

IRE Board Call Minutes

March 1, 2012

Board Members Present on the Call: Mc Nelly Torres, David Cay Johnston, Josh Meyer, Phil Williams, Alison Young, Len Downie, Aron Pilhofer, Andrew Donohue, Manny Garcia, Lea Thompson, Sarah Cohen

Board Members Absent from the Call: Matt Waite, Rob Cribb

Staff Present on the Call: Mark Horvit, Amy Johnston

Minutes:

Minutes from the October 2011 board meeting were sent to the board for review. Johnston made the motion to approve the minutes and Young seconded it. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Executive Directors Report: (Horvit)

CAR Conference

- CAR conference in St. Louis went well.
- We had over 400 attendees.
- Revenue exceeded past conference revenue.
- We had four board members at the conference which sends a good message to the membership.

Williams noted that because of sweeps he was unable to attend and wanted to encourage us to take that into consideration for future conference planning.

Horvit noted that conference dates had been discussed at the prior board meeting in St. Louis and that the broadcast issue was considered. In looking at the number of broadcasters in the past when the conference was in March there was only a handful of broadcasters that attended those conferences, but that we would like to move the conference to March if possible. It was moved previously because of conflicts with the South By Southwest Conference, which had become an issue for attendees. The 2013 CAR Conference is already scheduled for February.

Torres noted that there were quite a few new faces at the conference and it was really good to see that.

Executive Director's Report Continued:

Budget

- Things look fine so far.
- The next conference call will be in May and they will have a first look at next year's budget. Will then vote on the final budget at the June board meeting.

Membership

- Numbers look good overall, though down some, but they are now being tracked a different way because of our new membership management system. So the highs and low look different, but the revenue looks good.

Revenue Committee Report: (Johnston)

- Endowment: Interest rates are falling which means income will be falling. Investment advisor recommends that we change the mix of investment to increase our investment in dividend producing stocks to as much as 20-30% over the next couple of years.
- Mark will put together a report on the investment strategy and run it by the endowment committee for approval then post it on the website. This can also be discussed at the membership meeting in June.

Alison moves that we accept the endowment committee proposal. Sarah seconds. Unanimous approval.

Motion is made by Alison that we go into closed session to discuss confidential business matter. The motion is seconded by Manny. Unanimous approval.

Meeting goes to closed session.

Meeting opened again.

Young wanted to say kudos to the people organizing the meet ups in DC.

Membership Drive: (Horvit)

- Recommended that we hold another membership drive. It was suggested that April would be a good time to hold the drive so that we can offer incentives or do a drawing using IRE conference.
- The drive would be done the same way as the last one. The same rules would apply.
- The incentives will help drive members to renew.
- Information about the membership drive would be posted on the website and in Quickhits.
- It would run for a shorter period of time than the last one.

Cohen mentioned that she put a lot of time in last time to try and organize volunteers to hold events as part of the drive, but the payoff wasn't worth it.

- Student membership numbers are looking really good. There were more students at the CAR conference than before.

Downie noted that he, Steve Doig and another professor have been talking up IRE in their classes. They have also encouraged their students to join and get involved in IRE.

IRE Conference in Boston: (Garcia/Horvit)

- Thanks to the help of Aron we have a keynote speaker lined up for the IRE Conference in Boston: Jill Abramson, executive editor of The New York Times.
- Horvit noted that were a couple of the ideas proposed for the showcase panels:
 - Investigative Reporting Then & Now - Chuck Lewis who is working on a book with interviews with investigative reporters.
 - Sports Panel – Due to things like the Penn State scandal
 - Ethics Panel – Due to things like the News Corp. and other recent incidents.

Thompson suggested a session to do with all the new investigative units that are being built. She cited the new unit in San Francisco

Horvit noted that a member had suggested a panel on how to build an investigative unit. And while it might not be a showcase panel it could be a panel.

Board members discussed various potential speakers and several agreed to reach out to individuals to try and line them up.

Horvit requested that the board send him a list of their ideas for showcase panels including names. He requested that the list be sent within the next day or so. Once he has everyone ideas he will compile a list and send it out to the board.

Fundraising

- Garcia asked how Alan was doing on reaching names provided by board members. Horvit said he would get an update and send something out to the board.

Motion to adjourn was made by Johnston. It was seconded by Garcia.