

Board of Directors Conference Call January 24, 2017

In Attendance: Sarah Cohen, Andrew Donohue, Ellen Gabler, T. Christian Miller, Jill Riepenhoff, Cheryl W. Thompson, Nicole Vap, Phil Williams, Lee Zurik, Ziva Branstetter
Staff in Attendance; Doug Haddix; Amy Johnston

Not in Attendance: Josh Meyer; Steven Rich

Previous Minutes:

Motion to approve minutes made by Miller and seconded by Gabler. Unanimously approved.

Executive Director's Report

CAR Conference

If anyone is interested on serving on the career roundtable, please email Doug.

Conference registration is currently at 240, which is down a bit from the 385 we had at this time last year. We will be sending out speaker confirmations shortly, which should increase registration. Last year at this time we had already sent out some of the speaker confirmations.

Early registration for CAR conference ends Feb. 3

72% of room block is full, and we are in very good shape at this point.

Sessions were added over the weekend. We also have more things that we plan on promoting.

Sponsorship is strong.

Jaimi Dowdell, Megan Luther and Stephanie Sinn are all doing a great job in putting together the conference.

Zurik asked how the sponsorship compares to what had been budgeted. Haddix said that we are about \$40,000 off but that he had been focusing on CAR and will have more for IRE.

Based on past discussion with the board, we will not be having printed programs at either of the conferences this year. Instead are working on updating the mobile app. By eliminating printed programs, we will be saving some money.

Cohen noted that while she didn't think this would be an issue at the CAR conference, she thought there would be some concerns from some members attending the IRE conference. She noted that people like to have a hard copy to look at and circle sessions, etc. Haddix responded that there will be some printed programs available and that they expected some requests by people uncomfortable with the mobile app.

Zurik suggested instead of saying that we aren't going to have programs, instead say programs will be available at a specific location.

Cohen said she used the program when meeting with her mentees to recommend sessions that they attend. Haddix replied that we will have something that can be used for that.

The David Donald remembrance will be held on Friday at the Phil Meyer award ceremony. It should last 15 min. or so. Given that David had won a Phil Meyer award several times this seems very fitting. At the American University remembrance there was a brief video that we might be able to use for this. We can also remind those attending about the David Donald fund.

Miller asked how the David Donald fund was doing. Haddix said that we have \$6,226 in the fund with donations from more than 50 different donors. We are striving to get to \$20,000, which will allow us to endow this fund.

IRE Conference

Keynote speaker – Cohen, Goldberg & Vap

The board discussed various speaker options and formats for the keynote address.

Haddix said that the call for IRE panel ideas has been sent out and asked the board to help spread the word.

Thompson joined the meeting.

Staffing

Charles Minshew started yesterday as Data Services director. He will be meeting with Denise Malan over the next few days and he is also meeting with the graduate student later today. He has a lot of great ideas for the database library.

Jaimi Dowdell is leaving as senior training director.

Board went into executive session to discuss staff issues and IRE's agreement with the university. Regular session resumed at 2:38 p.m.

Membership

We will end January with around 5,800 members, which is up about 4% from Jan. 2016. We expect to start Feb. with over 5,200 members, which is up about 3% from Feb. 2016.

Contest

The Phil Meyer award winners were announced yesterday. We had 41 entries this year, which is a record.

IRE award applications are down some. This year we had 484 entries, and last year we had 558 entries. The biggest differences were in the print/online medium category and the large and small Innovation in Investigative Journalism categories.

Something to keep in mind when looking at these numbers is that some organizations have cut down on the numbers of entries they are doing. Overall, it's a healthy number, just down slightly.

Budget

We ended December with about \$68,000 in the black. This is great because we normally end December in a deficit since most of the fund-raising and revenue-generating events happen in the second half of the fiscal year.

Some of the factors being:

- There has been a 50% increase in giving (\$27,000). About \$50,000 in Dec. 2015 vs. \$77,000 in Dec. 2016.
- The Database Library director being empty for a few months.
- \$25,000 increase in the Ford Foundation support

This year we launched a social media giving push, which was very helpful with the end of year donations. We brought in \$41,157 this year vs. \$22,328 in 2015.

Total giving to date is \$76,833.

In 2016 there were a total of 64 student sponsorships, which brought in \$1,600.

Auditors are almost done and we expect their report by the end of the month. Heather prepared an endowment report that I shared with you.

Gabler noted that there hasn't been an organized push for student sponsorships within the last year or two. She also noted that if we wanted to do another push that we should talk about it. Haddix replied that yes, they should talk about the best time to do that again.

Donohue mentioned that in the past Mark hadn't pulled out all of the money that could be pulled from the endowment. Donohue suggested that he and Haddix set up a time to talk about that. Haddix agreed.

Reuters has renewed the contract with us for the Research Desk. This might be a service that we could develop and offer to other small or mid-size newsrooms. Haddix said he would like to work on this in the upcoming year and noted that there is a huge need for this.

Social Media

We are now creating a Facebook event page for each event.

IRE's Facebook followers are up 18% since the election. We have also seen similar post-election growth on Twitter. Where we now have 20,700 followers.

We have had 10,600 podcast plays since the election, which is a 20% increase from the same time as last year.

DocumentCloud

The board went into executive session to discuss the DocumentCloud service. After the executive session, the board considered this motion:

Motion – Executive director will explore options for shutting down or transferring DocumentCloud to another organization by the end of December 2017.

Motion made by Miller and seconded by Cohen. Unanimously approved.

Miller made the motion to adjourn at 3:55 p.m. Seconded by Cohen. Unanimously approved.