The Society of Professional Journalists
Board of Directors Meeting
Sept. 8, 2019
9 a.m. to 1 p.m. CDT
San Antonio Grand Hyatt, Travis C/D
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 GRAND HYATT, TRAVIS C/D
DATE: Sept. 8, 2019
TIME: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. CDT

1. Call to order – Newberry

2. Roll Call – Secretary-treasurer
   a. Gallagher Newberry
e. Fox
   b. President-elect
   f. Director at-large
   c. Secretary-treasurer
   g. Director at-large
   d. Reilley

2. Welcome and introduction of new and returning board members – Newberry

3. Welcome and introduction of staff – Linda Hall

4. 2019-20 goals – Newberry

5. Board protocol and procedures – Newberry


7. Ratification of Society of Professional Journalists Foundation board elections – Gratz

8. Appointments – Newberry
   a. Committees
   b. SPJ Foundation Board
c. SPJ Board

9. Public comment period

Enter Executive Session

10. Old/New Business
   a. EIJ contractual business – Newberry
c. Board orientation – Bailen
Exit Executive Session

11. Adjournment
MEMORANDUM

FROM: Patricia Gallagher Newberry, President
TO: SPJ Board of Directors
RE: 2019-20 Plans and goals
DATE: Aug. 28, 2019

Fellow board members and fellow SPJ members:

As I noted in my remarks at the President’s Installation banquet last night, I’ve been involved in the Society of Professional Journalists nearly as long as I’ve been involved in journalism. I joined as an undergraduate journalism student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the early 1980s and, aside from a few “lapsed mommy years,” have been an active member ever since.

I attended my first regional conference in 1980 or 1981 and served as president of my college chapter my senior year. During my years at The Cincinnati Enquirer, 1986-94, I served the Queen City Chapter as president and in many other roles. I’ve been adviser to the Miami University chapter since 2000. In 2013, I began my involvement on the national level as director of SPJ’s Region 4, becoming secretary-treasurer in 2017-18, president-elect in 2018-19 and now president.

Here are the priorities I anticipate in the year ahead – with a strong caution that they could be rearranged, expanded or contracted by two in-play and most-important factors:

• a new executive director: I look forward to working very closely with our next hire, in the belief that the board cannot accomplish any of its goals without the support of our talented staff.
• a new strategic plan: That work will continue in the coming year and will help chart the path for this board and, I hope, the boards that follow.

That said, here is my working list:

Welcome a new executive director. As many of you know, our last executive director resigned near the end of April, after just more than a year with us. We are now deep into the process of searching for a new ED — with every intention of finding someone with top-notch administrative skills to lead our staff, and either experience in or solid knowledge of the world of journalism. Our search committee is working with a terrific professional search firm to recruit and hire the best possible candidate by early fall. Expect to hear lots more on that as the process plays out.

Launch Phase II of a Strategic Planning Task Force. J. Alex Tarquinio, SPJ’s 2018-19 president, appointed this group in early 2019 to begin work toward putting a strategic plan on paper. This weekend, you’ve heard an update on that work. We’ll continue the initiative after EIJ, with the goal of putting a plan before the board by spring 2020.

Continue advocacy for press rights, with close attention to the executive branch. We do a lot of this — but I hope to do more. Our government continues to demonize the press and SPJ must continue to push against that.
**Increase advocacy at the legislative level** and consider lobbying possibilities. We already do some amount of lobbying, so I’ll be exploring our capacity to do more and share those efforts with members.

**Increase promotion of and engagement in Legal Defense Fund efforts.** We have a very healthy and active LDF — but I think too few members know about.

**Increase collaboration with other media advocacy groups.** Again, we have many active partnerships that benefit members and the practice of journalism overall. I hope we can grow those as we explore new possibilities.

**Establish clearer lines of communication between members** — individually and through chapters, regions, committees, communities, etc. — and the board. Expect more on that as the new board gets busy.

**Examine membership trends** and drill down on how to keep current members and grow our overall membership ranks.

**Increase promotion of member initiatives.** Members are truly the lifeblood of SPJ. They are why we exist. During 2019, I met with members at regional conferences in Cleveland, Nashville and Louisville. I attend as many Cincinnati chapter events as possible. I read reports from chapters across the country. *I am amazed by the effort and energy of the SPJ community.* So so many chapters stage so so many innovative and helpful programs; we can help each other by sharing strategies more widely.

I am excited to start my year as board president. I look forward to celebrating SPJ, celebrating journalism and celebrating journalists.

We have much work ahead but many dedicated SPJers to share the load.

For a longer version of this text, visit: [https://patriciagallaghernewberry.net/spj/](https://patriciagallaghernewberry.net/spj/). After today, I will begin regular postings on the Freedom of the Prez blog page.

Here is my contact info:

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- Twitter: @pattinewberry
- Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/patti.newberry](https://www.facebook.com/patti.newberry)
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)
• 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.
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<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) What do we desire or expect SPJ to be known for representing across the long-term?</td>
<td>6) What are the least impactful areas/programs that we should back away from?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) What is SPJ’s competitive advantage from the rest of the 65+ journalism orgs?</td>
<td>7) Who are our members going forward and how might that evolve?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) What is SPJ’s competitive disadvantage from the rest of the 65+ journalism orgs?</td>
<td>8) How will we balance what we think SPJ members need versus what they believe is the case?</td>
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<td>4) What do members value most from their association with SPJ?</td>
<td>9) How can we effectively accelerate SPJ’s evolution without alienating certain member groups?</td>
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<td>5) What are the most impactful areas/program we should be focused on?</td>
<td>10) What could SPJ do to radically integrate Digital culture and programs?</td>
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<td>11) How can we shift journalism trainings to holistic hands-on workshop approaches?</td>
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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%)
Survey findings

What is your age?

Answered: 545  Skipped: 5

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

SPJ Strategic Plan Member Survey
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
In what field did you/do you work?

Answered: 397   Skipped: 153

- Online
- TV
- Radio
- Newspaper
- Magazine
- Other (please specify)
Survey findings

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
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)
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)
Survey findings

Please rank the most impactful areas/programs SPJ should be focused on?

Answered: 543  Skipped: 7

- Advocacy for journalism,...
- Code of Ethics
- Contests
- Digital Training
- Industry relevance/co...
- Media Literacy
- Student Programs
- Other
Survey findings

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.

10 = strongly agree
0 = strongly disagree

Answered: 513  Skipped: 37

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>AVERAGE NUMBER</th>
<th>TOTAL NUMBER</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,389</td>
<td>513</td>
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Total Respondents: 513
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
- No
- 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**: [Green bar]
- **Online resources**: [Blue bar]
- **EIJ programming**: [Yellow bar]
- **In-person training**: [Light blue bar]
- **I am satisfied with the...**: [Orange bar]
- **Other (please specify)**: [Purple bar]
Members expressed their opinions by answering several open-ended questions. While many see us 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.”
Survey comments

- **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
Survey comments

- **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.”
• 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.”
• 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:

“...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.”
• **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 ...”
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.”
Survey comments

• 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.”
Survey comments

• 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