behalf of the public even as it is disliked, distrusted and disparaged.”

Last month, I organized and participated on a panel at the NABJ convention about media trust. “Connecting with Your Audience in an Era of ‘Fake News’ and Media Distrust” featured Hayes Brown, world news editor and reporter at BuzzFeed News, as moderator. In addition to me, other panelists were: Amanda Barrett, Nerve Center director, The Associated Press; Karen Rundlet, Journalism Program director, Knight Foundation; Mark Russell, executive editor, The Commercial Appeal; and Galen Stocking, journalism researcher, Pew Research Center. Panelists discussed ways journalists at all levels can help rebuild trust in the press and win back readers, viewers and listeners. I also was a panelist at NABJ about balancing family life and a demanding journalism career.

While in Indianapolis in April, I met with Scott Elliott, associate editor and site development director for Chalkbeat, a national nonprofit news site covering education. Scott started Chalkbeat in Indiana in 2013 and now leads teams in Indy, Memphis, Detroit, Chicago and Denver. He wants to start conversations in Indy about the future of media in the city. Also during that trip, I addressed journalism students from Indiana State University about dwindling news media trust, the evolving media landscape and the need for journalists committed to reporting that is fair, accurate and nuanced.

I was among five journalism professionals invited to offer guidance during the formative stages of a Media Insight Project conducted by a research collaboration between the American Press Institute, the Associated Press and NORC at the University of Chicago. The project will explore the extent to which the values journalists and the public have about which stories are important intersect with distrust in news media. The project paid for the one-day trip to Washington, D.C. in late August.

Future activities

I will be the keynote luncheon speaker on the first day of an environmental journalism conference to be held Oct. 9-13 at Colorado State University in Fort Collins. The group asked me to speak on Rebuilding Trust in the Media and discuss what I learned from the Casper project. Casper is three hours north of Fort Collins.

Next summer, I’ve been invited to address opinion writers at the National Society of Newspaper Columnists conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma. We’re being flexible on the topic, but the conference, in mid-June, falls during the height of the presidential campaign. Also, one of the big takeaways from Casper is a misunderstanding among many news consumers of the distinction between opinion and news. I’m giving some thought to bringing together some residents in the area to discuss media distrust while I’m there.
MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 11:02 a.m ET. Members present: President J. Alex Tarquinio; President-elect Patti Newberry; Secretary-Treasurer Matthew Hall; Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef; At-Large Director Lauren Bartlett and Region 3 Director Michael Koretzky, who joined the meeting in process. Members absent: None. Others present: At-Large Director Mike Reilley, Bylaws Committee Chair Robert Becker and SPJ staff web administrator Billy O’Keefe.

FY2020 BUDGET PLANNING REVIEW

The committee discussed a report by Executive Director Alison Bethel McKenzie and agreed to send staff additional questions.

SPJ’S 110TH/50TH ANNIVERSARIES

The committee discussed a report by McKenzie and after a series of motions, the committee voted to have SPJ board members work with staff on both anniversaries and also offered guidance about present and future SPJ staff retreats.

First, the committee voted against the following recommendation for the full board:

The Society of Professional Journalists doesn’t officially recognize its 50th anniversary of admitting women. In doing so, SPJ will not:

- Use any logo recognizing or commemorating its 50th anniversary of admitting women.
- Sell any branded scarves for $50 each (to celebrate 50 years of women in SPJ).
- Sell any SPJ-branded Yoga mats (to celebrate 50 years of women in SPJ).
- Sell any other merchandise to recognize its 50th anniversary of admitting women.
- Publish any stories in Quill or on SPJ’s website commemorating its 50th anniversary of admitting women.

In 2019, the Society of Professional Journalists recognize accomplished women journalists. To do that, SPJ will:

- Publish Quill and online articles limited to either the first SPJ women members, some of the first SPJ women presidents and/or prominent women SPJ members.
- Submit a program proposal for EIJ featuring accomplished women journalists, such as Linda Deutsch.
- Have the headquarters staff submit to the SPJ Executive Committee any additional ideas they have; all ideas require approval of the SPJ Executive Committee or full SPJ board to implement.
Motion: Bartlett. Second: Kopen Katcef. Vote: 3-2 with Tarquinio, Newberry and Hall voting no and Koretzky not present.

Second, the committee voted to have SPJ board members establish a working group to work with staff to celebrate women this year. Motion: Hall. Second: Newberry. Vote: unanimous with Koretzky not present.

Third, the committee voted to require board representatives, together with staff, to plan the 110th anniversary at no cost to SPJ. Motion: Kopen Katcef. Second: Koretzky. Vote: unanimous.

Fourth, the committee voted to recommend board members adopt a policy that SPJ members not attend SPJ staff retreats. Motion: Hall. Second: Bartlett. Vote: 5-1 with Tarquinio voting no.

Fifth, the committee voted to have Tarquinio, McKenzie and SPJ Foundation President Irwin Gratz convene this week’s staff retreat together and to have board members leave at a mutually agreed upon time in order for it to continue with just staff. Motion: Koretzky. Second: Kopen Katcef. Vote: 5-1 with Tarquinio voting no.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The committee voted at 12:25 p.m. ET to enter executive session to discuss the selection of SPJ Fellows, the sponsorship task force report and the executive director annual review. Motion: Newberry. Second: Hall. Vote: unanimous. The committee voted at 2:31 p.m. to exit executive session. Motion: Newberry. Second: Hall. Vote: unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT

The committee voted to adjourn at 2:32 p.m. ET. Motion: Bartlett. Second: Kopen Katcef. Vote: unanimous.
MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:06 p.m EDT. Members present: President J. Alex Tarquinio; President-elect Patti Newberry; Secretary-Treasurer Matthew Hall; Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef; directors at-large Lauren Bartlett, Mike Reilley, Michael Savino and Yvette Walker; Region 2 Director Andy Schotz; Region 3 Director Michael Koretzky; Region 10 Director Don Meyers and Region 12 Director Kelly Kissel. Joining later were Campus Advisor At-Large Jeff South, directors at-large Ivette Davila-Richards and Tess Fox and Region 6 Director Joe Radske. Members absent: Director-at-large Victor Hernandez and Region 11 Director Deb Krol. Also present: SPJ communications director Jennifer Royer.

MINUTES

The board approved the minutes of its April 13 meeting, as amended. Motion: Newberry. Second: Bartlett. Vote: unanimous. The board approved the minutes of its May 6 meeting, as amended. Motion: Bartlett. Second: Kopen Katcef. Vote: unanimous.

EIJ2021 VENUE UPDATE

Tarquinio briefed the board on the location, date and planning for the 2021 annual conference. It will be in New Orleans on Sept. 1-5, 2021.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH

Tarquinio proposed a seven-member search committee, formulated in consultation with the SPJ Foundation: Tarquinio, Newberry, Hall, SPJ Foundation President Irwin Gratz, SPJ Foundation Vice President Hagit Limor and two foundation appointees, Dr. Battinto L. Batts Jr. and Michael Bolden. Tarquinio said the committee and both boards would work over the summer to craft a job description and survey the boards and staff about what’s desired in an executive director. Best-case scenario, someone could be in place by early September to attend the annual convention, but that may be optimistic. Tarquinio said she would keep all SPJ members apprised along the way by email.

Tarquinio invited Limor to chair the committee, noting she had been a part of the last two executive director search committees and chaired the one before last. Several board members -- including Koretzky, Hall, Kopen Katcef, Bartlett and Kissel -- emphasized that Limor is a great choice for the committee but that it should be chaired by an SPJ board member -- Newberry as incoming president -- as SPJ is in charge of hiring executive directors. Tarquinio said Newberry as incoming president would be too busy. Savino said the committee should have included someone younger than 40.
Bartlett moved that the search committee submit names of three finalists to the SPJ board and that the board do videconference interviews with all of them, and that Newberry chair the search committee. Kopen Katcef seconded. After discussion, Tarquinio and Newberry said they would discuss committee leadership after the meeting, and the board voted only to require the search committee to bring three finalists to the SPJ board for videoconference interviews. Motion: Bartlett. Second: Kopen Katcef. Tarquinio and Newberry voted no. Walker abstained. All three called the step premature and too specific because the board hadn’t authorized its next steps yet.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The board voted at 1:22 p.m. EDT to enter executive session to discuss executive consultancy proposals and a content management system contract. Motion: Walker. Second: Newberry. Vote: unanimous. The board voted at 2:37 p.m. ET to exit executive session. Motion: Bartlett. Second: Kissel. Vote: unanimous.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH

The board voted to hire the firm recommended by Tarquinio to conduct the services discussed, contingent upon completion of satisfactory reference checks. Motion: Newberry. Second: Hall. Vote: unanimous

MINUTES

The board voted to amend the May 6 minutes as discussed in closed session. Motion: Hall. Second: Bartlett. Vote: unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT

The board voted to adjourn at 2:47 p.m. EDT. Motion: Walker. Second: Savino. Vote: unanimous.
MINUTES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
SATURDAY, JULY 13, 2019
TELECONFERENCE AND VIDEOCONFERENCE MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A closed meeting was called to order by teleconference to discuss national awards at
11:03 a.m EDT with all members present: President J. Alex Tarquinio; President-elect
Patti Newberry; Secretary-Treasurer Matthew Hall; Vice President of Campus Chapter
Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef; At-Large Director Lauren Bartlett and Region 3 Director
Michael Koretzky. Others present: Director of Communications and Marketing Jennifer
Royer and Program Coordinator Matthew Kent. The meeting ended at 11:53 a.m. EDT.

PUBLIC SESSION

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

A public meeting was called to order by videoconference at 12:03 p.m EDT with all
members present: President J. Alex Tarquinio; President-elect Patti Newberry;
Secretary-Treasurer Matthew Hall; At-Large Director Lauren Bartlett, Region 3 Director
Michael Koretzky and Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef,
who joined the meeting in process. Many others were present, including Director of
Communications and Marketing Jennifer Royer and Program Coordinator Matthew
Kent; at the meeting’s peak, 49 people were taking part in the videoconference call.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The committee discussed a proposal from Membership Committee Chair Colin DeVries
to offer discounted SPJ membership dues in August as part of the runup to the annual
SPJ journalism conference, EIJ19. Discussion revolved around the size of the subsidy,
whether it would apply to new and renewing members and how long it might extend.
Office Manager Linda Hall suggested annual SPJ dues could be reduced from $75 for
professional members and $37.50 for student members to $50 and $25, respectively.
SPJ member Hazel Becker suggested that the two-week window should open on July
30 because the conference pre-registration deadline is Aug. 12. SPJ member Forrest
Gossett suggested excluding existing members could create resentment. SPJ member
Bob Becker said dues are “not that high now” for members and that he saw no benefit,
and some downside, to extending a discount to current members. SPJ member Joel Bellman asked if there wouldn’t be a significant potential revenue hit if we extend the discount to existing members. Gossett said it would be a larger revenue hit if we lose members who feel left out. SPJ member Liz Enochs suggested existing members could get renewal discounts in August that apply whenever their current membership expires.

The committee voted to have DeVries and the membership committee create a one-page proposal for discounted membership from August 1 to August 15. Motion: Newberry. Second: Bartlett. Vote: unanimous.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

The chair of the executive director search task force, Hagit Limor, gave an update on the search. She said SPJ had hired consultants from Talbott Talent to help with the hiring, and they have been preparing survey questions for the SPJ board, the SPJ Foundation board and SPJ staff. Board surveys should be distributed and completed between July 15 and July 19 with staff surveys following July 22 to July 26. She said that any SPJ member can contribute to the process and added that potential applicants should be encouraged to send cover letters and resumes to spj@talbotttalent.com. The timeline includes a candidate position profile being drafted by July 31 and finalized by Aug. 3, with interviews to follow and recommendations by Oct. 8 with a start date a month after a person were to accept the position. Talbott representatives plan to give public presentations to both the SPJ board and the SPJ Foundation board on progress at meetings at EIJ19 in San Antonio in early September. In response to requests from members to share the cost of the consulting contract, Limor said the contract expressly forbids such a disclosure because it’s proprietary information for a private company.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The committee began public comment at 12:20 p.m. EDT and the roughly 72-minute public discussion largely revolved around what members want to see in a new executive director (ED), calls for transparency, past board tensions and better board collaboration.

SPJ member Hazel Becker said she wants the ED to be someone who knows journalism, not just someone who is an experienced association director, and also someone who is strong enough to “carry the day when the board goes rogue.”

Gossett objected “strenuously” to the confidentiality of the contract and to the board not being more open about it. He said his comments were not a reflection on Talbott but that SPJ owes it to its members to be fully transparent.
SPJ member Jonathan Make said he represented the views of chapters in D.C., Los Angeles, San Diego, Chicago, Florida; chapter leaders in Minnesota, Maryland and New England and Region 8 regional coordinator Kathryn Jones. He said he wants an ED who puts the practice of journalism above their own self-interest; who puts journalism leadership first above fundraising ability; has a track record of being a manager and both a consensus-seeker and consensus-builder; is committed to transparency, even and especially when the news is bad; wants the job for the long-term, at least five years; has creative ideas about expanding membership; and does not abuse alcohol or drugs, has never been accused of sexual harassment and doesn’t place inappropriate demands on staff or volunteers.

SPJ member Mary Crowley said she is extremely concerned about SPJ’s lack of transparency, from the late night notification when SPJ lost its most recent executive director to a contentious June 1 board meeting to the contract cost not being shared.

Jones said she is shocked there is not more transparency, that this goes against SPJ’s Code of Ethics, smacks of hypocrisy and sets a bad example at a time when journalists are facing criticism because the lack of transparency might be used to harm journalism.

SPJ executive committee member Bartlett said a board task force is reviewing board policies, including a transparency policy, and encouraged members to weigh in.

SPJ executive committee member Hall, chair of that task force, echoed that comment.

SPJ member Rebecca Aguilar said SPJ leadership should show leadership skills and be more respectful to one another. She said our Code of Ethics says, “Do no harm.”

SPJ member Dee Ann Divis said the ED should have entrepreneurial experience.

SPJ executive committee member Tarquinio said as president she had shared everything she was legally allowed to do. She added that the cost of the ED salary and search was being shared evenly between the SPJ board and the SPJ Foundation board.

SPJ member Elliot Spagat said the San Diego chapter would like to see the following in an ED: A thorough understanding of SPJ’s strengths and weaknesses and lots of ideas on how to improve on them; an ability to expand membership; thoughts on how to strengthen chapters; an ability to balance competing personalities and agendas, and an ability to motivate staff. He said the ED doesn’t necessarily need to be a journalist.
SPJ member Andrew Seaman suggested SPJ prepare a “playbook” for staff and the board so that when there are high-profile departures, SPJ can more easily replace the person and have a handle on what needs to be done. He said he wants to see an ED who has an honest and sincere support for journalism and the First Amendment but is also good at operating behind the scenes and keeping things together on the business side of the equation. He said an ability to get people to join SPJ and to run the organization is better than experience being a reporter.

Tarquinio said the policy review task force chaired by Hall was something she set up early in her term and identified as one of her top priorities. It had not been established in response to recent transparency concerns.

Gossett said he wants an ED who has innate leadership skills and can strike a balance between a volunteer board and staff. He asked how Talbott would identify candidates.

Limor said Talbott is a professional firm that has conducted many searches and would not be doing any “guessing.” Limor said she hoped the SPJ board’s “public spats” don’t discourage ED applicants from seeking the job. She said she wants a dynamic leader.

SPJ executive committee member Newberry asked whether the ED should be the public face and voice of SPJ or focus more on running the organization.

SPJ board member Mike Reilley said the ED needs to run the organization, period, and not be the face of it.

Crowley agreed.

Seaman agreed.

SPJ member Liz Enochs agreed.

Hazel Becker said the ED should not be SPJ’s public face unless s/he has a name in journalism and is “connected to journalism in a major way.” She said SPJ’s public face should be a journalist and that the ED doesn’t necessarily need to be a journalist.

Reilley said the two objectives are not mutually exclusive and that SPJ can find a great association manager with journalism ties.
Seaman said the bottom line is the ED should help SPJ survive from a business standpoint and that volunteer leaders and SPJ’s Journalist on Call should be the ones to help make it soar.

Newberry said she’d like SPJ to consider some sharing of speaking and public outreach.

Crowley said she envisions an ED who understands advocacy and would be skilled enough to deploy SPJers, especially chapter presidents, to make public appearances.

Divis suggested that both the ED and president and at least one other person be trained to be spokespersons because there will be times — like after the shooting at the Capital Gazette — that more people are needed, and there are always schedule challenges.

Aguilar said she loves SPJ and she thinks it’s “crucial” that Koretzky take down an edited video he made of the June 1 board meeting because it is damaging to SPJ and Tarquinio.

Bob Becker said SPJ has tried to have the ED be the face of SPJ several times in the past with “marginal to disastrous results” and that aiming for that limits the pool of applicants who could manage the organization well.

Reilley said taking down Koretzky’s video would accomplish nothing as it’s already been copied, shared and written about.

Gossett said personal attacks by anyone go overboard and that they are offensive.

SPJ board member Ivette Davila-Richards thinks the ED and president should work together but that normally it should be the president acting as the face of SPJ unless the president is unavailable in which case the ED could step up. She said SPJ looks dysfunctional and is putting people off with some of its activity in recent months.

Hazel Becker said maybe SPJ should just stop talking about Koretzky’s video.

Crowley agreed.

SPJ member Randy Showstack said being the public face of SPJ could be a shared responsibility between the ED and the board president, depending on the issue.

SPJ member Rhett Wilkinson noted that the president’s term lasts only for one year.
Enochs said she is dismayed by Koretzky’s video and accompanying blog post because the discussion created public discord. She said that that is divisive and problematic.

SPJ member Robert Leger said when he was SPJ board president, he thought the president should be the face of the organization but that some presidents have been uncomfortable with that role so it would be good to have an ED that could be first alternate. He said an organization like RTDNA has an executive that’s the face of it.

Davila-Richards said the Koretzky video needs to be taken down.

Wilkinson said Koretzky’s blog post “is journalism” and that “we are a journalism organization.”

Seaman said the best way to move on from the video of the June 1 meeting is to have more productive meetings like this one.

Wilkinson agreed, saying great productive meetings like this are the best way to deal with it, and that taking the video down would not be transparent.

Hazel Becker said she didn’t like Koretzky’s post but that it’s his “personal thing.”

Aguilar said the video should be taken down as it could harm Tarquinio’s reputation.

Newberry said she really appreciates everyone taking the time to be on today’s call to discuss the executive director search, the need to be transparent and other matters. She apologized as she had before for her role in the June 1 meeting, said there had been bad communication between her and Tarquinio but that she has moved on and that she talks to Tarquinio frequently because that’s what you do: eat crow, communicate and deal with the issues, such as important ones like hiring a new ED. She said there will be public comment at all meetings in her presidency and invited everyone to attend public meetings at EIJ19.

Tarquinio noted that the board always includes public comment period at its meetings.

SPJ member Irwin Gratz said today’s meeting went well and called attention to the imminent conclusion of SPJ’s Casper Project in Casper, Wyoming, designed to build trust in journalism. He touted the work of Journalist on Call Rod Hicks and said it’s what SPJ can do when it focuses on what it should -- improving and protecting journalism.
Limor said one blog post may not torpedo an organization but that it's been a multitude of insults and an accumulation of inventory that has tarnished SPJ's reputation this year. She said SPJ should move on from this day, be respectful and stop past issues and that SPJ would find a great ED and let future presidents thrive.

Tarquinio noted the logistics of the videoconference worked very well, thanks to staff.

Make said his hopes for greater transparency include information being released during business hours and displayed prominently in blog posts and on the website. He asked if the Talbott consultants would get a transcript of this call and about its involvement in the drafting of surveys. He read a statement from Detroit SPJ calling for more transparency, more openness in its search for the next ED and “discourse in a democratic fashion.”

SPJ staff member Royer emphasized the late-night communications are “not our normal operating procedures.” She said staff has been juggling a lot at “a highly unusual time of just trying to keep things afloat” and is looking forward to an ED “who will work well with the president and HQ on workflow and procedures so everything works more smoothly.”

Tarquinio clarified that a membership survey was being prepared by SPJ’s long-term strategic planning task force, and that Talbott was surveying both SPJ boards and staff.

Limor noted the call was being recorded and would be viewed by Talbott. She said other ideas are welcome and to keep them coming as the process continues.

With the discussion over, the executive committee voted to return to executive session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The committee voted at 1:32 p.m. EDT to resume its executive session by teleconference to discuss national awards. Motion: Bartlett. Second: Hall. Vote: unanimous. Executive session ended at 2:37 p.m. EDT, and the meeting adjourned.
MEMORANDUM

FROM: Caroline Escobar, Manager of Membership and Chapters
TO: SPJ Board of Directors
RE: Chapter Action
DATE: Aug. 1, 2019

SEEKING TO BE CHARTERED

Louisiana State University Campus Chapter -- Region 12
Northeastern Illinois University Campus Chapter -- Region 5
Wyoming Pro Chapter (reinstated) -- Region 9

CHAPTERS TO INACTIVATE

Greater Charlotte Pro – officially closed, email received 7/3/2019

Notes:
There are currently close to 31 chapters that failed to submit annual reports for the last three consecutive years. At this time, I am working with those chapters during the grace period they are given to bring their chapters back to good standing. Due to most of these chapters being campus chapters, I adjusted the grace period to coordinate with school being back in session to give them a fair opportunity to work on this. A more extensive list of this process will be provided at the next BOD meeting.
ADDENDUM

FROM: Caroline Escobar, Manager of Membership and Chapters
TO: SPJ Board of Directors
RE: Membership Drive
DATE: Aug. 27, 2019

Membership Drive Time Period: July 22, 2019 – August 26, 2019 *While technically the drive ended on 8/19, I honored applications and renewals up through yesterday for anyone who had technical difficulties or extenuating circumstances*

Total number of applications processed through INET: 584

Notes: These are the applications that come through the website into our internal data system. All new members filter through here and renewing members who choose not to log in and renew. These are the actual applications that I print and then manually enter into our database, iMIS. Then, I take those same applications and manually process payment in our financial system, Authorize.Net. After those have settled through the financial system, Linda goes back into iMIS and processes all of those again to apply the payment to their record. I feel that it is important to detail the amount and scope of work that has to be done for future planning and timing purposes of scheduling membership drives. If you have any questions, please let Linda or I know.

IMIS Reporting:

Total number of members new and renewed: 827

New Members: 220
Associate Member: 12
Professional Member: 105
Retired Member: 17
Post-Grad Member: 18
Student Member: 64
Professional HHD: 4

Renewing Members: 607
Associate Member: 28
Professional Member: 372
Retired Member: 104
Post-Grad Member: 41
Student Member: 51
Professional HHD: 7
Other Memberships: 4

For the same time period last year:
New Members: 148
Renewing Members: 296
Total: 444

So, with this drive we saw an overall increase of 383 members, new and renewing.
MEMORANDUM

FROM: Yvette Walker, chair, 110th Anniversary Task Force
TO: SPJ Board of Directors
RE: 110th Anniversary Task Force report
DATE: Aug. 27, 2019

Task Force participants:

- Paul Fletcher
- Linda Hall
- Katelyn Howard
- Michael Koretzky
- Yvette Walker, chair

The task force was formed March 12, 2019, and began to meet that month. Our first meeting was March 21, 2019. The task force met biweekly at first, and later, monthly.

We brainstormed several ideas, including pitching ideas to Quill magazine (we pitched three, one was accepted) on anniversary-related stories and how to engage EIJ conference attendees. We settled on a few projects that could be accomplished in our timeline and that were fun, inviting and low-cost.

We also invited SPJ leadership to write an op-ed column on our anniversary before the end of the year. That is not confirmed but might be forthcoming.

Confirmed, final projects

- Paul Fletcher wrote an article to run in Quill on Ethics, past and present, with a nod to the anniversary.
- Katelyn Howard and Sheila Solomon researched and compiled a list of songs about news and journalism throughout the years.
- Howard and Solomon also created a Spotify playlist of samples of the songs: https://open.spotify.com/user/1244114307/playlist/3l0mPejyXbrMkQldAqUzjz?si=31eJO1v-QC-yjKyhCuvqOQ
- We identified existing content from the SPJ website on our history to run on SPJ Leads

Anniversary presence at EIJ:

- A prominent sign/banner recognizing the anniversary
- A sign that invites conference attendees to take photos or selfies at our booth next to the 110th anniversary banner.
- A raffle for bundles of the anniversary pin, a year’s membership and updated book on ethics.
- Copies of the song list on the table
- Playing the playlist at the table
- SPJ information on the table
- Copies of Quill on the table
SPJ continues to play a vital role in the accreditation of journalism schools through its representation on the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, and I hope the SPJ Board will continue to support our organization’s membership.

Aside from council president Peter Bhatia, editor of the Detroit Free Press who represents ASNE (now the News Leaders Association), and Dan Shelley, who represents RTDNA, I am the only working professional journalist on the 22-member council. Some members, like David Boardman, are former professionals who have moved into academia.

NABJ, NAHJ, NAJA and AAJA all once were represented on the council, but they have dropped off because of costs.

What has SPJ gotten for its membership this year?

Aside from assuring that journalism schools meet ACEJMC’s nine standards for accreditation, the council this year embarked on a review of those standards. The standards are reviewed every 10 years or so with an eye toward streamlining and updating and improving the accreditation process. In a previous review, the council reduced the number of standards from 12 to 9, primarily by folding in some parts of one standard into others but also by eliminating duplication and outdated requirements.

At the Aug. 23 council meeting, ACEJMC executive director Pat Thompson reported the results of a survey of j-school leaders on what works and doesn’t work in the accrediting process and on what changes respondents think should be made in the nine standards.

Respondents told the council that some standards should be combined and others expanded upon to take into account changes in the profession. Most respondents also asked the council to go paperless for the self-study that schools conduct prior to being visited by accreditors every six years.

A six-member Standards Review Committee, on which I serve, will next synthesize the survey responses, along with comments made during the Aug. 23 discussion, and begin revising the standards for presentation to various academic groups next spring. The entire review process is expected to take two years.

In addition to my role on the review committee, I participated in one accrediting site visit since EIJ18. The past year was a light one for accrediting visits; only 11 reaccreditations and one new accreditation were considered at the council’s meeting in April. Typically, 20 or more schools are up for consideration each year, and I have usually been asked to go on at least two site visits a year.

Schools pay the expenses of the site teams, including travel, lodging and meals for the 2 ¼ -day visits.
SPJ’s only expense, aside from the annual ACEJMC dues, has been my travel to the twice-a-year council meetings, in April and August. I have sought reimbursement only for flight, hotel and transportation to and from airports, not meals or other expenses.

In other council news, Pat Thompson, director of student media at the University of Mississippi, just completed her first year as executive director of the council. She replaced a long-time director and has made a smooth transition.

There’s nothing new to report on another council endeavor — a pilot program aimed at encouraging accredited schools to integrate technology across curriculum to better prepare students in meeting the transformative challenges of the news industry.

Six journalism programs already are engaged with The ACEJMC Digital Certification two-year pilot. To be eligible for the digital certificate, schools must meet five key criteria – required skills, faculty development, commitment to research that impacts practice, use of technology and external collaboration.

Interestingly, several respondents to the council’s standards-review survey suggested folding the digital certificate into the standards. We will see whether that gains traction.

Thank you for letting me continue to serve SPJ and the profession these past four years as a member of ACEJMC.

Saa
MEMORANDUM

FROM: Andy Schotz, Awards and Honors Committee chair
TO: SPJ Board of Directors
RE: Annual Report
DATE: Aug. 19, 2019

The Awards and Honors Committee is: Andy Schotz (chairman); Sue Kopen Katcef, retired from the University of Maryland; Heather Lovett Dunn of the Cronkite School at Arizona State University; Jay Evensen of Deseret News; Jason Parsley of the South Florida Gay News; Pat Duggins of Alabama Public Radio; and freelance journalist Alex Veeneman.

• The committee’s main work and function is reviewing SDX Awards, Mark of Excellence Awards and the New America Award. That process is underway in a Slack channel, leading up to our annual meeting at EIJ. This year, we will again examine the judging process and screening entries that don’t follow the rules. We also expect to change or add a few categories. This past year, a podcast category was added for both SDX and MOE.

• As Awards and Honors Committee chairman, I continue to run the SPJ chapter contest judging swap.

• On behalf of the committee, I worked closely throughout the year, as needed, with Matthew Kent, SPJ’s awards coordinator.

• The committee is still considering a survey to gather feedback about our contests from current and past entrants, as well as judges.

• SPJ continues to work with the Family Travel Forum on its annual Teen Travel Writing Scholarship competition. For the fourth year, I will be helping with the judging in early September.

• The Kunkel Awards for video game journalism, which are not administered by SPJ HQ, continue. Kunkel Awards creator Michael Koretzky is working with the Awards and Honors Committee on possibly adding video game journalism categories to SPJ’s national contests.
MEMORANDUM

FROM: Rebecca Aguilar, Diversity Committee chair
TO: SPJ Board of Directors
RE: Annual Report
DATE: Aug. 17, 2019

The SPJ Diversity Committee has had a very successful year. We revamped the Dori Maynard Diversity Leadership program from top to bottom. We met our deadlines on everything we set out to do from a new application to announcing our six chosen fellows out of 21 applicants.

March 15- Launch Diversity Fellowship application to public.
May 3 - Deadline for Diversity Fellowship applications
May 10 - Judging started by three selected judges.
June 24 - Announcement of six Diversity fellows

2019 SPJ FELLOWS

We have selected a very diverse group from different platforms. Here they are:

• Rebecca David, Video journalist/Fill-in anchor, KWQC TV 6 News, Davenport, IA
• Daisy Contreras, Statehouse reporter, NPR Illinois, WUIS, Springfield, IL
• Stephanie Lin, Anchor/reporter, KHSL/KNVN-TV, Chico, CA
• Aisha Al-Muslim, Reporter, The Wall Street Journal, New York, NY
• Hatzel Vela, Foreign correspondent, WPLG-TV (Miami), Havana, Cuba bureau
• Taheshah Moise, Evening anchor/reporter, WFMY News 2, Greensboro, NC

PLANS FOR FELLOWS AT #EIJ2019

The goal for our fellows at #EIJ19 is to expose them to different journalists who have come up with a way to bring diversity to their newsrooms and/or the stories they produce and publish.

We have several guest speakers attending our three “Breakfast with the Fellow” events. We also plan “Aha Moment” sessions later in the afternoon where the fellows again will hear from guest speakers and share their “Aha Moment” of the day.

At the conference, the fellows will have the freedom to attend the workshops and panels they feel would help them grow as professionals. They will also be using their social media platforms to share what they are learning during #EIJ19.

SPJ DIVERSITY SOCIAL MEDIA

We’re doing our best to grow, engage and keep the public informed via our social media platform which include Facebook and Twitter. We are also using our social media to let everyone know about our 2019 fellows.

Thank you to Alex Tarquinio, Matthew Kent and Basharat Saleem for their help to make this happen.
August 2019 Ethics Committee Report
Submitted by Lynn Walsh, Ethics Chair

About: This committee's purpose is to encourage the use of the Society's Code of Ethics, which promotes the highest professional standards for journalists of all disciplines. Public concerns are often answered by this committee. It also acts as a spotter for reporting trends in the nation, accumulating case studies of jobs well done under trying circumstances.

Who: Eleven journalists based in cities throughout the country sit on the committee. The committee is chaired by Lynn Walsh the Assistance Director of the Trusting News project and a freelance journalist. The other committee members are: Lauren Bartlett, Fred Brown, David Cohn, Annie Culver, Elizabeth Donald, Mike Farrell, Paul Fletcher, Michael Lear-Olimpi, Chris Roberts, Alex Veeneman.

What: The SPJ Ethics Committee is working toward its mission by participating and leading the following programs:

- **SPJ Ethics Hotline:** Responding to ethics inquiries received through the ethics hotline is one of the most rewarding and interesting projects I have had the pleasure of leading. Since October 4, 2018, SPJ has received 140 inquiries from working journalists, the public and students. I said this in my last report, but I’m going to repeat it this time as well: I think this service is one of the most under-advertised tools that SPJ offers. The people who call in are extremely grateful for the support and advice. “Thank You SO MUCH for this clarification, I'm so grateful, I had no idea I had to ask for it and it wasn't automatic,” one of the individuals said after receiving feedback through the hotline. “Thank you so much for taking the time so quickly. I shared your responses with the newsroom and it resulted in a thoughtful and honest discussion. We all learned something and agreed we would handle things differently moving forward. I’m saving your responses to discuss with future employees at this station, and with journalism students when I do college visits,” another said. I really feel this hotline hits at what SPJ’s core values are and would like to see it more widely shared. I think this hotline is something SPJ should be proud of and it would be great to see if there is a way to get it funded to support the time and effort the volunteers commit to it.

- **Public Training Program:** We have created a 45-minute presentation that can be presented to non-journalists that uses the SPJ Code of Ethics to explain how journalism works and what journalists do to the public. Now that the presentation is finalized, the committee will help SPJ market the presentation. The idea is that members of the public would request this training and SPJ members would lead the presentations.

- **SPJ Ethics Week:** The committee worked with Jennifer Royer to make Ethics Week a possibility again this year. Due to timing of several other events SPJ was working on, the event didn’t get as much publicity as we would have liked, but we were able to do the following things: secure the billboards in Times Square, lead a Facebook Live event and share ethics content from the website.
• **#EIJ19**: The committee will hold a meeting at the 2019 Excellence in Journalism Conference and will have a presence in several sessions during the conference.
MEMORANDUM
FROM: Hilary Niles, Freelance Community Chair  
TO: SPJ Board of Directors  
RE: Freelance Community report  
DATE: Aug. 23, 2019

SUMMARY
Freelance Community Board Members
Overview

DEPARTMENT UPDATES
ADMIN (Chair Hilary Niles, Vice Stacie Overton Johnson)
COMMUNICATIONS (Secretary Tyler Newman)
  Publications
  Facebook
  Twitter
MEMBERSHIP (Membership Coordinator Ginny McCabe)
RESOURCES (Resources Coordinator position vacant)
  On Your Own
  Freelance Opportunity Databases
  On The Web
  Calendar and Job Postings
EVENTS / EIJ (Events Coordinator Stephenie Overman)

SUMMARY

Freelance Community Board Members

- Hilary Niles, Chair
- Stacie Overton Johnson, Vice-Chair
- Tyler Newman, Secretary
- (Vacant), Resources Coordinator
- Ginny McCabe, Membership/Outreach Coordinator
- Stephenie Overman, Events Coordinator
Overview

The Freelance Community (FC) continues to grow and strengthen, primarily through our very active Facebook group and sizable Twitter following. I believe the next stage of growth that would be best is to improve our integration with the rest of SPJ. There is a sense among most FC board members that freelancers in general, and our group specifically, are undervalued within the organization. I am concerned about the possibility that we may lose significant volunteer contributions (and possibly even SPJ membership) as a result of their frustration.

My strategy for addressing this concern is to increase awareness of the FC — our activities, as well as industry trends specific to the freelance business model — among all levels of SPJ leadership. I feel there is more I can do as chair to convey the community’s value to the organization and the professional legitimacy of freelance journalism. I will be reaching out to individual board members, regional and committee leaders, and HQ staff to identify the best mechanisms for this outreach.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

ADMIN (Chair Hilary Niles, Vice Stacie Overton Johnson)

The 2018 SPJ Community election season demonstrated the FC’s strength: For the second year, we filled our slate of eight community board members, through both returning members and with the addition of three new members. (That said, one new board member resigned soon after the election due to time constraints, and we have not filled her position.) Our ultimate goal is to see contested elections; for the time being, it’s gratifying to see sustained and new interest that keeps leadership both full and fresh.

We continue to hold monthly board meetings via video conference, a practice instituted in 2018. We have never failed to reach a quorum, and attendance is almost always 100%. We have not dug into the possibility of opening the board meetings to other community members. It remains a goal to better communicate the board’s work to FC members, to keep them apprised of board activities and opportunities to contribute.

COMMUNICATIONS (Secretary Tyler Newman)

Publications

We have continued publishing our email newsletter, albeit not yet on the sustained monthly schedule we aim for. The newsletter is conceived as a value-added benefit to encourage SPJ and FC membership, so distribution is limited to official members of the Freelance Community.

We remain a little uncertain about the place in Quill for contributions from the Freelance Community. We also are uncertain about the new approach to the blog. Currently, our communications efforts are focused on getting newsletter production into a groove. As this rhythm becomes established, we would like to connect with the appropriate individuals about both publications.
Facebook

While technically “closed” according to Facebook standards, the Freelance Community’s Facebook group is, by design, open to non-SPJ members. We feel this is a great outreach mechanism that exposes freelancers to the resources and camaraderie SPJ Freelance Community membership offers. As of August 2019, our group membership is has reached 1500 (up from less than 800 in August 2017).

In the past year, we revised and added to the group’s Code of Conduct, in response to some negative posts and comments. FC board members coordinated our moderation efforts to correct the tone of group exchanges, and I personally explained our decisions and actions publicly to the group. One group member left voluntarily, and the tone has since remained positive and supportive.

Twitter

The Freelance Community’s Twitter account, managed primarily by at-large member Susan Valot, has grown to 3,157 followers (up from 2,452 in April 4, 2018).

MEMBERSHIP (Membership Coordinator Ginny McCabe)

Our membership numbers remain pretty steady, despite growth of the community. I believe this is due to the silo’d databases through which SPJ membership and FC membership are maintained, as well as understandable confusion among members about the Freelance Directory. My strong recommendation is that SPJ’s membership database be structured to integrate community membership and the Freelancer Directory.

Thanks to outreach from Membership Committee Chair Colin DeVries, we are now in contact with that group about ways to improve membership onboarding and retention for freelancers. The more we know about the freelancers among SPJ’s ranks, the better we can communicate with them and direct our efforts to provide the resources and support they need the most.

RESOURCES (Resources Coordinator position vacant)

On Your Own

In late 2018, Resources Coordinator Hazel Becker added the following chapters to On Your Own, our online guide to freelance journalism:

- In the Business Matters section:
  - Taxing matters
  - Getting your business organized
  - Contracts and copyright - beyond the basics
- In the Finding Your Way to Work section:
  - Finding your way to work
  - Trolling the web for work
  - Pitching your way to a full story calendar
- In the Tools of the Trade section:
  - Why journalism ethics matter
  - Journalism reading list
Freelance Opportunity Databases

Despite stepping down as Resources Coordinator, Hazel continues to develop the Pitching Guidelines and Upcoming Freelance Deadlines databases she built from scratch. She is working with Billy O’Keefe to explore ways to make these resources accessible through the FC’s page on the SPJ website. (They are currently promoted only through our Facebook group.)

On The Web

We also are developing a new resource called On The Web, an online guide to help freelance journalists shape their online presence.

Calendar and Job Postings

We welcome suggestions about how to publicize our online calendar and job listings to all SPJ members — not just members of the Freelance Community. The calendar is open to all website visitors, as a means of trying to get people to attend freelance events; job postings are available only to SPJ members.

EVENTS / EIJ (Events Coordinator Stephenie Overman)

After several successful freelance sessions at EIJ 2018, we submitted six proposals for freelance-oriented sessions at EIJ 2019. However, none were accepted. We feel the absence of freelance-oriented breakout sessions is an unfortunate oversight for the convention. Freelance journalist ranks continue to grow in the wake of industry consolidation and layoffs, as well as in the broader context of mobile and remote conference technology enabling more independent workspaces. It’s essential for our industry to provide professional development to this constituency in order to maintain high professional standards and to support the financial viability of journalism for independent practitioners.

To make up for the disappointing absence of freelance-specific breakout sessions at the conference, FC board members rallied to create a robust schedule of programs and activities. We appreciate assistance from HQ staff (Larry and Basharat) to arrange the necessary space.

- “Freelancers Corner” outside the Expo Hall throughout the convention
- Two-hour Editor Meet & Greet (so far six confirmed editors in attendance)
- Two-hour Freelancer Free For All, with roundtable discussions/presentations on:
  - Understanding Contracts
  - Crafting the Query Letter
  - Finding Your Niche
  - “Crossing Over” Between Broadcast and Print
- Friday Night Happy Hour (off-site)
- Brown Bag Lunch with the FC Chair (time for sharing questions and ideas)
- “I Am Freelance” buttons to be distributed
- “Why I Freelance” video series to be shot on-site
- Free Freelancer Headshots to be offered on-site
- Annual Meeting

We also would like to explore hosting “virtual” events online throughout the year, and would appreciate any technical assistance and/or access to such platforms and tools through HQ.
Respectfully,

Hilary A. Niles
Freelance Community Chair
MEMORANDUM
FROM:  Tess Fox, Gen J Community chair  
TO: SPJ Board of Directors  
RE: Annual Report  
DATE: Aug. 19, 2019

The Generation J community has selected two projects: a student chapter guidebook and a mentorship program. We’re in the early stages of gathering information about previous projects that will help inform our next steps. Monica Dattage, one of our members, left the committee. Katelyn Mary Skaggs joined in her place. We are also working to revitalize an existing Facebook group, to give members across the country a place to communicate. Our section of the SPJ website is wildly out of date, so I hope to update that by the end of the year.
MEMORANDUM

FROM: Chairs: Elle Toussi & Dan Kubiske  
       Liaisons: Jennifer Karchmer & Brent Jolly  
TO: SPJ Board of Directors  
RE: Annual Report  
DATE: Aug. 19, 2019

SUMMARY

● Fall of 2018, we opened up positions for members of our community to be press freedom liaisons. Jennifer Karchmer and Brent Jolly came on board and will be serving as liaisons until Fall 2019.
● We have temporarily closed the SPJ IC public page on Facebook to focus on the private Facebook Group. We continue our efforts on Twitter and plan to maintain the group and Twitter account at the moment. We are currently at 400+ members in our private group.
● This year we have reached out and forged collaborations and partnerships. They include the One Free Press Coalition, where we will be posting their “10 Most Urgent” list every month to raise awareness and stand up for journalists under attack for pursuing the truth worldwide. We also have partners with International Senior Lawyers Project - ISLP that have agreed to provide services to any of our international members in the future. This stemmed from one of our members in London being sued by an oil tycoon in Virginia and needed legal assistance. We are now coordinating how this partnership will look like in the coming months and hopefully sharing more of the work they are doing to help journalists worldwide. We are in talks with the Frontline Freelance Register for a partnership to provide safety clinics in the US. Elle is currently speaking with CPJ and FFR about events in collaboration with SPJ IC to be held in NYC and other locations in the US.
● We have planned to launch a newsletter following EIJ 2019 and will have more information in the coming months.
● We have had members reach out asking for more translations on the code of ethics we provide at SPJ. We will be reaching out to our members to handle this in the coming months.

PLANS for 2019-2020

We will be putting a focus on outreach within the pro chapters to let them know the International Community is available for them. We will also be continuing to do outreach to organizations to continue our partnerships and collaborations. Also, we will be focusing on having an international journalism presence at EIJ 2020. We intend to – once again – put forward ideas for the EIJ 2020 in Washington DC. There are many foreign correspondents in the DC area and a number of international media-related groups along with our local SPJ DC chapter supporting our efforts.
MEMORANDUM

TO: Alex Tarquinio, SPJ President
    Jennifer Royer, SPJ Director of Communications & Marketing

FROM: Becky Tallent and Leticia Steffen, SPJ J-Ed Co-Chairs

DATE: Aug. 12, 2019

SUBJECT: J-ED COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The J-Ed Committee has continued focusing its efforts on #Press4Education outreach. To date, we’ve matched 186 volunteers with teachers. However, there are some issues:

- In seven cases this past year, requests had to be turned down because volunteers were not available and the teachers wanted an in-person presentation. These were requests from Carol Stream, IL; Redlands, CA; Bartlesville, OK; Spring Branch, TX; San Bernardino, CA; Magnolia, TX; and Everyman, TX. We are absolutely desperate for volunteers for small towns in Texas and California.
- Thirteen requests made in the spring are being held over until the fall because there were no volunteers. While these are in the process of being filled, again the primary areas are California and Texas. We are also looking for volunteers in Michigan (3 requests), Marietta, GA; Gretna, NE; Pennsylvania (2) and Moorestown, NJ (very close to Philadelphia, but no one will cross the state line to do the presentation).
- One request had to be withdrawn after the school cancelled their journalism program.

A new initiative the J-Ed Committee has begun preliminary work on is a project designed to reach students at historically minority serving institutions (college and universities) who may be interested in pursuing journalism careers. To this effort:

- The J-Ed Committee has compiled a preliminary list of 735 minority serving institutions (colleges and universities) that are categorized as one or more of the following: Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Alaska Native- and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions (ANNHs), Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) and Native American-Serving, Nontribal Institutions (NASNTIs).
- J-Ed Committee members will begin editing this list to include primarily colleges and universities with journalism or related writing programs.
- Once the list is pared down, J-Ed Committee members will volunteer to reach out to specific programs at these colleges and universities, sharing a fact sheet that is being drafted about the benefits that SPJ can provide to educational programs.
- The committee has discussed ideas of SPJ-specific offers or incentives we could share with interested students, including free one-year memberships or one free registration to an upcoming SPJ conference.
In addition to the two projects outlined above, the J-Ed Committee was approached in April by an SPJ member (Rob Mark) on behalf of a group of professional aviation journalists and public relations writers who are interested in recruiting more journalists into their field. To this end, Rob Mark discussed with J-Ed Committee Co-Chair Leticia Steffen:

- The possibility of developing online video sessions, workshops or other accessible training modules to share with journalism students or young journalism professionals who may be seeking niche journalism opportunities.
- Having information available at an upcoming EIJ or at regional conferences.
- Perhaps securing speakers from this group to present at regional conferences.
- The J-Ed Committee will continue collaborating with Rob Mark’s group.

The J-Ed Committee also discussed the possibility of reaching out to other niche journalism professions (e.g., medical/science writers, business reporters, environmental writers, etc.) to develop similar training modules to ones that may be developed with the aviation group. These modules could include (but are not limited to) online videos/workshops, in person workshops, printable web-based resources, etc.

The J-Ed Committee also reviewed nominees and provided recommendations for the SPJ outstanding educator award.
MEMORANDUM

FROM: Hagit Limor, LDF Committee Chair
TO: SPJ Board of Directors
RE: LDF Committee Report
DATE: Aug. 18, 2019

It’s been a very busy year for the LDF, not only did we take action on 55 cases this year through the time of this report, but we resurrected the silent auction and made plans for the live auction at convention.

I’m listing short descriptions below, starting with a few cases that came in under the previous administration before convention 2018 but after last year’s reporting deadline. (Inevitably more cases will come in between this reporting deadline and the full board meeting in a few weeks.) Thanks to Mark Bailen, our attorney for his initial summaries.

9/2/18 RCFP Amicus Brief - Rudkin v. Roger Beasley Imports, Inc.
We joined the Reporters Committee to join an amicus brief in a case before the Fifth Circuit about whether the Texas anti-SLAPP statute is applicable in federal court. These laws protect against frivolous lawsuits intended to silence speech, known as “strategic lawsuits against public participation” or SLAPP suits. Application of anti-SLAPP laws in federal court helps prevent plaintiffs in libel cases from forum shopping to avoid the statutes and generally help media defendants avoid costly litigation.

9/30 RCFP Amicus Brief - NRA v. Bondi
This case before the 11th Circuit dealt with the use of anonymous plaintiffs in a challenge to a Florida gun control statute. The NRA challenged the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act, a Florida statute that bans individuals under the age of 21 from purchasing firearms, passed shortly after the school shooting in Parkland in February 2018. Two individual plaintiffs attempted to join the NRA in the lawsuit under pseudonyms “Jane and John Doe.” The brief argues for judicial transparency; permitting anonymous plaintiffs may violate the First Amendment, rights of access and could lead to additional sealing of records or closure of proceedings, causing journalists and the public to lose access to valuable information about judicial proceedings.

10/4 NPPA Amicus Brief - SCOTUS Case - Nieves v. Bartlett
We joined the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) before the Supreme Court in a case about whether the existence of probable cause for arrest precludes a First Amendment retaliation claim. The case arises from an arrest for disorderly conduct and resisting arrest at an outdoor winter sporting festival in Alaska. Following his arrest, Russell Bartlett sued the arresting police officers, alleging retaliatory arrest among other claims. While the parties to the case are not journalists or news entities, this case is important to journalists because if the mere existence of probable cause to make an arrest precludes First Amendment retaliatory-arrest claims, such cases would be nearly impossible to bring against the government. The low threshold of probable cause would likely be met in matters where the government has set out to retaliate against unfavorable news coverage or wishes to limit or altogether preclude filming of policy activity, such as journalists vulnerable to retaliatory arrests when filming police activity at high-profile protests.
10/16 Request from Victoria Advocate
The SPJ Legal Defense Fund Committee approved up to $2,500 to support legal fees for this local family-owned newspaper in its Texas Open Meetings Act lawsuit against the Calhoun Port Authority. The paper claims the taxing entity failed to notify the public properly of its intent to hire a lobbyist. The paper challenged the hiring but the port wouldn’t repost the hearing or reconsider the hiring.

10/24 The Colorado Independent v. District Court for the Eighteenth Judicial District of Colorado
We joined the Reporters Committee in supporting this online news organization seeking to unseal court records in a first-degree murder case. It petitioned the U.S Supreme Court after the Colorado Supreme Court affirmed the denial of its motion to unseal various court filings in the murder case. The Colorado Supreme Court’s decision significantly restricts journalists and the public from monitoring the judicial system.

11/8 RCFP Amicus Brief - Nat'l Prescription Opiate Litigation
We supported HD Media, a Huntington, WV-based publisher of daily and weekly newspapers and magazines, and the Washington Post as they moved to intervene and modify a protective order to get access to a database about opioid prescriptions and to unseal judicial records. This multidistrict litigation was brought by public entities from across the U.S. who have sued manufacturers, distributors, and retailers of prescription opiate drugs, alleging that they are liable for the costs of addressing the opioid public health crisis. HD Media and The Washington Post have appealed to the 6th Circuit to obtain access to a U.S. government database regarding opioid prescriptions, which was produced in discovery but is subject to a protective order. The government argues the entire database should remain confidential to protect law enforcement-sensitive information.

11/9 Sacramento Bee & The Record Searchlight
We awarded $2,500 to the Sacramento Bee and The Record Searchlight of Redding, California as they sought copies of search warrants and other public records in a kidnapping case. Usually, these documents are publicly accessible but the District Attorney fought to keep the records sealed for two years to protect an ongoing investigation that made national headlines when a 33-year-old woman disappeared while jogging. She showed up weeks later and told investigators she was abducted at gunpoint by two masked Hispanic women who cut her long hair, physically assaulted her, and seared a brand into her skin before ultimately releasing her. The papers reported details that conflicted with her story but two years later have no access to judicial records, which could vindicate local Hispanic residents marginalized by the kidnapping allegations.

11/13 Amicus Brief - Manuel Duran Ortega
We signed onto an amicus brief before the 11th Circuit in the Manuel Ortega case. Ortega was arrested in Memphis in what appears to be retaliation for his reporting, and the government then moved to deport him.

11/15 Anderson v WBNS TV
We previously authorized $2,000 (see last report) and joined the Ohio Association of Broadcasters in an amicus brief before the Ohio Supreme Court and now added $250 to file a response after the plaintiffs filed a brief that mentioned the SPJ and RTDNA Codes of Ethics.

11/7 RCFP Amicus Brief - Van Dyke v. Retzlaff
We once again supported an Anti-SLAPP case appeal before the 5th Circuit concerning the applicability of the Texas anti-SLAPP statute -- the Texas Citizens’ Participation Act (“TCPA”) -- in federal court. This is
the same legal issue raised in *Rudkin v. Roger Beasley Imports* above. Like before, the brief argues that the Texas anti-SLAPP statute should apply in federal courts.

**11/28 RCFP Amicus - Jamie Kalven Exclusion Order**

We previously agreed to join an amicus brief to quash a subpoena to reporter Jamie Kalven. This action argues against the judge’s order to ban Kalven from the courtroom in case he is required to testify. While it is typical for fact witnesses to be excluded from the courtroom before they testify, Kalven has been covering the cases for years and does not want to miss any of the proceedings, and we already have argued that he should not have to testify. This is a classic 1st Amendment versus 6th Amendment situation.

**12/3 RCFP Amicus Brief - *Kent v. Hennelly***

We signed on an RCFP amicus brief to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit over “personal jurisdiction” in an online defamation case. Personal jurisdiction concerns whether a court has the power to hale an out-of-state defendant into court. Baker Hostetler litigated this issue 15 years ago in the Fourth Circuit and this amicus brief argues for the Sixth Circuit to adopt the Fourth Circuit’s reasoning. The original *Young* case has been extremely helpful to news organizations and journalists who are sued in distant jurisdictions where they have no connection and is currently the best authority on this issue in the federal appeals courts. It would be beneficial if the Sixth Circuit follows suit.

**12/4 Journalist Austin Nolen Legal Expenses**

We awarded $1,700 to Austin Nolen, who covers law enforcement and civil liberties for *The Declaration*, an online alternative news source in the Philadelphia area. The funds will cover legal expenses for an appeal by Delaware County to an order that they produce documents about using a FEMA grant to buy an armored vehicle designed for military use. Nolen submitted his records request in August 2014 under the state’s Right-to-Know Law and has been fighting for the information ever since. The county’s appealed two orders from the state Office of Open Records to release the materials. The county says disclosure would jeopardize public safety. The case could establish helpful precedent for increased transparency in homeland security funds.

**12/10 Journalist Joshua Phillips Legal Expenses**

We awarded $5,000 to support Joshua Phillips in his attempt to get records about President Trump’s DHS appointees shutting down the Domestic Terrorism mission which analyzes hate groups and provide intelligence to Fusion Centers and federal, state and local police agencies. This is a classic FOIA case.

**12/15 RCFP Amicus Brief - *Giuffre v. Maxwell***

We joined the RCFP in a case before the Second Circuit, US Court of Appeals to argue against the sealing of judicial records in a defamation lawsuit brought by one of the alleged victims of sex trafficking by financier Jeffrey Epstein. The *Miami Herald* filed a motion to unseal all of the sealed documents on the docket. The district court denied the *Herald’s* motion to unseal, the newspaper appealed, and the appeal has been consolidated with another appeal we previously supported to protect public access to judicial records, particularly access to motion for summary judgment related documents. This case is also of significant national interest.

**12/15 RCFP Amicus Brief - *NEPA Freethought Society v. County of Lackawanna Transit System* (“*NEPA v. COLTS*”)**

On the same day we joined an amicus in the US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit on behalf of
the Northeastern Pennsylvania Freethought Society (“NEPA”), an atheist organization that challenged the County of Lackawanna Transit System (“COLTS”) advertising policy as unconstitutional under the First Amendment. COLTS’s policy bans certain advertisements based on their content, including those with a religious or political nature. The district court upheld COLTS’s policy, finding that the transit system’s advertising space is not a public forum and is viewpoint neutral. The brief argues that COLTS’s policy could prohibit advertisements by news media and is tantamount to an unconstitutional “heckler’s veto” because it relies on the potential reactions of third parties to justify restricting wide swathes of private speech on matters of public concern and is unconstitutionally vague.

1/10 RCFP Amicus Brief - Duran Ortega
We joined another amicus brief in the immigration matter of Manuel Leonidas Duran Ortega, a veteran journalist arrested in Memphis in what appears to be retaliation for his reporting. While the charges against him were dropped, the government is now trying to deport him. We previously signed on to two prior briefs in this case in support of Mr. Duran Ortega – first before the Board of Immigration Appeals and then in support of a stay of deportation before the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals. This brief supports Mr. Duran Ortega’s appeal based on two arguments: 1) the increasingly dangerous conditions faced by investigative journalists in El Salvador; 2) the First Amendment principles that would be threatened if the Court allows Mr. Duran Ortega to be removed without further hearing.

1/15/2019 LDF/NFOIC grant to Reporter Elizabeth Regan
We awarded $1,500 to Regan in what began as a FOIA request on behalf of the Rivereast News Bulletin, a weekly newspaper owned by the Glastonbury Times, a small, family-owned newspaper in Connecticut. This case raises important issues at the crossroads of the integrity of elections and freedom of information. Regan made a FOIA request to inspect ballots in a hotly contested 2017 local election where voting irregularities were alleged. The town and the Connecticut Secretary of the State denied her request, holding that state voter privacy laws trump state FOIA laws. The opinion also makes it easier for the state to carve out additional exemptions to the FOIA law by relying on other statutes that were not meant to address public disclosure issues. Regan is appealing.

1/22 RCFP Amicus Brief - Federal Circuit PACER fees case (Nat’l Veterans Legal Servs. Program v. US)
We previously supported this class action on PACER Fees in District Court and now support it on appeal. The parties argue that the federal judiciary is overcharging for access to the federal court electronic filing system, PACER. The statute that established the system states that the judiciary can charge fees for accessing documents on PACER, but the amici side with the plaintiffs in arguing that the statute limits use of the fee revenue only for covering the costs of operating the system. In fact, the judiciary has been collecting millions of dollars in excess of its expenses for the PACER system and using the funds for other purposes. This case seeks to reduce the costs for accessing public filings to the actual cost, as required by statute.

1/26 Mann v. National Review/CEI
We signed onto a letter to the District of Columbia Court of Appeals asking to rehear an appeal by the National Review and other defendants in a libel case pending before that court. We had previously joined an amicus brief in this case. The panel then issued its ruling in December 2016, creating terrible precedent for libel law regarding actual malice and opinion/fair comment in the District of Columbia. The part on the law of opinion appears to gut an extremely favorable pro-First Amendment in Moldea v. NY Times. The letter asks for a rehearing before all the judges on the Court.

1/27 RCFP Amicus Brief - CNS v. Yamasaki
We joined another amicus brief in a Courthouse News Service (CNS) case as it litigates against court clerks who fail to make the filings of civil complaints immediately available to the public. The brief argues that the right of access attaches when the complaint is filed, and the clerk should not be permitted to delay public access to the complaints and other initial filings in the case. Timely access is a core First Amendment principle and particularly important for journalists working on deadline.

2/4 Bradley v. Ackal - RCFP & Brechner Center Amicus Brief
We joined an amicus brief and awarded $2,100 to the Advocate newspaper and KATC-TV in a case before the 5th Circuit. The media outlets were seeking access/disclosure of the amount of a settlement between the family of a victim killed by the police from a Louisiana Parish Sheriff’s office. The brief supports the efforts of the Advocate newspaper and KATC-TV, raising a number of points emphasizing the importance of the First Amendment and common law right of access. This matter has particular national significance given the on-going public debate relating to deaths caused by police officers.

2/8 “Protect Free Speech Coalition”
We joined the “Protect Free Speech Coalition” in Texas, formed to help protect the Texas Citizens Participation Act (“TCPA”), which is the Anti-SLAPP statute in Texas, and one of the strongest in the country. There is a movement now under way (led by plaintiffs’ lawyers) to substantially weaken it. Anti-SLAPP has been a powerful tool for journalists and news organizations in fighting back against meritless defamation lawsuits. Dozens of media defendants in Texas have obtained early dismissal of cases under the TCPA as well as an award for legal fees and sanctions against plaintiffs who bring non-meritorious claims. The major revisions sought by the plaintiffs’ bar will eviscerate the effectiveness of the anti-SLAPP provisions of the TCPA and may encourage copycat attempts at repeal in other states.

2/12 Cochise County Attorney v. David Morgan
David Morgan, a blogger/journalist, runs a website and Facebook page covering courthouse and law enforcement in Cochise County, Arizona. He’s fighting an injunction from the county attorney to force him to remove a grand jury transcript in a murder case. Morgan posted the transcript after the defendant’s lawyer publicly filed a motion that attached the transcript as an exhibit. Grand jury proceedings usually are secret, but the filing remained publicly available for eight days before the court sealed the documents. Morgan got the transcript during that time and posted it online. The county sued Morgan for a preliminary injunction to take down the transcript. We joined the First Amendment Clinic at Arizona State University and the ACLU in arguing that the injunction is equivalent to a prior restraint on speech, that the requested restraint is unconstitutional, that the statute that the county is relying on – that prohibits disclosure of grand jury information – does not apply to the press or public who obtain the information through lawful means; and that the county has not satisfied the high burden for establishing a preliminary injunction.

2/26 Drone case - Uniform Law Commission (ULC)
We continued as part of a media coalition submitting comments to the Uniform Law Commission (ULC) regarding a proposed law to regulate small, unmanned aircraft systems - i.e drones. The ULC drafts uniform legislation for the states, DC, and territories to adopt. The main issue addressed by the comments by the media coalition is removal of a provision in the draft Act that provided for an express exemption for conduct protected by the First Amendment. For example, a drone capturing video from public airspace of events in a public space for newsgathering purposes automatically would be protected under the prior version of the Act. The revised provision removes the express protection, which will likely make it harder to obtain speedy dismissal of litigation brought under the Act.
We joined this amicus to support broader protection for journalists and news organizations reporting on scientific matters. The brief argues that science reporting often includes stories about controversies and claims of misconduct or inaccuracy, and that the news media must be able to report on these matters without fear of defamation liability. This defamation case against the NY Times is on appeal to the Sixth Circuit.

3/21 – RCFP Amicus Brief: *Food Marketing Institute v. Argus Leader*
This FOIA case currently sits before the Supreme Court. The *Argus Leader* requested records from the USDA about its Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), including data on how much SNAP funding individual stores received. The trial and appeals courts agreed that USDA had to produce these records. But an industry group representing grocery stores has appealed to the Supreme Court under “Exemption 4” – which exempts from disclosure matters that are “trade secrets and commercial and financial information obtained from a person and privileged or confidential.” The amicus brief argues for disclosure of the requested information under FOIA consistent with SPJ’s mission to promote the free flow of information. A reversal in this case would likely lead to broader interpretations of exemptions, and an overall limiting of information to be disclosed by the federal government in response to FOIA requests.

3/24 - Toll v. Gillman - Nevada Shield Law Amicus Brief
We supported the Nevada Press Association’s amicus brief before the Nevada Supreme Court arguing for a broad interpretation of Nevada’s shield law to ensure that journalists who work for online publications – not just printed newspapers – receive the protections of the shield law. The trial court ruled that journalists for online publications, as opposed to print, would not be covered by the shield law in all circumstances.

4/1 - RCFP Amicus Plans: ProPublica Prior Restraint
We supported ProPublica’s challenge to a prior restraint by the Cook County Juvenile Court in Illinois. ProPublica challenged an order barring it and any other media outlets from reporting information that may identify families involved in a child welfare case, including a prohibition on publishing demographic information. The court entered the order in an attempt to protect the privacy of minors, but it is a classic prior restraint. It prohibits the news media from publishing information learned through independent reporting and, in this case, undermined the ability to report on potential systemic failures of the Illinois child welfare system.

4/5 - RCFP Amicus Brief: *Blades v. US*
We joined RCFP before the District of Columbia Court of Appeals in an unusual access case. A defendant petitioned to reverse his criminal convictions because the trial court used a “husher” (a white noise device) during jury selection to prevent the public from hearing answers by prospective jurors. We argued that permitting the public to see but not hear jurors’ answers to questions during jury selection violates the First Amendment right of access, which ensures that the process is fair, contributes to public understanding of judicial proceedings, and allows the public to serve as a check on judges, attorneys, and potential jurors. The amicus brief recognizes that there are exceptions where public disclosure may be restricted – like when a juror advises that he or she may need to disclose sensitive, private information – but in those circumstances the Supreme Court has required that the trial judge make a specific finding that disclosure would infringe a privacy interest, which did not occur here.

4/10 - News Media Coalition - Comments to FAA re: Drones
We once again joined the News Media Coalition on comments to the FAA regarding rule-making for drones. The comments were prepared by a working group of drone journalists from the Washington Post, Tegna, USA Today, Sinclair, and from the National Press Photographers Association. They argued that the FAA should continue to foster an increasingly flexible regulatory framework for the safe use of drones, and that framework should encourage innovation, foster informative journalism, and respect the First Amendment. The comments also advocate for changes in the regulations, so they don’t unnecessarily increase burdens or costs on journalists by rendering existing drone fleets obsolete, restricting innovation, or requiring journalists to undertake the responsibilities of manufacturers.

4/12- RCFP Amicus Brief: Arkansas Times v. Waldrip
The alternative newspaper Arkansas Times challenged the application of a state law that requires any state contractor to sign a certification that it will not boycott or support a boycott of Israel. The Times has run advertisements for the University of Arkansas-Pulaski Tech for years and, in October 2018 the school began insisting that the paper sign the certification. The newspaper refused and sued for a court ruling that the law does not apply to it as a news organization. The district court granted the state’s motion to dismiss, and the Times appealed to the 8th Circuit. The amicus brief argues that the state law interferes with a news organization’s editorial independence and encourages news outlets to self-censor for fear of inadvertently violating the law. A law requiring the press to take a particular position on an issue in order to receive advertising from a government entity raises significant First Amendment concerns for journalists and news organizations.

We joined RCFP before the Washington Supreme Court to argue in a public records about a disturbing trend among state legislators to exclude their offices and the state legislatures as a whole from public records laws. Some state laws explicitly exempt the legislature from the scope of the public records law but others, like Washington State’s, are not explicit and yet the legislature takes the position that it is exempt. Several media outlets have sued to access records from the Washington state legislature under the state Public Records Act. The amicus brief supports the news organization plaintiffs and emphasizes the importance of ensuring that the public is able to scrutinize the activities of their elected officials.

4/17 - Amicus Brief: Smith v. Palisades News
We supported the Palisades News, a small, community news outlet, in this defamation action before the California Court of Appeal. The News published an article about a marijuana investigation. The owner of properties raided by police sued the News for defamation and other claims, arguing the article inaccurately identified her as a cannabis operator, rather than a landlord who rents to cannabis operators. The Palisades News filed an anti-SLAPP motion, which the trial court granted as to all but the defamation cause of action. The case is now on appeal. We joined to support two separate and important legal doctrines for news media in defamation cases. The neutral reportage doctrine is a privilege that can apply to news stories reporting on public figures and events of public interest, even if some allegations or accusations are disputed, letting the press publish fair and accurate reports of accusations against public figures without fear of liability. The wire service defense protects news organizations from liability for reporting based on information from a reputable source (such as the AP.)

4/18 - Transparent GMU v. George Mason University
We joined an amicus prepared by the Brechner Center for Freedom of Information and the Student Press Law Center in this FOI case in Virginia Supreme Court. The brief supports student activists seeking financial records from the George Mason University Foundation. In a narrow application of Virginia’s
Open Records Act, the trial court held that the fundraising by a foundation for a public university is not "public business" and therefore is not subject to disclosure. The case is now on appeal before the Virginia Supreme Court. The functioning of public university foundations is clearly a matter of public interest and concern. Foundations, such as the one at George Mason University, generally hold themselves out to the public as being part of the host institution and solicit donations for the university. Moreover, foundations for universities may control billions of dollars that are ultimately dedicated to fulfilling university purposes.

4/24 - RCFP Amicus: Desmond v. News & Observer
The North Carolina Supreme Court is hearing an appeal of a $6 million jury verdict in a defamation case against the McClatchy-owned Charlotte newspaper and one of its reporters. The plaintiff, a forensic firearms examiner for the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, sued over News & Observer articles examining deficiencies in her work for the SBI. The brief argues the importance of providing breathing space for journalists to report on criminal justice issues and a lack of actual malice evidence in the record. Cases like this have a profound chilling effect on reporting on matters of public concern, including alleged misconduct by government officials.

4/24 - Gubarev v. BuzzFeed - Steele Dossier case
We joined an amicus brief in the 11th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in the BuzzFeed defamation case involving the publication of the “Steele Dossier.” A Russian tech tycoon and his companies mentioned in the dossier sued BuzzFeed for libel. The district court judge in Florida applied New York law protecting BuzzFeed by New York’s fair report privilege, dismissing the lawsuit because the publication of the dossier was part of a true and fair report on official proceedings. The plaintiffs appealed, arguing that the wholesale republication of the dossier is not a “fair and true report on a public proceeding” because it contains unverified accusations by a private individual (Christopher Steele) and the dossier was merely in the hands of government officials, not in itself a public proceeding or report. The amicus brief argues in favor of the broad application of New York’s fair report privilege because the dossier was part of the government’s investigation and relied upon by government officials. A strong fair report privilege provides critical protection for journalists reporting on government matters and the conduct of government officials.

4/26 - Amicus Brief in Barr v. [Redacted/Under Seal]
National Security Letters (NSLs) are an extraordinary search procedure similar to subpoenas that give the US government the power to compel disclosure of information as part of national security-related investigations. They let agencies like the FBI prevent an organization that receives an NSL from disclosing the fact that it got the request if disclosure may threaten national security or interfere with a pending investigation. In this case, the defendant is an undisclosed telecommunications or tech company that received three NSLs issued by the FBI. The district court ordered that the defendant comply with the nondisclosure requirements of the NSLs. The defendant appealed and is challenging the unlimited duration of the court-ordered nondisclosure requirements imposed upon it. The brief argues that temporally unlimited gag orders accompanying NSLs violate the First Amendment, and that the media and electronic service providers have reciprocal First Amendment interests in contributing to the public debate over government surveillance generally and NSLs specifically, providing important oversight and promoting public scrutiny. NSLs in the digital age pose particularly acute First Amendment concerns due to their proliferation and the vast quantities of data they seek.

5/3 - RCFP Amicus Brief: Frasier v. Evans
This is a topic the LDF has supported many times: the right to video record the police while they are in
public performing their official duties. This before the US Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit seeks to protect the rights of journalists or members of the public to photograph and record public events in public areas. It is central to the First Amendment right to gather and publish news and information on public officials and employees.

5/7 - “Press the Flesh” lobbying campaign for a federal shield law
The committee awarded $1,500 for “Press the Flesh,” a campaign to educate students and promote shield law protections. The grant supports a program to teach students how to lobby for a shield law and other free press issues on Capitol Hill this fall. The funds will help pay travel and meal expenses for the students and instructors.

5/7 - “The Right to Record” program
The committee awarded $2,500 for one of four training programs during which the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) will train law enforcement on the rights of the press and public to film police officers in public. The request from Mickey Osterreicher, the General Counsel to the NPPA, like the previous program, advances the goals and mission of the LDF by enhancing and protecting public access to government information.

5/10 - RCPF Amicus Brief: In re Fine Point Films & Trevor Birney. (No Stone Unturned)
In a rare-for-LDF international case, we joined this brief in the Belfast High Court of Ireland in In re Fine Point Films & Trevor Birney. The case concerns the documentary film, No Stone Unturned, which was directed by Alex Gibney, an RFCP Steering Committee member. The film explores the unsolved 1994 Loughinisland massacre in Northern Island, ultimately revealing the likely suspect in the case and exposing possible cover-up by authorities. After the documentary premiered, two of the filmmakers Gibney worked with were arrested for stealing an unpublished draft of a government report that was featured in the film and was sent to the filmmakers anonymously. Police also got a search warrant to both filmmakers’ homes and seized millions of documents containing sensitive journalistic work product concerning both No Stone Unturned and unrelated investigations. The brief addresses US laws as a point of comparison in international law for the Court to consider in determining whether the police’s actions in the case violated UK law and the European Convention on Human Rights. It discusses protections in US law for publication of lawfully acquired, newsworthy information, protections against the search and seizure of journalists’ work product, and state shield laws.

5/13 - RCPF Amicus Brief – Center for Investigative Reporting v. SEPTA
We supported the Center for Investigative Journalism (CIR) in making a First Amendment challenge against the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA) for SEPTA’s rejection of CIR’s advertisements promoting its journalism on racial disparities in mortgage lending. The case before the US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, challenges policies that ban advertisements in public transit systems, including on buses, based on viewpoint. Allowing the policies to stand effectively creates an unconstitutional “heckler’s veto” because it enables the potential reactions of third parties to restrict wide swaths of speech on matters of public concern.

5/16 - RCFP Amicus Brief: PEN American Center v. Trump
We supported PEN America in its lawsuit against President Trump alleging that he has violated the First Amendment by retaliating against or constraining speech critical of him or his administration. In this brief we and other media amici are arguing to the Court that it should allow organizations like PEN America, RCFP, or even SPJ, to sue on behalf of news organizations to protect First Amendment rights because those organizations may not have the resources and time to do so. PEN America argues that it
has diverted resources from its overseas projects to address the President’s alleged unconstitutional conduct.

5/22 – Grant to Nick Ochsner/WBTV
The committee awarded $2500 to Nick Ochsner, an investigative reporter for WBTV in Charlotte, North Carolina, to unseal court records in a lawsuit against the Roman Catholic Diocese about alleged sexual abuse by priests. Ochsner has been reporting on a victim lawsuit and has been requesting the unsealing of some evidence involving exhibits to the Diocese’ motion for summary judgment. The Court has not responded to his correspondence so Ochsner will use this funding to sue to force the unsealing. Because this sealed evidence could be used by the Court to adjudicate the case to a final disposition – the Court could grant the Diocese’s motion and dismiss the case – there are strong arguments for disclosure because information upon which the Court relies in adjudicating a case should be publicly available.

5/28 - RCFP Amicus Brief: NLG v. City of Hayward
This issue impacts almost all reporters: the high cost of public records requests. This brief asks the California Supreme Court to look at the amount of fees that can be charged in responding to a public records request. The case involves requests for bodycam video footage for which the City of Hayward charged more than $3,000, including searching for and redacting the videos. The intermediate appellate court upheld the fees. We ask for a reversal, noting that if the lower court ruling stands, this will impose substantial burdens on access to electronic records, particularly by freelance journalists, nonprofit news organizations, and smaller newsrooms. A broad directive from the California Supreme Court on the importance of maintaining low barriers to access, as mandated both under the state public records statute and the state Constitution, would help further public access to information on governmental bodies and advance the core mission of the LDF.

6/4 - Amicus Brief: Washington Post v. McManus
We joined a brief to challenge a Maryland law that that regulates online political advertising. It departs from the usual practice of placing the burden solely on the candidates, campaigns, and others who advertise by requiring publishers and other organizations that host online campaign and issue ads to publish information about those ads (including proprietary details about audience and ad pricing) within 48 hours of accepting any political ad. It requires complex and costly new recordkeeping, with Maryland being able to demand records on 48 hours’ notice. Those who don’t or can’t comply risk injunctions, civil fines and criminal penalties for hosting noncompliant ads, with no guaranteed notice or opportunity to object. This places significant potential costs and burdens on news organizations to monitor, collect, and report on information on such advertising. The brief argues that the statute violates the First Amendment because it imposes regulation not just on the advertisers (the candidate, campaign, or PAC) but on the on-line platform itself.

6/10 - RCFP Amicus Brief: US v. Schulte
We asked the Second Circuit US Court of Appeals to support a defendant’s efforts to allow public access to the search warrant information. Lower courts sealed the warrants and affidavits without considering the public’s common law right of access to search warrant materials in a case where the defendant – a former CIA worker who was accused of leaking classified information – was found to have possessed thousands of images of child pornography. He was initially indicted on those charges. Notwithstanding the charges against the defendant, we agreed his arguments for access to the judicial records are well-founded
In yet another case of sealed court documents, we joined RCFP in two cases pending before the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit supporting the unsealing of court filings (including the docket sheet itself, briefs, and judicial rulings) in a federal court contempt proceeding brought against Facebook by the Justice Department. DOJ sought a “technical assistance order” against Facebook so the government could wiretap certain voice communications made over Facebook Messenger. Facebook refused to comply. DOJ then moved for contempt and while the district court apparently denied to hold Facebook in contempt, it did allow the entire proceeding to remain under seal. The district court denied two motions to unseal, one by the Washington Post and the other by a group including the ACLU and others. The amicus argues that the First Amendment right of access applies to the sealed information; and that “the public, and journalists in particular, have a powerful interest in understanding the legal arguments the government is advancing and courts are accepting or rejecting regarding attempts to circumvent encryption,” especially because journalists often use encrypted communications to communicate with confidential sources.

6/26 - Amicus Brief: ALDF v. Reynolds
We joined an amicus in a case that could target journalists relying on sources that work in “agricultural facilities.” The 8th Circuit is considering Iowa’s “ag-gag” statute, which criminalizes gaining access to an “agricultural facility” under false pretenses. The statute’s language is broad in covering conspiracy and aiding and abetting, potentially causing a chilling effect on reporting matters concerning public safety. SPJ previously joined similar briefs in cases involving the Idaho, Utah, and North Carolina statutes.

7/8 - RCFP Amicus Brief: Gruber v. Yelp
We joined a case that could have criminalized taking notes of telephone conversations, a regular practice of working journalists that ensures accuracy of news reports and helps protect reporters from defamation liability. The case involves interpretation of California’s wiretap statute and whether Yelp violated the statute by conducting “one-way recording” of its employees. This means the employees, but not customers or users who call in, are recorded. The plaintiff is arguing for a very broad interpretation of what constitutes “illegal recording” under the statute, saying whether his voice was recorded “is not relevant.” The amicus brief supports a reasonable interpretation of the statute that would benefit journalists.

We supported the San Diego Union-Tribune in a California Public Records Act (CPRA) case that involves “reverse CPRA” actions in which a government agency sues to get a ruling saying it doesn’t have to respond to public records requests. The lawsuits are a way for government agencies to short circuit the public records process and potentially avoid paying attorneys’ fees in a regular CPRA action if a requester prevails. The Union-Tribune prevailed in a reverse CPRA action for documents from the Metropolitan Water District and was awarded fees. The Water District appealed on the attorneys’ fee issue, so the newspaper cross-appealed arguing that the appeals court should reconsider the propriety of reverse CPRA actions. The amicus shows how reverse CPRA actions are detrimental to journalists and news organizations (and others) seeking access to public records, and that the California appellate court ruling that opened the door to many of these reverse CPRA cases was wrongly decided. There has been a great deal of litigation over reverse CPRA actions and the Union-Tribune is taking the lead in trying to diminish the effectiveness of such cases.
7/31 - SPJ Legal Defense Fund Request - Oklahoma public records matter
The committee awarded $2,000 in an unusual FOI matter. Marquette University journalism professor A.J. Wagner and his research team have made public records requests to various government offices in different states as part of a project to examine “which statutory, demographic and psychographic variables produce the best results in public records request.” They sent a set of public records requests to the Sheriff’s Office of Custer County, Oklahoma seeking incident reports. The sheriff agreed to produce the documents for inspection, but refused to email them even though they already were in electronic form, claiming that the Oklahoma public records law only requires that they be made available on the premises to be copied or inspected. Wagner filed suit seeking an order that failure to send the records by email constituted a violation of the public records law. By requiring in-person inspection, the Oklahoma law clearly disadvantages those who are out-of-state or far from a government office. A favorable ruling that the Oklahoma law requires production by email of electronic public records would be a huge benefit to journalists and the public who otherwise would have to travel long distances and incur substantial expense to obtain public records.

8/3 - RCFP Amicus Brief: Amadis v. Dep’t of State
We joined a brief in a FOIA case before the DC Circuit where the new foreseeable harm standard which was added as part of the FOIA amendments in 2016 will likely be interpreted. The RCFP brief advocates in favor of an interpretation that requires a heavy burden for agencies. They must provide concrete evidence individualized to each specific record that establishes harm due to disclosure of the record and not merely recite speculative or generic claims of potential harm.

We added our support in a constitutional challenge to an Arkansas “ag-gag” law. We’ve previously joined similar briefs challenging these laws in other states (most recently the Iowa statute in June). This law criminalizes recording images or sound within an agricultural facility and using the recording in a way that damages the employer at the facility. The amicus brief focuses on the impact that such a law has on newsgathering, including that it chills and stifles reporter-source relationships.
MEMORANDUM

FROM: Colin DeVries, Membership Chair
TO: SPJ Board of Directors
RE: Update for Board
DATE: Aug. 19, 2019

Executive Summary

Following the reconstitution of the SPJ Membership Committee, which consists of eight members representing seven of the 12 SPJ regions, the committee has been working toward the completing a number of goals previously outlined. We have also assisted the national board launch a four-week summer membership drive, which has yield some good results for membership nationally. The committee intends to meet during the SPJ Convention during Excellence in Journalism in San Antonio to discuss how to move forward on our goals to streamline our key messages for members and assist in developing strong recruitment and retention strategies. The committee meeting will be open to the membership at large and new ideas to keep us moving forward are always welcome.

Goals

- Review onboarding e-mails and letters.
- Update the Programs in a Box tool kit for local chapters to drive membership
- Reboot #SPJ4all social campaign. For fall so students can participate. Collaboration with Diversity Committee.
- Student back-to-school membership sale
- Integrated membership promotions around SPJ Communities (Gen J, Freelance, Digital, International, Community Journalism)
- Campaign highlighting current members on perks/benefits – How SPJ Helped Me #humansofspj
- Help develop a timely notification system for post-grad membership to all graduating student SPJ members
  - Automatic connection for post-grads into Gen J Community
- A potential date for an "ask a friend to join SPJ" campaign.
- Develop mentorship program between professionals and students/post-grads
MEMORANDUM

FROM: Matt Hall  
TO: SPJ Board of Directors  
DATE: Aug. 29, 2019

In October 2018, Society of Professional Journalists President Alex Tarquinio formed a task force, chaired by SPJ Secretary-Treasurer Matthew T. Hall, to review and update SPJ board policies and post them prominently on the SPJ website. They appointed board members Lauren Bartlett and Andy Schotz, regional coordinator Kathryn Jones and former board member Bill McCloskey to it.

Below is an overview of our work, our proposed policy manual and a list of policies as they exist.

Hall initially reviewed all SPJ meeting minutes on SPJ’s website dating to 1999, then assembled all relevant policies with input from several staff and SPJ members, including past president Irwin Gratz and McCloskey, who helped lead efforts to compile SPJ policies in 2000 and 2011, respectively. By spring 2019, Hall had compiled dozens of policies dating back to 1996 for the task force to consider for a new, comprehensive policy manual. Minor changes are suggested to reflect the SPJ Foundation’s new name, SPJ’s shift from regional directors to regional coordinators, and a smaller board’s elimination of its executive committee. Larger suggestions include new awards and transparency policies, a more concise conflict of interest policy, campaign guidelines that permit board member endorsements, reimbursement guidelines that detail use and oversight of the funds, a proposal to eliminate five-year term limits for national committee chairs and the repeal of old meeting and non-media company convention sponsorship policies. We have highlighted these significant changes in bold below to call them to your attention. The task force tabled a potential code of conduct when only Hall supported it.

Our report and recommendations follow many electronic discussions and four telephonic meetings. We met on June 26 and July 17 for about an hour, and on July 24 and Aug. 7 for about two hours. All decisions were made by consensus but one. Lauren and Andy wanted the executive director hiring policy to require “at least two” candidates be sent to the board to have multiple options. Matt, Kathryn and Bill wanted to maintain the current “one or more” as a best practice, so as not to lose a great candidate looking for a second one. Let’s discuss this at EIJ20.

We propose that these policies be subject to biennial review by the incoming president, not just evaluated every 10 years or so. Board members should be given the policies each year by staff when a new board is seated and read them closely so staff and volunteers can comply with all policies and can change with the times. Suggested improvements should always be considered.

We ask that you approve this new policy manual now, and that staff post it in a convenient place on our website and share it with SPJ board members annually after each election. Thank you.

Matt, Lauren, Andy, Kathryn and Bill  

Aug. 12, 2019

Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications selection policy (recommend with minor changes)
1. The SPJ position on the ACEJMC is a position that interested SPJ members apply to be considered for. The applicants are considered by the full board and subject to board ratification.

2. The SPJ representative will serve for a term of three years.

3. The SPJ representative should be a working journalist.

4. The SPJ representative will submit reports to the board, detailing their activity, for the spring and fall board meeting packets.

5. SPJ will pay the annual membership fee and the representative’s travel expenses to council meetings.

Adopted April 16, 2016

***

Awards recommendations policy (recommend as newly proposed)

With nominations solicited from members and open to anyone, the following committees will rank and recommend finalists by June 1 in the event of a September annual convention — or three months before the convention otherwise — to the full SPJ board for its approval:

• The Awards & Honors Committee will solicit nominees and rank and recommend finalists for:
  
  A. the Historic Site in Journalism
  B. the Howard S. Dubin Outstanding Pro Member (Large and Small) Award
  C. The Fellows of the Society

• The SPJ FOI Committee will solicit nominees and rank and recommend up to three finalists for the Sunshine Award.

• The Ethics Committee will solicit nominees and rank and recommend one or more finalists for the Ethics in Journalism Award winners.

• The Journalism Education Committee will solicit nominees and rank and recommend finalists for:
  
  A. the David L. Eshelman Outstanding SPJ Campus Adviser Award
  B. the Robert D.G. Lewis First Amendment Award
  C. the Distinguished Teaching in Journalism Award

• The SPJ board will choose the Wells Memorial Key recipient(s) by June 30 in advance of a September annual convention — or at least 60 days before the convention otherwise. The board will take into account member comments and suggestions regarding nominees. After the Wells Key presentation at the annual banquet, the board will explain why it picked that year’s recipient(s). The Wells Key should be given to a person attending the convention.

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Board meetings policy (recommend to repeal)

It is the policy of the Society of Professional Journalists to fervently endeavor to hold its meetings and conduct its business openly. The board of directors and executive committee may exclude other parties from their meetings only rarely and under these strict limits:

1. To discuss the employment, discipline, compensation, resignation or performance of officers or employees over whom they have authority;

2. To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice or to discuss pending or potential litigation;

3. To consider the acquisition, sale or lease of real property; or

4. To comply with a legally-imposed requirements that matters be kept confidential.

The board of directors or executive committee may close a meeting only by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present.

The agenda must be announced in advance, as specifically as possible without violating the reason for the confidentiality.

No binding vote can be taken in closed session.

Adopted Oct. 2, 1999

***

Board transparency policy (recommend as newly proposed)

The Society of Professional Journalists is built on the foundation of the First Amendment and values transparency and openness. SPJ believes that the business of its members should be done before the members and invites everyone to participate. SPJ also believes that information about the organization should be shared publicly in a timely manner. The board adopts the following practices to foster accountability.

Meetings

SPJ national meetings must follow the spirit of open meeting laws.

• The president will finalize and the staff will post meeting time, date, and venue information at least one week in advance for members and the public. It also will share the information in a prominent place on the home page of SPJ’s website and multiple times on social media and other platforms. Staff will include meeting information in at least one email to members.
• Regular board meeting agendas will be posted at least 72 hours in advance. Special meetings or emergency meeting agendas will be posted at least 24 hours in advance.

• The board will allow any member or the public to observe all open meetings, whether in person, by teleconference or by videoconference. The president and board will provide a public comment period at each meeting to let people comment on topics they wish to bring up. The president has the discretion to limit the time for each speaker. When the SPJ board meets electronically, it should make every effort to include the public to the full extent that the board and staff can participate, including the ability to listen and to speak during the public comment period.

• The secretary-treasurer will finalize and the staff will post a meeting summary on the national website within a week of the meeting, so members can stay up to date on board actions. The summary will include the specifics of any decisions or votes, including how the members voted if the vote was not unanimous. The secretary-treasurer also will prepare, and the staff will post, draft minutes within two weeks of the meeting. The board will review and vote on minutes at the next meeting. The staff shall archive, share and make available easily through a website search all meeting summaries, meeting minutes and recordings of meetings. The meeting summaries and minutes will be posted on SPJ.org.

• The board will account for circumstances where private discussion among leaders is necessary, similar to state open meeting laws. Typical exemptions that might allow meeting in “executive session” include personnel decisions, property or contract negotiations, certain award decisions, pending/potential litigation and to comply with legally imposed requirements that matters be kept confidential. Any votes taken in executive session must be reported without violating the reason for the confidentiality when the board returns to public session.

• Board committee and task force meetings should be accessible to everyone. Members of SPJ or the public should be allowed to monitor teleconference and videoconference meetings held by these groups and attend those held in person. Anyone interested should contact the committee or task force chair in advance to get information to listen in on a meeting.

• At each meeting of the board and delegates, the president shall designate a parliamentarian who shall rule on any questions of procedure, using the bylaws and Robert’s Rules of Order. The parliamentarian shall be announced when agendas are posted and be noted in the minutes.

Records and Communications

Society records and communications should be as open as possible to foster understanding, trust and efficiency. In general, just as with meetings, the essence of state public record laws should apply to SPJ functions, in spirit and/or letter.

• SPJ national leaders and staff won’t make an organizational announcement outside of business hours – except when deemed necessary by the executive director and president, with an explanation why it is being made after hours. Business hours are based on the time zone where SPJ headquarters is located.

• SPJ open meetings will be recorded, archived and made available online, such as on SPJ’s YouTube channel. Recordings will be posted within three business days after the meeting.
• SPJ headquarters staff, at the direction of board leadership, will make available online governance documents, including bylaws, policies, annual IRS 990 forms, approved annual budgets, meeting agendas, meeting minutes and reports.

• SPJ headquarters staff, at the direction of board leadership, will provide multiple public forums for members to share information, discuss issues and network, such as the various blogs on spj.org and the organization’s social media channels.

• SPJ national leaders and/or headquarters staff will respond promptly, ideally the same day, to requests about the organization from members, the media or the public.

• SPJ national leaders and staff will account for legitimate circumstances when society records and communications should be kept secret, such as records related to personnel, contracts and litigation. Disclosed records should be reviewed and redacted so as not to share personal information, such as Social Security numbers.

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Campaign guidelines (recommend as amended)

These election campaign guidelines should be followed by all candidates for the SPJ national board of directors and regional coordinators. Candidates with questions should ask the SPJ Nominations Committee Chair or the Executive Director.

Headquarters staff will format and send to members emails compiling messages from all announced candidates three times during the election cycle for the announced candidates. The Executive Director will determine the timing of the staff campaign transmissions. The preferred timetable is four weeks, two weeks and one week before the convention.

No candidate may use the membership database for campaign or political purposes.

Candidate speeches will be no more than three minutes in duration and will be delivered during the opening business meeting. Those speeches will be streamed live and made available on the election home page as soon as possible after they are delivered. The order in which candidates give speeches will be based on the alphabetical order of their last names.

While candidates, because of hotel contract restrictions, may not post signs in the convention hotel, fliers, buttons and other literature may be distributed.

Contact the SPJ Executive Director (or designee) to arrange for display space near the convention’s registration area or trade show. All candidates will receive information about board and committee meetings before the convention.

Candidates are encouraged to attend board and committee meetings that are applicable to their prospective position. Candidates may purchase advertising space in Quill, the convention program or
SPJ’s convention electronic publication at rates discounted 50% off the current rate card. Contact SPJ Executive Director (or designee) for information.

Revised April 28, 2012

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Composition of national committees policy (recommend as amended with one change eliminating the term limits as described in the intro)

To help groom new leadership and have effective advocacy, SPJ shall once a year invite all members in good standing to apply to serve on SPJ’s national committees. Furthermore, each SPJ national committee shall:
— not exceed 15 members.
— have only one chairperson. Chairs may name vice chairs as appropriate.
— have committee members be appointed to serve one term concurrent with the length of the national president’s term. National committee members must be reappointed by each subsequent national president, who should strive to ensure each national committee has a diversity of gender, age, ethnicity and professional discipline.

Adopted April 7, 2007

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Conflict of interest policy (recommend as amended and condensed; statement as is)

SPJ staff, volunteers, national board members and regional coordinators must disclose when they have any actual or potential conflicts of interest, or perceived conflicts, between the interests of the Society of Professional Journalists on one hand, and personal, professional, and business interests on the other.

Examples of an actual or potential conflict include (but are not limited to):
• Having a parent, sibling, child, spouse or significant other, who, individually or with an entity, is in, or seeking to be in, a business or financial relationship with SPJ
• Voting on any proposal that could financially benefit or otherwise reward a) the person who votes or b) an entity in which the person has an ownership, employment or financial connection

If there is even the slightest doubt, a person should disclose.

Disclosure must be made:
• Before or during a meeting of the board in which the conflict topic is to be discussed, and at the first meeting following annual board elections or an appointment. The person must disclose the conflict aloud and it will be recorded in the meeting minutes. The rest of the board, with the advice of an attorney if necessary, shall determine if disclosure is enough or if the board member must be recused. For an actual conflict, the person shall exit the meeting before any discussion of the conflict topic begins and shall not participate or vote.
• Through a written form that all board members sign each year, at the first meeting following annual board elections or an appointment. The form shall be kept on file at SPJ headquarters, and should allow for a full, written disclosure of interests, relationships, and holdings that could potentially result in a conflict of interest.
• As soon as practical, for regional coordinators.

Society of Professional Journalists Conflict of Interest Policy Statement

The standard of behavior at the Society of Professional Journalists is that all staff, volunteers, and board members scrupulously avoid conflicts of interest between the interests of the Society of Professional Journalists on one hand, and personal, professional, and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding potential and actual conflicts of interest, as well as perceptions of conflicts of interest.

I understand that the purposes of this policy are to protect the integrity of the Society of Professional Journalists’ decision-making process, to enable our constituencies to have confidence in our integrity, and to protect the integrity and reputations of volunteers, staff and board members.

Upon or before election, hiring or appointment, I will make a full, written disclosure of interests, relationships, and holdings that could potentially result in a conflict of interest.

This written disclosure will be kept on file and I will update it as appropriate.

In the course of meetings or activities, I will disclose any interests in a transaction or decision where I (including my business or other nonprofit affiliations), my family and/or my significant other, employer, close associates will receive a benefit or gain. It is my responsibility to state my connection and potential conflict on any topic as it comes up during a discussion. After disclosure, I will remove myself from the discussion and leave the meeting, unless I am called on to answer questions. I will not vote on the topic.

I understand that this policy is meant to supplement good judgment, and I will respect its spirit as well as its wording.

Signed: ___________________________________________ Date: _____________

Printed Name: ___________________________________________________________

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Convention registration bag policy (recommend with minor changes)

Non-SPJ items included in the registration bags at SPJ's national convention must be:

• An item or information that promotes the host city or a specific tourist venue; or
• An item or information from an organization participating in SPJ’s national convention as a sponsor, advertiser or exhibitor.

SPJ's marketing director or director of events shall compile an inventory of registration bag contents and ensure the above policy is followed.
Adopted Feb. 3, 1996

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Convention voting transparency policy (recommend with minor changes)

At SPJ’s annual convention, resolutions and bylaws amendments may be brought to the floor for a vote by delegates. During the convention, SPJ members elect national officers and directors for the coming year through an electronic process. The Society shall 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, the staff shall prepare video and printed training materials to familiarize delegates and alternate delegates with the standing rules of the convention and voting procedures. These materials shall be available on convention web pages for viewing and downloading. The 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, the 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, the 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. The 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 coordinator 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. Regional coordinators’ reports will be published in an appropriate place on the SPJ website.

*Adopted April 30, 2015*

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**Discretionary spending policy (recommend with minor changes)**

The board shall approve any expenditure over $5,000 that is not authorized in the annual budget.

*Adopted Sept. 6, 2017*

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**EIJ sponsorship policy (recommend maintaining without change)**

- Both media and non-media entities will be allowed to sponsor sessions/events, and to propose session ideas and speakers. Proposals will be vetted by the EIJ Planning Committee. Once proposals are accepted, the Committee and its designated producer will assume full responsibility for participants, topics, times, places, etc.
- Neither media nor non-media entities may offer speaking fees for sessions/events they sponsor. SPJ, RTDNA or the EIJ Planning Committee may choose in certain circumstances to use sponsor or grant monies to provide fees to speakers.
- Neither media nor non-media entities may cover expenses for speakers participating in sessions/events they sponsor. SPJ, RTDNA or the EIJ Planning Committee may choose in certain circumstances to use sponsor or grant monies to cover speaker expenses.
- EIJ partners will retain the right of refusal over all sponsors, exhibitors or advertisers, with contracts reviewed by the executive directors of partner groups before accepting.
- EIJ partners will disclose its policies on sponsorship of sessions/events to potential sponsors in sales materials for EIJs and other appropriate publications or web pages.

*Approved Feb. 2, 2019*
Electronic voting policy (recommend as condensed)

The SPJ board may vote unanimously via email, but a single vote shall make moot any motion.

Confirmed on March 15, 2004 and again on Sept. 24, 2010

Executive director evaluation policy (recommend with minor changes)

The executive director shall be evaluated annually by the president of SPJ, the president-elect of SPJ and the president of the SPJ Foundation. The evaluation committee will share its findings with the SPJ and SPJ Foundation boards, and may recommend that the SPJ Board of Directors search for a new executive director.

Proposed Sept. 18, 2015

Executive director hiring policy (recommend with minor changes)

The presidents of SPJ and the SPJ Foundation shall appoint an equal number of members to a search committee. The SPJ president shall appoint one additional member to serve as committee chairman with voting privileges. The committee will forward a list of one or more candidates it deems qualified, from which the SPJ Board of Directors will vote to hire the executive director. The SPJ Board of Directors shall immediately notify the SPJ Foundation of its decision.

Proposed Sept. 18, 2015

Investment policy (recommend with one change)

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

A. Standard of Care 1) In managing the assets of the Society of Professional Journalists, the board of directors shall use the care, skill, prudence, and diligence under the circumstances as any reasonable person.
B. Asset Management 1) The board shall have the authority to obtain the services of professional asset managers and to dismiss same as necessary.

C. Diversification 1) The board shall supervise the diversification of the assets of the funds, plans and program. This will be done to minimize the risk of large losses unless circumstances make it clearly prudent not to diversify.

D. Restrictions 1) Fixed income securities may be purchased where issued or guaranteed by the United States Treasury, government sponsored enterprises, or corporate bonds rated by Moody’s or Standard and Poor’s. International Securities may also be purchased. Convertible securities will be considered as equity securities. An average Standard and Poor’s credit rating of “AA,” or the equivalent, should be maintained. Commercial paper should be rated P-1 by Moody’s Investor Service Inc., A-1 Standard and Poor’s, or F-1 by Fitch’s and certificates of deposit or banker’s acceptances of the one hundred (100) largest commercial banks in the United States, or deposit or banker’s acceptance (in appropriate amounts) are fully insured by an agency of the federal government.

2) No direct investments shall be made in commodities, commodity contracts, futures, future contracts, oil/gas, mineral leases, mineral rights, or royalty contracts.

3) No direct transactions in short sales, options, puts, calls, straddles and/or spreads shall be used. Covered call options strategies on equities can be pursued on a limited basis. Real Estate Investment Trusts (REIT) are permitted on a limited basis.

4) No investment shall knowingly be made in which any officer or director of the SPJ board of directors has a known significant financial interest.

5) SPJ may invest in mutual funds which are quoted by the National Association of Securities Dealers.

6) SPJ retains the right to remove any stock or bond from the portfolio if it feels that the issuing body or company sells products or services not in harmony with the Society’s goals.

II. INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES

Recognizing the need to manage day-to-day operations; fiduciary responsibility to our members; and desire for a prudent guide for the present and future direction of our assets, our investment priorities shall be:

A. Liquidity 1) To maintain sufficient liquidity to provide for all anticipated withdrawals or transfers and to invest in issues with sufficient marketability to provide for unexpected withdrawals.

B. Stability 1) To maintain a high level of stability and security in the Society by minimizing risk and volatility insofar as possible within the rate of return objectives.

C. Steady income from interest and dividends 1) Earned interest and dividends may be re-invested or used for day- to-day operations.
D. Preservation of Capital 1) To preserve the capital investment of the Society only after ensuring the previous three objectives are being met.

III. INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

1) To achieve the Society’s investment objectives, we will place tight parameters on investment decisions and advisors. These would include a low to moderate risk tolerance in every portion of the portfolio. We wish to avoid large swings in portfolio value and will not accept short-term fluctuation to try to achieve a higher return.

2) The Society’s executive director shall review account balances monthly and suggest investment changes to the board of directors when appropriate.

3) The executive director will share investment performance with the board of directors at the time quarterly financials are issued, and monthly investment reports shall be subject to review by the secretary-treasurer and finance committee.

*Adopted June 22, 2013*

***

Non-media company convention sponsorship policy *(recommend to repeal)*

1. No money will be accepted from domestic or foreign governments, or from partisan political organizations.

2. Non-media contributors will be disclosed to all convention attendees on a handout or program spread that also includes our sponsorship policy.

3. Specific portions of the convention must not be named after non-media companies with the exception of the venue.

4. SPJ will control all aspects of the convention program. All convention programs will be on the record. People and organizations with positions directly opposed to those of any contributor may be invited to appear.

5. Acceptance of any contribution does not imply endorsement of the contributor’s products, service or point of view.

SPJ reserves a right of prior approval for any material available and presentations at all sponsored events.

7. SPJ reserves the right to reject any contribution.

Non-media organizations such as law firms with significant media practices, will be treated as media contributors for the purpose of this policy if they have some record of pro bono work for journalists or frequent contributions to our programs.
Nothing in these rules prohibits the sale of advertising in any convention-related publication, including, but not limited to, the program, The Working Press and any special-issue magazine.

Amended May 3, 2008

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Reimbursement guidelines for board members and regional coordinators (recommend as amended)

REIMBURSEMENT STIPENDS

As of Fiscal Year 2019, SPJ Board Members and Regional Coordinators receive the following annual reimbursement stipends for work and travel done on behalf of SPJ:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Stipend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President-Elect</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary-Treasurer</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At-Large Directors (4)</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Appointees (2)</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Coordinators (12)</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REIMBURSEMENT GUIDELINES

Board Members and Regional Coordinators receive annual reimbursement stipends for work they do on behalf of the Society. They have a fiduciary responsibility to the Society and stipends must be used strictly for work related to SPJ. Stipends shall run from annual convention to annual convention. The secretary-treasurer shall be responsible for monitoring the expenses.

Approved reimbursements include:

- Airfare
- Car rental
- Mileage for personal vehicle (50 cents per mile)
- Lodging
- Meals
- Miscellaneous travel expenses, including parking fees, cab fares and toll fees

The following expenses will not be reimbursed:

- National convention and regional conference registration fees (including meal event tickets)
- Alcohol-related expenses
- Entertainment
The goal of the stipend is to offset travel expenses for board members who travel around the country for SPJ business, as well as Regional Coordinators who travel to the annual convention and around their own regions. All parties should use their best judgment when requesting reimbursements.

Board members and Regional Coordinators should make every effort to stretch the SPJ dollar by using the least expensive form of travel.

Board members and Regional Coordinators are free to secure their own lodging for any SPJ event. However, the reimbursement request must not exceed the rate at the “headquarters” hotel.

Expenses incurred for spouses/significant others are not eligible for reimbursement.

A key word to insert before all eligible reimbursements is “reasonable.” SPJ does not expect volunteers to stay in shoddy hotels and eat every meal at fast-food establishments. Likewise, staying at five-star hotels and dining at expensive restaurants every night similarly are discouraged.

REIMBURSEMENT REQUESTS

Requests should be submitted using an SPJ expense report form (available at www.spj.org). Receipts or copies of receipts must be included with all reimbursement requests.

All requests for reimbursement should be submitted within 30 days to SPJ headquarters. Expense reports submitted more than 60 days after the expenses have been incurred shall not be reimbursed, at the discretion of the executive director.

The reimbursement stipend timeline runs from the close of the national convention to the close of the following national convention in accordance with board member terms.

Stipends shall not be used for any purpose other than reimbursing approved SPJ-related expenses except that at year’s end, all board members’ unspent expense reimbursements will revert to the general fund for reimbursement of those individuals who had expenses in excess of their limit. These excess reimbursements will be applied pro rata when necessary.

Questions about reimbursements or requests for waivers should be directed to SPJ’s executive director.

Approved April 15, 2018

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Release of LDF applicant information policy (recommend as amended)

The Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) will not publicize personally identifying information from Legal Defense Fund (LDF) applications beyond LDF committee and subcommittee members, members of SPJ’s national board and select members of SPJ’s administrative staff.

However, SPJ may publicize non-personally identifying details from LDF applications to promote awareness and understanding of an issue. The publicity of such details shall require approval from SPJ’s national president.
Once an LDF grant has been awarded, SPJ shall publicize identifying information about the grant recipient. Portions of the recipient’s application may be publicized, with the applicant’s consent, to promote awareness and understanding of an issue.

*Adopted April 7, 2007*

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**Sponsor disclosure policy (recommend as amended)**

The Society of Professional Journalists sometimes solicits cash and in-kind contributions from individuals and organizations outside of its national convention.

(1) For such events coordinated by the national headquarters that require SPJ fundraising, underwriting and/or partnerships, the Society shall disclose to its members and event attendees the following information:
(a) a list of the general sponsorship opportunities, including dollar ranges. The list shall include the names of sponsors grouped by their sponsorship level.
(b) a list of all other contributors of cash and in-kind goods and services
(c) the Society's contribution and donor-disclosure policies

(2) The Society shall disclose, upon request, the dollar amounts of all contributors.

(3) The Society shall disclose this information proactively, using the most effective media, so that the information is readily available to event attendees and to members at the time they receive mailings or otherwise come into contact with the product or service connected with outside financial support.

(4) Disclosure statements shall include a disclaimer that says acceptance of a contribution does not mean the Society endorses the contributor or its products, services or viewpoints.

*Adopted April 26, 2003*

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**Third-party records policy (recommend as amended)**

The Society of Professional Journalists, or Society, shall conduct its business openly and transparently.

Upon request, the Society shall provide its members with the details of its approved transactions with third parties. Within five business days of receiving a records request, the Society must respond by either providing the information in the format requested (e.g. electronic, hard copy); acknowledge the request and provide a reasonable estimate of the time required to respond to the request; or deny the record request.

Additional time may be needed to have the requestor clarify the request; assemble the information; notify third parties of the request; or determine whether any information requested should be denied in
whole or in part. A majority of the Society's board must vote to deny a records request and SPJ's executive director will provide the requestor with a written explanation for that denial.

A reasonable fee will be assessed to recover the actual costs to gather and make copies of the records request. The requestor will be notified beforehand and will receive an itemized estimate as to this cost. The fee should be waived, as determined by the Society's executive director, should the request be for the good of the Society. Making information available electronically, at no charge, is preferred.

Adopted April 7, 2007

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Whistleblower policy for SPJ/SPJ Foundation (recommend with minor changes)

General

The Society of Professional Journalists ("SPJ") and the SPJ Foundation ("Foundation") (collectively, the "Organization") require directors, officers and employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As employees and representatives of the Organization, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

Reporting Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all directors, officers and employees to report violations or suspected violations in accordance with this Whistleblower Policy.

No Retaliation

No director, officer or employee who in good faith reports a violation (hereafter, a "report of wrongdoing"), including, but not limited to, a report of wrongdoing concerning accounting, internal controls or auditing matters, or provides truthful information relating to the commission or possible commission of any federal offense to a law enforcement officer shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse employment consequence. An employee who retaliates against someone who has made a report of wrongdoing in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns within the Organization prior to seeking resolution outside the Organization. An employee who knowingly or recklessly makes statements or disclosures that are not in good faith may be subject to discipline, which may include termination. Employees who make a report of wrongdoing pursuant to this Whistleblower Policy can and will continue to be held to the general job performance standards of the Organization. Therefore, an employee against whom legitimate adverse employment actions have been taken or are proposed to be taken for reasons other than prohibited retaliatory actions, such as poor job performance or misconduct by the employee, is foreclosed from using this Whistleblower Policy as a defense against lawful actions of the Organization.
Reporting Violations

The Organization has an open door policy that employees share their questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints with someone who can address them properly. In most cases, an employee's supervisor is in the best position to address an area of concern. However, if you are not comfortable speaking with your supervisor or you are not satisfied with your supervisor's response, you are encouraged to speak with anyone in management or leadership whom you are comfortable in approaching. Supervisors and leadership are required to bring a report of wrongdoing to the attention of the executive director and/or president of SPJ or the SPJ Foundation, as the case may be, who have responsibility to investigate all such reports. For suspected fraud, or when you are not satisfied or uncomfortable with following the Organization's open door policy, individuals should contact the executive director or president of SPJ or the SPJ Foundation, as the case may be, directly.

Accounting and Auditing Matters

The board of directors of SPJ or the SPJ Foundation, as the case may be, shall address all reported concerns or complaints regarding corporate accounting practices, internal controls or auditing. The executive director shall immediately notify the boards of SPJ or the SPJ Foundation, as the case may be, of any such complaint and work with the board until the matter is resolved.

Acting in Good Faith

Anyone filing a report of wrongdoing must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information reported is true. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense. Good faith exists when the report is made without malice or consideration of personal benefit and a person has a reasonable basis to believe the report is true; provided, however, a report does not have to be proven to be true to be made in good faith. Good faith is absent when the disclosure is known to be malicious, false or frivolous.

Wrongdoing

Wrongdoing includes financial or accounting fraud, and violation of laws, regulations, or policies regarding accounting practices, internal controls or auditing matters.

Adverse Employment Consequences

Examples of adverse employment consequences include demotion, suspension, termination, transfer to an inferior position, denial of promotions, denial of benefits, and denial of compensation as a direct result of a report of wrongdoing.

Confidentiality

A report of wrongdoing may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant or may be submitted anonymously. A report of wrongdoing will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.
Handling of Reports of Wrongdoing and Administration of Policy

The executive director or president of SPJ or the SPJ Foundation, as the case may be, will notify the sender and acknowledge receipt of a report of wrongdoing. All reports of wrongdoing will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.

The boards of SPJ or the SPJ Foundation, as the case may be, shall be primarily responsible for the administration of this Whistleblower Policy; provided, however, the board shall work closely with the executive director to ensure the effectiveness of this Whistleblower Policy and may delegate to management and/or third parties, including professional advisors, responsibility for all or part of the administration of this policy. The board shall be provided quarterly summaries of all reports of wrongdoing made pursuant to this policy.

For each report of wrongdoing, an inquiry will be initiated to determine if the report can be substantiated or has merit. That inquiry will be made by such person or persons (the "Investigating Officer") designated by the boards of SPJ or the SPJ Foundation, as the case may be, to review the report, which person may include members of the SPJ board, the executive director or the outside legal counsel of the Organization.

The Investigating Officer shall make a determination, in his or her reasonable judgment, whether a reasonable basis exists for commencing an investigation into the report of wrongdoing. The Investigating Officer may conduct an initial informal inquiry. The purpose of the initial inquiry of the Investigating Officer is to screen reports of wrongdoing so that the boards of SPJ or the SPJ Foundation, as the case may be, does not have to examine immaterial or spurious reports. Nevertheless, the board shall have oversight authority and review on a regular basis reports of wrongdoing that were screened out for immediate reporting to the board. If the Investigating Officer does not screen out a report of wrongdoing, he or she shall promptly forward such report to the president along with the Investigating Officer's conclusions (even if preliminary or qualified) about the merits of the report.

Following the receipt of any report of wrongdoing from the Investigating Officer, the boards of SPJ or the SPJ Foundation, as the case may be, will investigate each matter reported and recommend that SPJ or the SPJ Foundation, as the case may be, take appropriate corrective or disciplinary action, if required. The board may enlist employees of the Organization and/or outside legal, accounting or other advisors, as appropriate, to conduct any investigation of a report of wrongdoing.

A confidential file for each report of wrongdoing will be maintained for an appropriate time period. The executive director or other appropriate management personnel may be contacted to determine what employment action, if any, should be taken. Results of all investigations will be reviewed by the executive director and reported to the board of SPJ or the SPJ Foundation, as the case may be.

Claims of Retaliation

Claims of acts of retaliation should be submitted to the executive director or boards of SPJ or the SPJ Foundation, as the case may be, as applicable. The recipient of such claims will immediately notify the executive director or the Organization's outside counsel who will initiate a confidential investigation.

Adopted by SPJ on Feb. 27, 2012; adopted by SPJ Foundation on April 29, 2012
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Work visa opinion letters policy (recommend maintaining without change)

It is the policy of the Society of Professional Journalists to decline requests from those seeking opinion letters in an effort to obtain a work visa. This policy is in effect because:

- SPJ doesn’t have resources to vet all potential applicants.
- SPJ shouldn’t provide an opinion on applicants it can’t fully vet.
- SPJ has long had a position against defining who is and who isn’t a journalist.

The Society may, however, issue a letter confirming an applicant’s membership status with SPJ.

*Adopted Sept. 21, 2015*

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EXISTING POLICIES

Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications selection policy

1. The SPJ position on the ACEJMC is a position that interested SPJ members apply to be considered for. The applicants are considered by the full board and subject to board ratification.
2. The SPJ rep will serve for a term of three years.

3. The SPJ rep should be a working journalist.

4. The SPJ rep will submit reports to the board, detailing his/her activity, for the spring and fall board meeting packets.

5. SPJ will pay the annual membership fee and the rep’s travel expenses to council meetings.

Adopted April 16, 2016

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Board meetings policy

It is the policy of the Society of Professional Journalists to fervently endeavor to hold its meetings and conduct its business openly. The board of directors and executive committee may exclude other parties from their meetings only rarely and under these strict limits:

1. To discuss the employment, discipline, compensation, resignation or performance of officers or employees over whom they have authority;

2. To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice or to discuss pending or potential litigation;

3. To consider the acquisition, sale or lease of real property; or

4. To comply with a legally-imposed requirements that matters be kept confidential.

The board of directors or executive committee may close a meeting only by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present.

The agenda must be announced in advance, as specifically as possible without violating the reason for the confidentiality.

No binding vote can be taken in closed session.

Adopted Oct. 2, 1999

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Campaign guidelines

These election campaign guidelines should be followed by all candidates for the SPJ national board of directors. Candidates with questions should the SPJ Nominations Committee Chairman or the Executive Director.
1. Candidate speeches will be no more than three minutes in duration and will be delivered during the opening business meeting. Speeches will be streamed live and available on the election home page as soon as possible after they are delivered.

2. No signs may be posted in the hotel or convention site.

3. Headquarters staff will format and send members emails three times during the election cycle for the candidates. Headquarters staff will send emails according to the following timeline:
   - The same week candidate profiles are published in Quill magazine. Candidates should submit this email no later than two weeks before Quill is published.
   - Sometime during the election cycle after profiles are published in Quill, but earlier than four weeks before convention. Staff will have one week to format and send these emails.
   - One week before the election. This email should be submitted no later than two weeks before the opening business session.

4. Current national SPJ board members should remain neutral in all elections.

5. No one may use the membership database for political purposes.

Notes:

- The order in which candidates give speeches will be based on the alphabetical order of their last names.
- While candidates may not post signs in the convention hotel, fliers, buttons and other literature may be distributed. Contact SPJ Executive Director (or designee) to arrange for display space near the convention's registration area or trade show.
- All candidates will receive information about board and committee meetings before the convention. Candidates are encouraged to attend board and committee meetings that are applicable to their prospective position.
- Candidates may purchase advertising space in Quill, the convention program or the convention newspaper at rates discounted 50 percent off the current rate card. Contact SPJ Executive Director (or designee) for information.

Revised April 28, 2012

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Conflict of interest policy introduction

At some point, most boards confront tension or conflict between the interests of the organization and the interests of an individual board member. For example, if your organization is hiring a new bookkeeper and the board president recommends his sister, other board members may (and should) question whether this is appropriate. On one hand, the board president's sister is an experienced bookkeeper who, because of her personal connection to the organization, will be particularly committed to the work. On the other hand, the executive director may be reluctant to supervise the board president's sister.
Conflicts of interest are difficult to weigh and balance because the relationships between board members and the community also are a part of the contribution that board members make to the agency. If the organization is buying a new computer, for example, and a board member owns a computer store, the organization may well benefit from discounts and extra service by buying the computer at her store. It would be a mistake to prohibit working with board members as vendors. Similarly, members who are also clients of the organization can be tremendously helpful in ensuring that a client perspective is brought into decision-making, but a client board member may find himself in a difficult position if the agency is considering eliminating a service that is used by very few clients other than him. In many cases, the perceived conflict of interest may simply "feel wrong" to some board members, although it might be within legal boundaries.

Three simple safeguards can go a long way towards preventing and avoiding conflicts of interest. First, establish a policy related to conflict of interest, which is signed by all board members when they join the board. The statement can be a simple declaration or require detailed information about the board members' financial interests. Second, establish disclosure as a normal practice. Board members should find it customary for someone to announce, for example, "I have started to date the Clinic Director and, as a result, feel that I must resign from the board. I would like to continue as a member of the Fundraising Committee, but not as a board member." In another situation a board president might say, "This next agenda item relates to joining a collaboration with other children's agencies. I'm going to ask board members who are also on one of these other boards to identify themselves and participate in the discussion, but I will excuse them from the room for part of the discussion and for the vote." Such disclosures should be recorded in the meeting's minutes.

Perhaps even more than written policies, board and staff leadership must establish by example and attitude an atmosphere of personal integrity. Some situations may need only a brief, informal comment to maintain that climate (example: "I know it's only $24 but it's important to keep our finances straight"). In others, a decision may be delayed because of the need to ensure that it has been made in the organization's best interests.

Each of us, by our daily words and actions, contributes to a culture of integrity and responsibility.

**Conflict of interest policy**

The standard of behavior at the Society of Professional Journalists is that all staff, volunteers, and board members scrupulously avoid conflicts of interest between the interests of the Society of Professional Journalists on one hand, and personal, professional, and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding potential and actual conflicts of interest, as well as perceptions of conflicts of interest.

The purposes of this policy are to protect the integrity of the Society of Professional Journalists' decision-making process, to enable our constituencies to have confidence in our integrity, and to protect the integrity and reputations of volunteers, staff and board members.

Upon or before election, hiring or appointment, an individual will make a full, written disclosure of interests, relationships, and holdings that could potentially result in a conflict of interest.

This written disclosure will be kept on file and an individual shall update it as appropriate.
In the course of meetings or activities, an individual shall disclose any interests in a transaction or decision where such individual (including any business or other nonprofit affiliations), his or her family and/or significant other, employer, close associates will receive a benefit or gain. After disclosure, the individual should remove himself/herself from the discussion and leave the meeting, unless he/she is called upon to answer questions. He/she will not vote on the topic.

Updated April 22, 2017

**Society of Professional Journalists Conflict of Interest Policy Statement**

The standard of behavior at the Society of Professional Journalists is that all staff, volunteers, and board members scrupulously avoid conflicts of interest between the interests of the Society of Professional Journalists on one hand, and personal, professional, and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding potential and actual conflicts of interest, as well as perceptions of conflicts of interest.

I understand that the purposes of this policy are to protect the integrity of the Society of Professional Journalists’ decision-making process, to enable our constituencies to have confidence in our integrity, and to protect the integrity and reputations of volunteers, staff and board members.

Upon or before election, hiring or appointment, I will make a full, written disclosure of interests, relationships, and holdings that could potentially result in a conflict of interest.

This written disclosure will be kept on file and I will update it as appropriate.

In the course of meetings or activities, I will disclose any interests in a transaction or decision where I (including my business or other nonprofit affiliations), my family and/or my significant other, employer, close associates will receive a benefit or gain. It is my responsibility to state my connection and potential conflict on any topic as it comes up during a discussion. After disclosure, I will remove myself from the discussion and leave the meeting, unless I am called on to answer questions. I will not vote on the topic.

I understand that this policy is meant to supplement good judgment, and I will respect its spirit as well as its wording.

Signed: _____________________________________________ Date: _____________

Printed Name: ___________________________________________________________

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**Composition of national committees policy**

To help groom new leadership and increase the effectiveness of its advocacy work, SPJ shall invite once a year all members in good standing to apply to serve on SPJ’s national committees.

Furthermore:
— SPJ national committees shall not exceed 15 members.
— SPJ national committees shall have only one chairperson. Vice chairmen may be named as deemed appropriate.
— SPJ national committee chairpersons shall serve in that capacity no more than five consecutive years.
— SPJ national committee members shall be appointed to serve one term concurrent with the length of the national president’s term. National committee members must be reappointed by each subsequent national president.
— SPJ’s national president should strive to ensure each national committee is composed of members representing both genders and a variety of ages, ethnicities and professional disciplines.

Adopted April 7, 2007

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Convention registration bag policy

Non-SPJ items that are included in the registration bags at SPJ’s National Convention must meet one of the following criteria:

- A paper flier or brochure that promotes the host city or a specific tourist venue.
- An item or information from an organization that is participating in SPJ’s National Convention as a sponsor, advertiser or exhibitor.

SPJ's marketing director is responsible for compiling an inventory or registration bag contents and ensuring the above policy is followed.

Adopted Feb. 3, 1996

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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.

Adopted April 30, 2015

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Discretionary spending policy

The Executive Committee shall approve any expenditure over $5,000 that is not authorized in the annual budget.

Adopted Sept. 6, 2017

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**EIJ sponsorship policy**

- Both media and non-media entities will be allowed to sponsor sessions/events, and to propose session ideas and speakers. Proposals will be vetted by the EIJ Planning Committee. Once proposals are accepted, the Committee and its designated producer will assume full responsibility for participants, topics, times, places, etc.

- Neither media nor non-media entities may offer speaking fees for sessions/events they sponsor. SPJ, RTDNA or the EIJ Planning Committee may choose in certain circumstances to use sponsor or grant monies to provide fees to speakers.
- Neither media nor non-media entities may cover expenses for speakers participating in sessions/events they sponsor. SPJ, RTDNA or the EIJ Planning Committee may choose in certain circumstances to use sponsor or grant monies to cover speaker expenses.

- EIJ partners will retain the right of refusal over all sponsors, exhibitors or advertisers, with contracts reviewed by the executive directors of partner groups before accepting.

- EIJ partners will disclose its policies on sponsorship of sessions/events to potential sponsors in sales materials for EIJs and other appropriate publications or web pages.

*Approved Feb. 2, 2019*

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**Electronic voting policy**

Baker & Hostetler, SPJ’s legal counsel confirmed with Executive Director Terry Harper on March 15, 2004 and again with Executive Director Joe Skeel on Sept. 24, 2010, that casting votes by e-mail or fax is prohibited in most cases. There is an exception for an issue seeking only unanimous consent, however, one negative vote vacates the entire question. It is possible to organize a meeting via conference call in accordance with the Society’s Bylaws. A voice vote is sufficient in that instance.

*Confirmed on March 15, 2004 and again on Sept. 24, 2010*

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Executive director evaluation policy

The Executive Director shall be evaluated on an annual basis. A committee for conducting that evaluation shall consist of the President of SPJ, the President-elect of SPJ and the President of the SDX Foundation. The evaluation committee will share its findings with the SPJ and SDX Foundation boards, and may, if it deems appropriate, recommend that the SPJ Board of Directors initiate a search for a new Executive Director.

Proposed Sept. 18, 2015

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Executive director hiring policy

The Presidents of SPJ and the SDX Foundation shall appoint an equal number of members to a search committee. The SPJ President shall appoint one additional member to serve as committee chairman with voting privileges. The committee will forward a list of one or more candidates it deems qualified, from which the SPJ Board of Directors will vote to hire the Executive Director. The SPJ Board of Directors shall immediately notify the SDX Foundation of its decision.

Proposed Sept. 18, 2015

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Investment policy

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

A. Standard of Care 1) In managing the assets of the Society of Professional Journalists, the board of directors shall use the care, skill, prudence, and diligence under the circumstances as any reasonable person.

B. Asset Management 1) The board shall have the authority to obtain the services of professional asset managers and to dismiss same as necessary.

C. Diversification 1) The board shall supervise the diversification of the assets of the funds, plans and program. This will be done to minimize the risk of large losses unless circumstances make it clearly prudent not to diversify.

D. Restrictions 1) Fixed income securities may be purchased where issued or guaranteed by the United States Treasury, government sponsored enterprises, or corporate bonds rated by Moody’s or Standard
and Poor’s. International Securities may also be purchased. Convertible securities will be considered as equity securities. An average Standard and Poor’s credit rating of “AA,” or the equivalent should be maintained. Commercial paper should be rated P-1 by Moody’s Investor Service, Inc., A-1 Standard and Poor’s, or F-1 by Fitch’s and certificates of deposit or banker’s acceptances of the one hundred (100) largest commercial banks in the United States, or deposit or banker’s acceptance (in appropriate amounts) are fully insured by an agency of the Federal Government.

2) No direct investments shall be made in commodities, commodity contracts, futures, future contracts, oil/gas, mineral leases, mineral rights, or royalty contracts.

3) No direct transactions in short sales, options, puts, calls, straddles and/or spreads shall be used. Covered call options strategies on equities can be pursued on a limited basis. Real Estate Investment Trusts (REIT) are permitted on a limited basis.

4) No investment shall knowingly be made in which any officer or director of the SPJ board of directors has a known significant financial interest.

5) SPJ may invest in mutual funds which are quoted by the National Association of Securities Dealers.

6) SPJ retains the right to remove any stock or bond from the portfolio if it feels that the issuing body or company sells products or services not in harmony with the Society’s goals.

II. INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES

Recognizing the need to manage day-to-day operations; fiduciary responsibility to our members; and desire for a prudent guide for the present and future direction of our assets, our investment priorities shall be:

A. Liquidity 1) To maintain sufficient liquidity to provide for all anticipated withdrawals or transfers and to invest in issues with sufficient marketability to provide for unexpected withdrawals.

B. Stability 1) To maintain a high level of stability and security in the Society by minimizing risk and volatility insofar as possible within the rate of return objectives.

C. Steady income from interest and dividends 1) Earned interest and dividends may be re-invested or used for day-to-day operations.

D. Preservation of Capital 1) To preserve the capital investment of the Society only after ensuring the previous three objectives are being met.

III. INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

1) To achieve the Society’s investment objectives, we will place tight parameters on investment decisions and advisors. These would include a low to moderate risk tolerance in every portion of the portfolio. We wish to avoid large swings in portfolio value and will not accept short-term fluctuation to try to achieve a higher return.
2) The Society’s executive director shall review account balances monthly and suggest investment changes to the board of directors when appropriate.

3) The executive director will share investment performance with the board of directors at the time quarterly financials are issued.

Adopted June 22, 2013

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Non-media company convention sponsorship policy

1. No money will be accepted from domestic or foreign governments, or from partisan political organizations.

2. Non-media contributors will be disclosed to all convention attendees on a handout or program spread that also includes our sponsorship policy.

Specific portions of the convention must not be named after non-media companies with the exception of the venue.

4. SPJ will control all aspects of the convention program. All convention programs will be on-the-record. People and organizations with positions directly opposed to those of any contributor may be invited to appear.

5. Acceptance of any contribution does not imply endorsement of the contributor's products, service or point of view.

SPJ reserves a right of prior approval for any material available and presentations at all sponsored events.

7. SPJ reserves the right to reject any contribution.

Non-media organizations such as law firms with significant media practices, will be treated as media contributors for purpose of this policy if they have some record of pro bono work for journalists or frequent contributions to our programs.

Nothing in these rules prohibits the sale of advertising in any convention-related publication, including, but not limited to, the program, The Working Press and any special-issue magazine.

Amended May 3, 2008

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Reimbursement guidelines for board members and regional coordinators

REIMBURSEMENT STIPENDS
As of Fiscal Year 2019, SPJ Board Members and Regional Coordinators receive the following annual reimbursement stipends for work and travel done on behalf of SPJ:

President................................................................. $10,000
President-Elect......................................................... $4,000
Secretary-Treasurer................................................ $4,000
At-Large Directors (4).............................................. $1,500
Board Appointees (2).............................................. $1,500
Regional Coordinators (12)................................. $1,500

REIMBURSEMENT GUIDELINES

Board Members and Regional Coordinators receive annual reimbursement stipends for work they do on behalf of the Society. They have a fiduciary responsibility to the Society and stipends should be used strictly for work related to SPJ.

Approved reimbursements include:

- Airfare
- Car rental
- Mileage for personal vehicle (50 cents per mile)
- Lodging
- Meals
- Miscellaneous travel expenses, including parking fees, cab fares and toll fees

The following expenses will not be reimbursed:

- National convention and regional conference registration fees (including meal event tickets)
- Alcohol-related expenses
- Entertainment

The goal of the stipend is to offset travel expenses for board members who travel around the country for SPJ business, as well as Regional Coordinators who travel to the annual convention and around their own regions. All parties should use their best judgment when requesting reimbursements.

Board members and Regional Coordinators should make every effort to stretch the SPJ dollar by using the least expensive form of travel.

Board members and Regional Coordinators are free to secure their own lodging for any SPJ event, however, the reimbursement request should not exceed the rate at the “headquarters” hotel.

Expenses incurred for spouses/significant others are not eligible for reimbursement.
A key word to insert before all eligible reimbursements is “reasonable.” SPJ does not expect volunteers to stay in shoddy hotels and eat every meal at fast-food establishments. Likewise, staying at five-star hotels and dining at expensive restaurants every night similarly are discouraged.

REIMBURSEMENT REQUESTS

Requests should be submitted using an SPJ expense report form (available at www.spj.org). Receipts or copies of receipts must be included with all reimbursement requests.

All requests for reimbursement should be submitted within 30 days to SPJ headquarters. Expense reports submitted more than 60 days after the expenses have been incurred shall not be reimbursed, at the discretion of the Executive Director.

The reimbursement stipend timeline runs from the close of the national convention to the close of the following national convention in accordance with board member terms.

Questions about reimbursements or requests for waivers should be directed to SPJ’s Executive Director.

Approved April 15, 2018

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Release of LDF applicant information policy

The Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) will not publicize personally identifying information from Legal Defense Fund (LDF) applications beyond LDF committee and sub committee members, members of SPJ’s national board and select members of SPJ’s administrative staff.

However, SPJ may publicize non-personally identifying details from LDF applications to promote awareness and understanding of an issue. The publicity of such details shall require approval from SPJ’s national president.

Once an LDF grant has been awarded, SPJ shall publicize identifying information about the grant recipient. Portions of the recipient’s application may be publicized to promote awareness and understanding of an issue. However, personal information, identified as such on grant applications, will not be released to the public.

Adopted April 7, 2007

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Sponsor disclosure policy

The Society of Professional Journalists regularly solicits cash and in-kind contributions from individuals and organizations including but not limited to its national convention, national writers and editors workshops and conferences.
(1) For such events coordinated by the national headquarters that require SPJ fundraising, underwriting and/or partnerships, the Society shall disclose to its members and event attendees the following information:
(a) a list of the general sponsorship opportunities, including dollar ranges. The list shall include the names of sponsors grouped by their sponsorship level.
(b) a list of all other contributors of cash and in-kind goods and services
(c) the Society's contribution and donor-disclosure policies

(2) The Society shall disclose, upon request, the dollar amounts of all contributors.

(3) The Society shall disclose this information proactively, using the most effective media, so that the information is readily available to event attendees and to members at the time they receive mailings or otherwise come into contact with the product or service connected with outside financial support.

(4) Disclosure statements shall include a disclaimer that says acceptance of a contribution does not mean the Society endorses the contributor or its products, services or viewpoints.

Adopted April 26, 2003

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Third party records policy

The Society of Professional Journalists, or Society, shall conduct its business openly and transparently. Upon request, the Society shall provide its members with the details of its approved transactions with third parties. Within five business days of receiving a records request, the Society must respond by either providing the information in the format requested (e.g. electronic, hard copy); acknowledge the request and provide a reasonable estimate of the time required to respond to the request; or deny the record request. Additional time may be needed to have the requestor clarify the request; assemble the information; notify third parties of the request; or to determine whether any information requested should be denied in whole or in part. A majority of the Society's executive committee must vote to deny a records request and SPJ's Executive Director will provide the requestor with a written explanation for that denial. A reasonable fee will be assessed to recover the actual costs to gather and make copies of the records request. The requestor will be notified beforehand and will receive an itemized estimate as to this cost. The fee should be waived, as determined by the Society's executive director, should the request be for the good of the Society.

Adopted April 7, 2007

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Whistleblower policy for SPJ/SPJ Foundation

General
The Society of Professional Journalists ("SPJ") and the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation ("SDX") (collectively, the "Organization") Code of Conduct ("Code") requires directors, officers and employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As employees and representatives of the Organization, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

Reporting Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all directors, officers and employees to comply with the Code and to report violations or suspected violations in accordance with this Whistleblower Policy.

No Retaliation

No director, officer or employee who in good faith reports a violation of the Code (hereafter, a "report of wrongdoing"), including, but not limited to, a report of wrongdoing concerning accounting, internal controls or auditing matters, or provides truthful information relating to the commission or possible commission of any federal offense to a law enforcement officer shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse employment consequence. An employee who retaliates against someone who has made a report of wrongdoing in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns within the Organization prior to seeking resolution outside the Organization. An employee who knowingly or recklessly makes statements or disclosures that are not in good faith may be subject to discipline, which may include termination. Employees who make a report of wrongdoing pursuant to this Whistleblower Policy can and will continue to be held to the general job performance standards of the Organization.

Therefore, an employee against whom legitimate adverse employment actions have been taken or are proposed to be taken for reasons other than prohibited retaliatory actions, such as poor job performance or misconduct by the employee, is foreclosed from using this Whistleblower Policy as a defense against lawful actions of the Organization.

Reporting Violations

The Code addresses the Organization's open door policy and suggests that employees share their questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints with someone who can address them properly. In most cases, an employee's supervisor is in the best position to address an area of concern. However, if you are not comfortable speaking with your supervisor or you are not satisfied with your supervisor's response, you are encouraged to speak with anyone in management or leadership whom you are comfortable in approaching. Supervisors and leadership are required to bring a report of wrongdoing to the attention of the Executive Director and/or President of SPJ or SDX, as the case may be, who have responsibility to investigate all such reports. For suspected fraud, or when you are not satisfied or uncomfortable with following the Organization's open door policy, individuals should contact the Executive Director or President of SPJ or SDX, as the case may be, directly.

Accounting and Auditing Matters
The executive committee of the board of directors of SPJ or SDX, as the case may be, shall address all reported concerns or complaints regarding corporate accounting practices, internal controls or auditing. The Executive Director shall immediately notify the executive committee of SPJ or SDX, as the case may be, of any such complaint and work with the committee until the matter is resolved.

*Acting in Good Faith*

Anyone filing a report of wrongdoing must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information reported is true. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense. Good faith exists when the report is made without malice or consideration of personal benefit and a person has a reasonable basis to believe the report is true; provided, however, a report does not have to be proven to be true to be made in good faith. Good faith is absent when the disclosure is known to be malicious, false or frivolous.

*Wrongdoing*

Wrongdoing includes financial or accounting fraud, and violation of laws, regulations, or policies regarding accounting practices, internal controls or auditing matters.

*Adverse Employment Consequences*

Examples of adverse employment consequences include demotion, suspension, termination, transfer to an inferior position, denial of promotions, denial of benefits, and denial of compensation as a direct result of a report of wrongdoing.

*Confidentiality*

A report of wrongdoing may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant or may be submitted anonymously. A report of wrongdoing will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

*Handling of Reports of Wrongdoing and Administration of Policy*

The Executive Director or President of SPJ or SDX, as the case may be, will notify the sender and acknowledge receipt of a report of wrongdoing. All reports of wrongdoing will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.

The Executive Committee of SPJ or SDX, as the case may be, shall be primarily responsible for the administration of this Whistleblower Policy; provided, however, such Committee shall work closely with the Executive Director to ensure the effectiveness of this Whistleblower Policy and may delegate to management and/or third parties, including professional advisors, responsibility for all or part of the administration of this policy. Such Committee shall be provided quarterly summaries of all reports of wrongdoing made pursuant to this policy.
For each report of wrongdoing, an inquiry will be initiated to determine if the report can be substantiated or has merit. That inquiry will be made by such person or persons (the "Investigating Officer") designated by the Executive Committee of SPJ or SDX, as the case may be, to review the report, which person may include members of the Executive Committee, the Executive Director or the outside legal counsel of the Organization.

The Investigating Officer shall make a determination, in his or her reasonable judgment, whether a reasonable basis exists for commencing an investigation into the report of wrongdoing. The Investigating Officer may conduct an initial informal inquiry. The purpose of the initial inquiry of the Investigating Officer is to screen reports of wrongdoing so that the Executive Committee of SPJ or SDX, as the case may be, does not have to examine immaterial or spurious reports. Nevertheless, such Committee shall have oversight authority and review on a regular basis reports of wrongdoing that were screened out for immediate reporting to such Committee. If the Investigating Officer does not screen out a report of wrongdoing, he or she shall promptly forward such report to the Chair of such Committee along with the Investigating Officer's conclusions (even if preliminary or qualified) about the merits of the report.

Following the receipt of any report of wrongdoing from the Investigating Officer, the Executive Committee of SPJ or SDX, as the case may be, will investigate each matter reported and recommend that SPJ or SDX, as the case may be, take appropriate corrective or disciplinary action, if required. Such Committee may enlist employees of the Organization and/or outside legal, accounting or other advisors, as appropriate, to conduct any investigation of a report of wrongdoing.

A confidential file for each report of wrongdoing will be maintained for an appropriate time period. The Executive Director or other appropriate management personnel may be contacted to determine what employment action, if any, should be taken. Results of all investigations will be reviewed by the Executive Director and reported to the Executive Committee of SPJ or SDX, as the case may be.

*Claims of Retaliation*

Claims of acts of retaliation should be submitted to Executive Director or Executive Committee of SPJ or SDX, as the case may be, as applicable. The recipient of such claims will immediately notify the Executive Director or the Organization’s outside counsel who will initiate a confidential investigation.

*Adopted by SPJ on Feb. 27, 2012; adopted by SPJ Foundation on April 29, 2012*

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*Work visa opinion letters policy*

It is the policy of the Society of Professional Journalists to decline requests from those seeking opinion letters in an effort to obtain a work visa. This policy is in effect because:

- SPJ doesn’t have resources to vet all potential applicants.
- SPJ shouldn’t provide an opinion on applicants it can’t fully vet.
- SPJ has long had a position against defining who is and who isn’t a journalist.
The Society may, however, issue a letter confirming an applicant’s membership status with SPJ.

Adopted Sept. 21, 2015
Strategic Planning Task Force

EIJ: Boards and Leaders Update and Town Hall

Read more on SPJ website: bit.ly/spjstrategy
Overview

- Develop and deliver a new strategic plan for SPJ
- Examination, communication and recommendations through EIJ19 and beyond
- Begin broad with intent to narrow focus on board-defined most critical areas
  - Survey
  - Town hall discussions/presentations at EIJ
  - Possible focus groups
  - Updates online at bit.ly/spjstrategy
Overview

- Provide update to SPJ board, SPJ Foundation board and membership at EIJ19
  - Gather feedback and add to report
  - Matt Hall and new executive director to be added to the committee after EIJ19
- Provide clear strategy recommendations in forthcoming comprehensive report
  - Fall 2019/winter 2020
  - Present to SPJ Board at April 2020 meeting
The committee

- Victor Hernandez (chair)
- Patti Newberry
- Alex Tarquinio
- Yvette Walker
- Mike Reilley
- Jennifer Royer
- Kimberly Chin
- April Bethea (SPJ Foundation rep)
Background

- SPJ last created a strategic plan in 2007.
  - Ran seven pages, with multiple goals for each priority — and was rarely, if ever, consulted after completion
  - Former Executive Director Joe Skeel long supported creating a plan.
  - Former SPJ President Dave Cuillier shared his ideas for a plan more recently.
1) What do we desire or expect SPJ to be known for representing across the long-term?

2) What is SPJ’s competitive advantage from the rest of the 65+ journalism orgs?

3) What is SPJ’s competitive disadvantage from the rest of the 65+ journalism orgs?

4) What do members value most from their association with SPJ?

5) What are the most impactful areas/program we should be focused on?

6) What are the least impactful areas/programs that we should back away from?

7) Who are our members going forward and how might that evolve?

8) How will we balance what we think SPJ members need versus what they believe is the case?

9) How can we effectively accelerate SPJ’s evolution without alienating certain member groups?

10) What could SPJ do to radically integrate Digital culture and programs?

11) How can we shift journalism trainings to holistic hands-on workshop approaches?
Where else are members turning?

What do they do well that we also offer?

What do they do well that we don’t, and should consider?
The Strategic Planning Task Force is creating a living, breathing document to guide the board, and will run no more than three pages.

○ At EIJ2020, delegates will be asked to adjust bylaws to require boards to review and revise the plan every April

Currently in research, feedback and exploration phase: Survey completed, town hall discussions and board updates at EIJ
Survey background

- Sent to 5,591 members through direct emails: 34 questions: quantitative, qualitative, demographic
  - Reminders in Leads and promoted heavily on social media channels
- 550 responses | 9.9% response rate
  - Survey Gizmo: External surveys will generally receive a 10%-15% average response rate
- Two-thirds of respondents were age 50 or older
  - Responses by age groups were consistent on questions such as moving HQ, name change, lobbyist, etc.
- 50% female, 49% male, 1% did not designate
- 10.5% of responses were from California
  - Followed by New York (6.4%), Ohio (6%), Illinois (5%) and Florida (4.8%)
What is your age?

Answered: 545  Skipped: 5

- Under 18
- 18-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61-70
- 71-80
- 80-plus
Survey findings

What is your specific SPJ involvement?

Answered: 545   Skipped: 5

- Active professional...
- Active student member
- Active retired member
- Inactive member
- Chapter leader
- Regional/national leader
- Other
Survey findings

In what field did you/do you work?

Answered: 397  Skipped: 153

- Online: 33%
- TV: 14%
- Radio: 12%
- Newspaper: 48%
- Magazine: 20%
- Other (please specify): 116
What other professional journalism organizations do you belong to?

Answered: 314  Skipped: 236

- RTDNA
- IRE
- DNA
- ASNE
- NAHJ
- NASJ
- AAJA
- NLGJA
- JAWS
- Other (please specify)
Survey findings

How likely are you to renew your membership in the upcoming year? Why or why not?

Answered: 546   Skipped: 4

- Very likely
- Likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely
Survey findings overview

Respondents told us:

- **They do not support** moving HQ to NYC or Washington DC

- They do not support changing SPJ’s name to the Society for Professional Journalism

- **They do support** increasing SPJ’s lobbying efforts at the local and national levels.

- **They do support** hiring a full-time lobbyist

- **They strongly oppose** increasing member dues

- **They responded inconsistently** to questions about education/digital training

Respondents told us:

Three areas for SPJ to focus on in the next decade (in order):

1) Ethics
2) Journalism training
3) Open government

Most impactful programs SPJ should focus on:

1) Advocacy for journalism
2) Code of Ethics
3) Industry relevance *

*Closely followed by: Media literacy and digital training*
Survey findings

As a member of SPJ, what do you value the most from the organization?

Answered: 549   Skipped: 1

- Access to First...
- Industry association,...
- Network and career...
- Journalism training
- Award opportunities
- Other (please specify)
Survey findings

What would you expect SPJ to be known for over the next decade?

Answered: 402  Skipped: 148

- Career Resources
- Diversity
- Ethics
- Journalism Training
- Open Government
- Other (please specify)

Bar chart showing the distribution of responses.
Please rank the most impactful areas/programs SPJ should be focused on?

Answered: 543  Skipped: 7
Q13

To be more effective, SPJ should move its headquarters from Indianapolis to a more industry-accessible locale such as Washington, D.C., or New York.

Answered: 513   Skipped: 37

10 = strongly agree
0 = strongly disagree
To be more effective, SPJ should increase its lobbying efforts at the national level.

Answered: 522  Skipped: 28
To be more effective, SPJ should increase its lobbying efforts at the local/state level.

Answered: 523   Skipped: 27
Survey findings

Should SPJ change its name to the Society for Professional Journalism?

Answered: 541  Skipped: 9

- Yes: 126
- No: 68%
- Other (please specify):
• **What respondents told us about SPJ, education and digital training:**

• There is a need for digital tools training and online trainings (webinars, etc.)

• SPJ is not meeting their needs in this area

• In-person trainings are important but not as important as online trainings to them

• 28% of survey respondents skipped this question

• On another question, respondents ranked journalism training No. 2 on what the organization should be known for in next decade

  ○ But ranked it fourth on what they value most in the organization
Survey findings

Where is SPJ lacking in the area of education?

Answered: 394  Skipped: 156

- Webinars
- Online resources
- EIJ programming
- In-person training
- I am satisfied with the...
- Other (please specify)
Members expressed their opinions by answering several open-ended questions. While many see SPJ doing good things, many others have concerns.

One comment summed up what many respondents said:

- “Not welcoming, impersonal, low profile. No public position on important issues.”
• **Common themes gleaned from the open-ended questions:**

• Members who responded want more and better open communication with the board and HQ

• They say the board infighting takes SPJ away from its mission

• They want more chapter support and more interaction with the chapters

• They want more local programming and “turnkey” programming for chapters
Common themes gleaned from the open-ended questions:

- Members who responded want training that goes beyond Facebook and Google (reporting, storytelling, back to the basics) and Webinars.
- They want training that prepares members for their next jobs.
- They want more employment assistance.
- They want more lobbying and advocacy for journalism.
- They question our efforts on diversity.
Feedback from respondents on a need for better communication:

- “Its bureaucracy and poor communication among members. Also that a lot of people can't express in 30 seconds what the Society provides members or potential members. We need to promote ourselves and SPJ better.”
- “Communication that stimulates action and involvement.”
- “More information on national governance issues. I don't have time to wander through blogs, etc. Just send me the information.”
Feedback from respondents on a need for better communication:

- “Trustworthiness”
- “Streamlined communication”
- “SPJ should not rely on SPJ Leads and social media for communicating to its members.”
More on communication:

“Just need more connection.”

“Confidence that while we might not always agree with decisions made by HQ and the SPJ board, that the voice of the chapters are being heard.”

“More information in Spanish.”

“I don’t get reached out to unless I say something first.”
Survey comments

- **More on communication:**
  - “Transparency from HQ and the national board.”
  - “More communication”
  - “Responsiveness to local chapters and grassroots members”
  - “Why are journalists terrible at communications? Our chapter should be getting messaging guidance, social toolkits, graphics templates, and more.”
• Feedback from respondents on in-fighting:

• “I am strongly considering not renewing my membership with SPJ. The piece Columbia Journalism Review ran on the organization was embarrassing. The chaos created by … board members makes me question whether SPJ is relevant in 2019.”

• “The infighting about our mission has been troubling. … We need to have a strong voice on what we can agree on, and be a resource in the country and world.”

• “Recently, it seems infighting within organization has taken attention away from bigger goals and needs to grow the organization and ensure it is relevant to as many journalists as possible.”

• “The infighting, back-stabbing and secrecy at the national level. I'm ashamed and irritated to see it in a "professional" organization. I feel those involved have too much time on their hands, if they have the time to waste with politicking. I certainly don't have the time to waste following it.”
• **Feedback from respondents on chapter support:**

  • “I think the chapter system is broken. We have more chapters that are dormant or poorly led than good ones.”

  • “I don't hear about its efforts/ability to help chapters.”

  • “The national board needs to give state chapters a share of membership dues to incentivize states to boost membership in national; to do otherwise is a death sentence.”
Survey comments

- **Other insightful feedback:**
  - “It [SPJ National] seems detached from local chapters.”
  - “National has become far too political and doesn't seem to understand chapters and their needs. Micromanagement of chapter finances is a crazy requirement that takes too much time for volunteer board members in an organization struggling nationally and locally to attract and retain members.”
  - “There doesn't seem to be much connection between the national organization and the local chapter nearest me. I did go to a local chapter's event a few months ago, and that was fun, but I only found out about it through Facebook. Wouldn't you share mailing lists? I don't get it.”
• **Feedback from respondents on local programming and training:**

  • “I think there's space for SPJ to step forward and create a program for members to qualify as legit journalists. With the cost of membership and a quiz/competency test of sorts, that could go a long way to be a Seal of Approval. Tricksters likely won't bother to become credentialed. I see this as a sister program to the Trust Project.”

  • “More local programming and help from national to local chapters to do it.”

  • “Local programming and leadership. Regular networking events on a local level.”
Feedback from respondents on local programming and training:

- “Access to more smaller-scale programs throughout the year (not just the regional and national conferences).”
- “Training and resources for rural journalists.”
- “Turnkey programs for chapters to offer.”
- “More accessible training.”
• **Feedback from respondents on local programming and training, cont.:**

• “Personally, I think small chapters, of which I am a member of, should meld together as sub-regions and work together on programs, contests, marketing of the organization and education opportunities with geographics in mind. Two strong programs can be presented to three chapters at different times. Contests can also have more competitions if more chapters banded together to run it.”

• “More advanced digital training offers year-round beyond the partnerships with Facebook and Google. Those offer good info but it's just part of digital.”
Feedback from respondents on what they like most about SPJ:

- “I appreciate its long-lasting voice -- SPJ can be a leader in the community and in promoting media literacy. I appreciate the FOI and other legal support for journalists. I appreciate the recognition -- it can be such a boost to journalists working in small newsrooms to have their work recognized. I appreciate the professional development opportunities.”

- “A strong voice of likeminded colleagues who value journalism ethics and First Amendment and open government advocacy.”

- “Fighting for First Amendment rights.”

- “Awards, Quill, email updates.”

- “It’s a community dedicated to fighting for the tenets of Journalism.”

- “That is simply exists in today’s difficult media environment.”
Survey comments

• Feedback from respondents on employment assistance:

  • “Career advancement options or something related to developing and advancing careers. Something like a job board ...”

  • “Group health insurance for our association.”

  • “Help for transitioning out of journalism.”

  • “Support. As a freelancer, I need it! But EVERY time over the last two years that I have reached out to my local chapter president or to an SPJ committee, my requests have been completely ignored, dismissed, or responded to MONTHS later ...”
Survey comments

- **Feedback from respondents on employment assistance:**
  - “I would like employment assistance and workshops/training devoted to not only diversity and inclusion, but networking with professionals to find jobs in journalism and building career contacts I am not receiving.”
  
  - “If there were a way to post a profile, job wants, other needs, and it could do a search for you and provide opportunities or contacts. A sense that an organization that I've put a lot of effort into is putting effort into giving something back to me, too.”
Feedback from respondents on diversity concerns:

- “What has the organization done to promote diversity and inclusiveness? How has the organization attracted the next generation of journalists?”

- “NO DIVERSITY. NO INCLUSION. NO ATTEMPT TO GAIN MORE DIVERSITY.”

- “More diversity-centered programming and advocacy.”
• Feedback from respondents on lobbying:
  
  “A strong voice at the national level defending us against politically motivated attacks that ultimately weaken democracy. This could take the form of lobbying, of fundraisers for Washington politicians, of a quick-response media team to respond to outrageous attacks on us.”

  "‘Lobbying,’ in a sense, with universities. According to my research and others’, there is still a major gap between what communication executives and academics perceive to be the educational needs of future journalists. I would love to work with SPJ in bridging that gap.”

  “Updates on lobbying efforts.”

  “More aggressive lobbying for free press.”

  “More lobbying efforts on the state level.”
Survey comments

- Not a running theme, but insightful feedback:

  Lack of relevancy outside of newspaper journalism

  In search of a mission

  Low public profile

  No “cool factor”

  Fall behind organizations who have specialized

  Too much for too many

  Unclear direct benefits

  No freelance support

  Members mention they have not received their SPJ cards
And one indicator of a lack of connection between SPJ and our members:

“I'm not sure what the role is supposed to be, how I'm supposed to connect, and I'm not aware of whatever free speech/journalism/4th estate advocacy is going on.”

-- from a female professional radio journalist, 41-50 years of age.
Next steps

1. Continued exploration; research, listening (focus groups), analysis [Fall]

2. Full recommendations report available to SPJ Board [Spring]

3. Research findings, survey data, more available SPJ.org/strategy [ongoing]

THANK YOU