

IRE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

June 20, 2013, at 2 p.m.

In attendance: Board members David Cay Johnston, Sarah Cohen, Andrew Donohue, Mc Nelly Torres, Lea Thompson, Manny Garcia, Len Downie Jr., Rob Cribb, Ellen Gabler, Stuart Watson, Alison Young, Josh Meyer, Matt Waite. Staff: Mark Horvit, Lauren Grandestaff

Johnston called the meeting to order at 2:03pm, Thursday, June 20, 2013. Young moved to approve the minutes; Downie seconded. The minutes are approved unanimously.

Young noted that with Board of Director elections coming this week, there is also the election of Board officers. Recent procedure has involved those intending to run declaring their intention to do so in advance, to make the process transparent. She recommended that all those planning to run for the Executive Committee file notice during the meeting, and that the names be announced the names prior to the end of this meeting. She also noted that any newly elected Board members can add their names to the list. Johnston recommended that Young collect the names, as she is not seeking re-election.

Horvit gave the Executive Director's Report.

He introduced two employees recently hired employees: Tony Schick, who runs the IRE website, and Denise Malan, who is doing data analysis for members of the Investigative News Network.

Horvit gave an update on the conference, noting that attendance is strong, with likely more than 1,200 attending. He said fundraising for the IRE and CAR conferences exceeded goals significantly, with about \$220,000 raised. He thanked Maud Beelman of the Dallas Morning News for her help in securing hosting funds, as well as several IRE members who work for Hearst. He said that Gannett offered more than 80 scholarships for employees nationwide in both print and broadcast, and that Scripps, NBC and others have large blocks of attendees.

Horvit discussed options for the 2015 CAR Conference, reminding board members that there has been some discussion of holding the event in the western half of the country. Young noted that it's also OK to look at the East Coast, and various cities were discussed.

Horvit noted that membership numbers have been strong, averaging between 4,200 and 4,400 per month.

He said absentee voting increased with the new email balloting procedure, with about 195 requested and 160 returned.

He said Web traffic remains strong and that Schick has begun to offer live Google hangout events in which journalists who have done recent projects talk about their work. He said Schick is working on a project that Horvit has discussed previously, which involves creating an interactive online map showing where IRE's training has been and some of the stories generated by it. The goal is to showcase IRE's impact.

Schick also is working on updating the online timeline of IRE's history, but work must be done to update it because work on doing so stopped in 2005.

Horvit noted that IRE is now offering several free services to members. Those who attend either the mapping boot camp or take mapping classes at the CAR Conference get \$1,500 Esri software (this has been true for the boot camps for several years); that Tableau is now giving free copies of its desktop software to IRE members (worth close to \$2,000), and that Training Director Jaimi Dowdell worked out an arrangement to get IRE members free subscriptions to CometDocs, a service that converts PDFs and costs more than \$100 a year. Membership in IRE is \$75.

Horvit gave an update on various training programs, including TNT (Total Newsroom Training) , the boot camps (attendance is up), Hearst, Gannett and NBC (Hearst and Gannett are corporate-wide, NBC is station-by-station, but driven by corporate). He said IRE may do training through a grant from the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation (part of the Society of Professional Journalists) with the New England Center for Investigative Reporting.

Alan Lynes recommended that IRE's mission statement be revised to include a segment about the organization's commitment to diversity. Board members asked Lynes to work on it.

Thompson presented the proposed 2013-14 budget, which board members had previously been given during a May conference call. There was brief discussion. Gabler moved to approve, Downie seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Young asked about whether the reserve fund is large enough. Horvit said the fund now stands at \$180,000, not including funds available in the endowment that IRE has not used for other purposes. He said the accountants believe this amount is sufficient, but he will look at whether it should be increased.

Board members then received an update on the endowment.

Gabler and Watson gave an update on the membership committee. IRE is now conducting both membership drives and holding regional meet-ups. A new proposed initiative would focus on college students specifically. Gabler proposed a student member sponsor program, in which professionals could pay the \$25 student fee for a specific student or for someone from the school of their choosing. Discussion ensued about various ways to shape and launch such a program, which was supported by the Board.

IRE member Jill Riepenhoff then proposed a program that could build on the momentum of the Campus Coverage Project. She proposed creating a student mentorship program. Members would be recruited to work with students, particularly those with specialty areas that make sense. The goal is get members involved who don't already participate in the existing mentorship program. A motion was made by Young to create a committee to look at this program. Downie seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Riepenhoff offered to chair the effort.

Thompson discussed the need to preserve the video in IRE's story library. Johnston noted that member David Reno has asked whether IRE should work with an existing museum of broadcast on such an effort.

Young and Watson asked whether initial efforts should focus on the award-winning projects in the library. Cohen and others noted that issues of intellectual property rights could come into play. Thompson said that although she is stepping down from the Board, she plans to continue to lead this effort.

Cribb gave an update on the Golden Padlock Award and debuted the award, which was built by a friend of Thompson's family.

The Board took a brief break.

Thompson updated the Board on the IRE Awards. She said entries increased and were higher particularly in categories representing smaller newsrooms and breaking news.

However, there was confusion in the breaking news category among some entrants about when their work must have started relative to the event. Tweaks to the language will be considered.

Thompson said that some categories had so many entries that screeners had difficulty reading them all. Discussion ensued about whether each screener needs to read every entry, or whether it makes sense for screeners to divide categories and report back to their groups. There was also discussion about limiting the number of stories that can constitute an entry (currently there is no limit, so dozens of stories can be submitted). Similar issues arise for video entries, which can be lengthy documentaries. The Contest Committee will consider a limit.

There was discussion about the student category and whether anything needs to be done to address partnerships. In both cases, the Board agreed that no changes are needed at this time.

The Board then took up the question of whether Board members should be able to enter the IRE Awards. Cohen provided an overview of the issues and the arguments pro and con. The Board must balance the risk of perception of influence if a Board member won an award, versus the loss of quality board candidates who do not run because others in their news organizations would be prohibited from entering the awards if they were involved with a project in any way. Additionally, sometimes top work isn't entered because of a Board member's involvement, meaning the awards run the risk of not representing all of the best work in a year. Additionally, students lose the ability to compete if their advisor or professor is on the Board.

A proposed change had previously been drafted and publicized to IRE members for comment; few commented, and most were in favor of the change. Horvit also reached out to several long-time members, with similar results.

Audience member Shawn McIntosh agreed that rules related to students needed to change, but was concerned about the appearance if a Board member's work won an IRE Award and recommended against allowing that to occur. Several other audience members also offered their thoughts, including Board candidates Ryan Gabrielson,

T. Christian Miller and Matt Goldberg. Audience member Fernando Diaz spoke about the loss of good judges because of the rule.

Johnston then read the proposed policy: (see below)

Waite made a motion in favor of adopting it; Cohen seconded the motion.

Cohen made a motion to amend the wording to prohibit the Board president from entering the awards; Torres seconded. But after further discussion in which the Board agreed that the President would no longer sign the award certificates unless he or she was also the Contest chair – who cannot enter the awards – that motion was withdrawn.

A motion was made by Young to change wording in the proposal to say “can compete” instead of “is competing.” “Pre-screener of contest entries shall not screen categories in which their own news organization can compete.” Cohen seconded, and it passed.

Waite made a motion to amend the proposed wording to say that names of contest judges who recuse themselves should be made public. Cribb seconded the motion. Young proposed making the wording “shall be reported to the membership.” Waite agreed to the change. The motion passed unanimously.

Donohue proposed a wording change to amend the first sentence of the proposal to state that members of the Contest Committee “are prohibited from being considered” for an award. Cohen seconded the motion. After discussion, the amendment was altered to also include the Board president.

The motion passed with three “No” votes: Young, Donohue, Thompson.

Cohen moved for vote on the amended proposal. Waite seconded the motion.

The motion, as amended:

Members of the IRE Contest Committee, including any member of the IRE Board who serves on the committee and the IRE board president, are prohibited from entering the IRE Awards for the year during which they serve. Any work that the committee member was involved with in any way is disqualified from consideration. Once appointed, even if a committee member resigns from the committee prior to judging, such work is still disqualified. IRE Board members who do not serve on the contest committee may submit contest entries for consideration. Contest Committee members must disclose any potential conflicts of interest to the committee and to IRE's executive director and shall recuse themselves from discussion and voting on entries where they are deemed by fellow committee members as having an actual conflict. If a member recuses themselves during voting, a written record will be kept of such recusals and shall be reported to the membership.

The Contest Committee will consist of at least six members, and can include a mix of Board members, representatives elected by the membership and representatives appointed by the chair of the contest committee in conjunction with the executive director. No single news organization (newspaper, broadcast station, online news site, etc.) shall be represented by more than one judge.

Pre-screener of contest entries shall not screen categories in which their own news organization is competing. Pre-screener must promptly notify IRE staff and their co-screener of any potential conflict of interest they identify once they see the entries they are reviewing.

A roll call vote was taken:

Thompson: No

Cribb: Yes

Garcia: Yes

Gabler: Yes

Downie: Yes

Watson: No

Torres: No

Meyer: Yes

Johnston: Yes

Cohen: Yes

Donohue: Yes

Waite: Yes

Young: Yes

The motion passed, 10-3.

Young announced the name of those running for the Executive Committee:

President – Johnston

Vice President: Torres and Cohen

Secretary: Gabler

Treasurer: Donohue

At large: Torres

Horvit gave an update on DocumentCloud. He noted that two grants funding the project expire in the coming months, from the Knight Foundation and the Open Society Foundation. Sustainability of DocumentCloud is a key issue. The Knight Foundation has expressed interest in support efforts to build in sustainability.

Donohue discussed the Revenue Committee, noting that it needs a clearer, better defined mission if it is to continue in its current format.

Downie expressed interest in supporting a new fund-raising effort, potentially for a fund for small newsroom training that had been previously discussed. Board members agreed to look at the committee's role during its fall retreat.

Gabler noted that Thompson and Young are leaving the Board, and she and all Board members thanked them for their service.

Cohen motioned to adjourn. Gabler seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned about 5:45 p.m.

IRE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
June 22, 2013

In Attendance: Board members Ziva Branstetter, Sarah Cohen, Rob Cribb, Andrew Donohue, Len Downie Jr., Ellen Gabler, Manny Garcia, Matt Goldberg, David Cay Johnston, Josh Meyer, T. Christian Miller, Mc Nelly Torres, Stuart Watson. Staff: Mark Horvit

The meeting was called to order at 8:15 p.m.

The board voted for members of the Executive Committee that will serve during the 2013-14 year. Board members unanimously approved electing the following members:

President: David Cay Johnston

Vice President: Sarah Cohen

Treasurer: Andrew Donohue

Secretary: Ellen Gabler

At-large: Mc Nelly Torres.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.