

Minutes

IRE Board of Directors

Oct. 14, 2020

Video Retreat, Part 2

See appendix for full reports

IRE Board President Cheryl W. Thompson presiding, called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Eastern.

In addition to Thompson, the following **board members** were present: Bethany Barnes, Jodie Fleischer, Jennifer Forsyth, Cindy Galli, Marisa Kwiatkowski, Jennifer LaFleur, Steven Rich, Mark Rochester, Brian Rosenthal, Kat Stafford, Jodi Upton and Mark Walker

Staff present: Doug Haddix, Denise Malan, Stephanie Klimstra, Chris Vachon, Madison Fleck Cook, Lauren Grandestaff, Heather Feldmann Henry, Sarah Hutchins, Amy Johnston, Charles Minshew, Francisco Vara-Orta and Cody Winchester

Approval of minutes from Oct. 7 board meeting

Motion from Walker, seconded by Rochester to adopt minutes as amended.

Vote: unanimously approved

Executive session

Motion from Rich, seconded by Walker to go into executive session

Vote: Unanimously approved

Board moved into executive session at 9:11

Motion from Fleischer, seconded by Rich to adjourn executive session

Vote: Unanimously approved

9:55 a.m. adjourn executive session

Staff reports – Doug Haddix and staff

See full reports for details

Haddix said that IRE was getting close to launching the new website and that all staff was working on it. The plan was to launch in early December. Haddix wanted to clarify that custom newsroom training is not on hold.

IRE is having preliminary talks with some funders about doing focused training in Chicago.

The staff has been working on the end-of-year funding campaign and will ask the board to help amplify their message.

Haddix said IRE already has several boot camps scheduled.

IRE has signed a contract with a new vendor to manage contest entries, OpenWater, which other organizations have used with great success.

Haddix asked for questions from the board.

Upton noted that she heard really good things about IRE on Campus.

Thompson suggested reaching out to smaller HBCs in the south regarding IRE on Campus. Sarah Hutchins on staff has been working with HBUs and working to diversify geographically.

Rosenthal noted that fewer than 200 private meetings were held during IRE. Haddix said it would likely increase as people get used to the new platform. He also noted that there is no way to know how many individuals were at those meetings. Galli noted that some people were meeting on Zoom outside of the conference platform, but that she would like to see ways to bolster networking.

Budget report – Doug Haddix and Heather Feldmann Henry

(See report for details)

Haddix said that IRE looks strong and has stronger cash flow for this time of year than we normally would, based on the September conference. Fiscal 2020 included only the NICAR conference because IRE got pushed to next fiscal year. He noted that the budget does not include staff time on conferences. It includes only hard costs.

Membership: The September conference was a success as far as the number that attended. Membership is at a record level.

Heather Feldmann Henry said that IRE budgeted very conservatively because of the ongoing uncertainty. But noted that IRE should be able to exceed the numbers.

Haddix noted that data sales have gone down, which is why IRE has pivoted to data services. IRE is working to build this out. Also, some grants include a certain number of hours for data services.

IRE is the fiscal agent for a few other organizations and it has signed a few more on recently.

Haddix said that IRE budgeted \$130K for the national conference revenue and made \$337K, which is spectacular. Master classes are still doing very well. We exceeded our initial target for sponsorships. IRE also will be opening the conference to people who did not register before the conference (not master classes).

Haddix also noted that he and staff are working with funders to reallocate some of the money. That's one of the reasons we were able to offer so many fellowships for the September conference.

IRE is having a discussion about future ways to monetize master classes. But the ones at the September conference were not recorded.

Fleischer asked about a second rollout for the Campus Campaign targeting universities' looking to add virtual value for the spring semester. Haddix said staff will market the recorded IRE 20 conference to educators in November. There will be an additional push directed toward campuses in advance of NICAR 21.

Upton asked for clarification on the pay increases. Haddix and Henry explained that some of was due to split in payment from the University of Missouri and IRE. Also, Mizzou has raised cost of benefits.

Haddix noted that \$47K in PPP repayment is listed. That may be forgiven, but we're not sure yet.

Rosenthal asked about Fellowships and scholarships. Haddix explained that it is mostly repurposing of money from other grants. Three conferences this fiscal year – that's why there is more money for fellowships available.

Henry explained that we had foundation money carried over for IRE 20 that would not normally be available.

Motion to approve budget from Upton, seconded by Kwiatkowski

Vote: Approved unanimously

Break at 10:46

Reconvened at 10:56

Strategic plan – Jennifer Forsyth and Marisa Kwiatkowski

See report for details.

Forsyth outlined three options for a strategic plan:

1. "Skinny" plan – facilitator help you set goals
2. Big plan – lots of meetings with all stakeholders
3. Difficult to do without facilitator – someone has the time to push it along.

We originally thought of beginning the process in early 2021, but that changes with executive director search.

Three options on the table:

1. Go ahead to do some planning – then work with new executive director to fine-tune. This could include a facilitator for the search process.
2. Actually complete a strategic plan so that the new executive director is handed something that says the board is unanimous that these are our priorities.
3. Put off until new the new executive director is hired. That person would be part of strategic planning.

As part of their research Forsyth and Kwiatkowski said they interviewed groups that have done different options.

Rosenthal asked when IRE did its last strategic plan. Forsyth said it was done right before Mark Horvit was hired. It was a facilitator goal-setting approach. Board members at the time and Horvit said it was successful. Horvit said it was useful for him to hit the ground running because he knew what the organization had prioritized.

Upton said that a strategic plan could be a recruiting tool. When we go for grants, funders often ask for strategic plans.

Forsyth said some organizations said they have been asked by funders about their strategic plan. Kwiatkowski said she would ask Doug what they currently send to funders. She also noted that funders also often want 100% board participation in donations.

Upton said it would help us understand what is being said to funders on behalf of the organization.

Thompson asked the board members what they wanted to do as far as strategic planning.

Rochester, Rosenthal, Rich, Thompson and Fleischer all agreed that they wanted to wait until we hire a new executive director to do strategic planning.

Upton said we don't need to do full strategic planning but that it would be helpful to know our goals before we hire an executive director. Having what we currently send funders would help. LaFleur agreed.

Rochester said that would be done in the search process.

The board agreed to wait for strategic planning until a new executive director is hired.
No vote taken.

Motion to move into executive session from Walker, seconded by Galli.

Vote: Unanimously approved

Board moved into executive session at 11:17 a.m.

Motion to leave executive session by Walker, seconded by Rich

Vote: 12 of 13 Rochester not present for vote

Motion to adjourn from Barnes, seconded by Thompson.

Vote: 12 of 13 Rochester not present for vote

Adjourned at 12:57

Note: The board approved the minutes from the 9/28 board video meeting by email 10/15/20

IRE STAFF REPORTS -- *Board retreat*

OCTOBER 14, 2020

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | Doug Haddix

Management/leadership:

- Led staff to produce the largest conference in IRE history (and the first all-virtual conference): **2,987** attendees.
- Led organization to an all-time membership high in September 2020: **6,592** members
- Guided the organization programmatically and financially through the ongoing disruptions caused by the global coronavirus pandemic.
- Oversaw ongoing behind-the-scenes work on the new IRE website (expected to launch later this year).

Fundraising:

- Secured a \$150,000 endowed gift from Rick Gevers and his wife, Karen Burns, to provide IRE training and resources to college students of color.
- Participated in meetings and correspondence with several conference sponsors to secure/retain their support. Despite the pandemic and the move of IRE20 to a virtual conference, we exceeded our original sponsorship targets (raised \$329,500 to top the goal of \$325,000 for NICAR20 and IRE20 combined)
- Helped retain and redirect several foundation grants originally designed for in-person training: Knight Foundation, Lumina Foundation, Inasmuch Foundation.

Staff priorities (through June 2021):

- Reminder: This is the first fiscal year in IRE history that staff has been responsible for producing three national conferences.
- New IRE website. Launch the new site by the end of this calendar year. This time-consuming project involves every staff member.
- Watchdog Workshops grant. Implement a plan to amend program requirements with the Inasmuch Foundation on the \$100,000 grant.
- TV workshops. Implement a new plan for several themed virtual TV workshops to fulfill the remainder of a three-year, \$390,000 grant from the Knight Foundation.
- Bootcamps. Deliver a variety of virtual immersive data bootcamps in the coming weeks and months.
- IRE on Campus. Retool the on-site portions of the program to satisfy terms with the Lumina Foundation.
- TNT: need to deliver two days of custom training virtually to six different newsrooms

- Custom newsroom training. Meet renewed demand from media companies and other organizations for paid IRE training.
- NICAR21 conference amid pandemic uncertainty.
- IRE21 conference amid pandemic uncertainty.

IRE20 by the numbers

- Total attendees: 2,987 (includes vendors, exhibitors, sponsors, etc., in addition to paid registrants)
- Total private meetings scheduled through Pathable: 206
- Total chat posts: 11,396

PARTNERSHIPS | Chris Vachon

Grant Management:

McCormick Foundation/Newsroom Training: A Letter of Inquiry (LOI) was recently submitted to provide training to journalists working at the dozens of independent, ethnic and community-based outlets in the Chicago area. If the LOI is approved, IRE will be invited to submit a grant request. IRE would hear in March about a possible grant.

Knight Foundation/TV Watchdog Workshops: In place of in-person workshops, IRE will be conducting the balance of the training via Zoom. This grant will be up for renewal in 2021, and IRE plans to submit a renewal grant for the program.

Knight Foundation/Conference Sponsorship: The grant is ending its three-year term in 2020, and the foundation has invited IRE to submit a new request for another three-year grant. The basic conference sponsorship portion is expected to remain the same (\$20,000 per conference) but the \$20,000 for fellowships for each conference is expected to be eliminated from this grant, as the Knight Foundation is changing the way it handles fellowships to various conferences.

Arnold Ventures/General Operating: The grant provided \$150,000 for 2019 and 2020. IRE will begin discussions about funding for 2021 and beyond soon.

Arnold Ventures/Conference Sponsorship: The grant provided \$50,000 for 2020. IRE will be seeking another grant for 2021.

Jonathan Logan Foundation/General Operating: The grant provides \$75,000/year for 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Kohlberg Foundation/General Operating: The foundation has been providing a grant for the TNT program, in the amount of \$150,000, for the last eight years. The most recent grant may be used for general operating, rather than the TNT program, due to the pandemic.

Inasmuch Foundation/General Operating: The past support of \$100,000 has been for the Watchdog Workshop program. When the pandemic hit, they allowed us to pivot their support to the IRE webinars. The current grant is for general operations due to the pandemic.

Lumina Foundation/IRE on Campus program: The foundation is providing \$95,000 for the program, and the terms of the grant have been extended to summer 2021 due to the pandemic.

Lumina Foundation/Conference Sponsorship: The foundation has provided \$12,500 annually for several years. They are doubling their support (\$25,000 annually) for 2021 and 2022 because IRE21 is in Indianapolis and the foundation is headquartered in Indianapolis.

Hearst Foundations/JOC Fellowship program: IRE received \$50,000 for the JOC Fellowship program in spring 2020. This grant is not renewable for at least three years.

Park Foundation/General Operating: The foundation has been providing \$30,000-\$50,000 annually since 2018. A grant request has been submitted for 2021, and IRE will receive notification in December.

Gannett Foundation/Conference Sponsorship: The foundation has been awarding an annual grant to IRE for many years ranging from \$10,000-\$15,000.

TEGNA Foundation/Conference Sponsorship: The foundation has been awarding an annual grant to IRE for many years in the amount of \$10,000.

Scripps Howard Foundation/Conference Sponsorship: The foundation has been awarding an annual grant to IRE for many years in the amount of \$7,500.

Individual fundraising:

- End-of-year campaign: Will kick off on Giving Tuesday, December 1, and continue through the calendar year.
 - Staff will ask the board to help amplify messaging.
- Legacy Society: A planned giving program will be kicked off once the new website is live. In the meantime, the information is available on [this page](#).
- Board members are highly encouraged to give annually.
 - The amount is not important - it is important that IRE can say 100% of the board members donate annually.
 - If you'd like to set yourself up for automatic donations, so you don't have to remember to donate, the online donation form allows you to set up automatic annual, quarterly or monthly donations.
 - If you're not sure if you've donated in 2020 yet, feel free to check with Chris.

➤ Overall contributions:

Fiscal Year	# of Donations	Small to Medium Donations	Large Donations	Donation Total
FY20	545	\$72,153		\$72,153
FY19	574	\$75,534	\$118,235 from bequest	\$193,769
FY18	439	\$80,280	\$67,278 from bequest; \$25K from one donor	\$173,098
FY17	294	\$77,484	\$25K from one donor	\$102,484
FY16	118	\$31,011	\$25K from one donor	\$56,011

Fellowships/Scholarships

- 189 fellowships were awarded to IRE20
 - If the conference had been in person, IRE had funding for 19 fellowships.
 - 56% of the fellowships were awarded to journalists, students and educators of color.
 - 48% of the fellowships were awarded to non-members who are now IRE members.
 - The increase in fellowships for IRE20 is attributed to two things. First, because the conference was online, IRE used the travel money included in the fellowships typically offered each year in order to offer more fellowships. Second, the Knight Foundation supported some unused IRE grant money to be used for fellowships for journalists, students and educators of color.

- Journalist of Color Investigative Reporting Fellowship
 - Due date for 2021 applications is October 12.
 - Four fellows will be selected for 2021.
 - The 2020 fellows are being given an extension for their projects - from December 31, 2020 to May 1, 2021 due to COVID.

Conference Sponsorships (IRE & NICAR)

Budgeted	Actual
\$325,000	\$329,500 from 30 sponsors

MEMBERSHIP | Amy Johnston

End of September 2020

September ended with 6,592 members, which is up 7.8 % from the same time last year. This is a **new record high** for membership.

Month	2018	2019	2020	Diff	Perc Diff	Diff	Perc Diff
				20 to 19	20 to 19	19 to 18	19 to 18
Sept	5991	6116	6592	476	7.8%	125	2.1%

Beginning of October 2020

October started with 6,247 members, which is up 6.1 % from the same time last year.

Month	2018	2019	2020	Diff	Perc Diff	Diff	Perc Diff
				20 to 19	20 to 19	19 to 18	19 to 18
Oct	5752	5889	6247	358	6.1%	137	2.4%

Membership revenue (fiscal) YTD: \$94,995

Membership Breakdown (as of October 1, 2020)

Membership Type:

- Professional: 3,923
- Student: 1,748
- Academic: 334
- Associate: 214
- Retiree: 28

Media Type: (Members choose all that apply)

- Newspapers: 2,180
- Online: 2,276
- Television: 1,202
- Other: 1,227
- Freelance: 867
- Magazine: 742
- Radio: 760
- Education: 569
- Books: 348
- Wire service: 249
- Trade publication: 145

Location:

- United States: 4,960
- International: 477

Gender:

- Female: 2,847
- Male: 2,175
- Prefer not to answer: 654
- Non-binary: 41

Race/Ethnicity: *(Members choose all that apply)*

At least 22 percent of members are non-white.

Race/Ethnicity Breakdown	Members	Pct of Members*
American Indian / Alaska Native only	14	0.2%
Contains American Indian / Alaska Native	19	0.3%
Asian only	418	6.7%
Contains Asian	79	1.3%
Black / African American only	324	5.2%
Contains Black/African American	34	0.5%
Latino/Hispanic only	353	5.7%
Contains Latino/Hispanic	109	1.8%
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	7	0.1%
Contains Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	9	0.1%
White only	3,173	51.1%
Contains White	205	3.3%
Blank	654	10.5%
Decline to specify	967	15.6%
Contains Decline to Specify	10	0.2%
Not specified/Other	78	1.3%
* This percentage was figured using the total number of members (6,215)		

Free Tool Subscriptions

- Tableau Desktop / Tableau Prep: 2,332
- Cometdocs: 1,514

IRE Journal Subscriptions: 64

TRAINING | Denise Malan, Patti DiVincenzo, Lauren Grandestaff, Sarah Hutchins, Stephanie Klimstra, Charles Minshew, Dylan Sinn, Francisco Vara-Orta, Cody Winchester

Watchdog workshops: We will not be hosting Watchdog Workshops in person this fiscal year, and our grant from Inasmuch Foundation has been converted to general operating support. Staff is working on ideas for virtual events to take their place, including the possibility of master class workshops that go in-depth on practical topics such as public records, interviewing and writing. These would be similar to the master classes held at conferences but in a different format.

Knight broadcast workshops: We also will not be hosting any more Knight broadcast workshops in person for this grant cycle. Knight has approved our plan to convert these workshops into virtual events, and staff is working on planning the events and the timeline. We expect an announcement within a few weeks.

Total Newsroom Training (TNT): The pandemic put a hold on several of our TNT trainings, which are conducted in-house at winning newsrooms. We had hoped that because these are smaller group workshops that we could still do these in person. That is now clearly not possible, and staff is now working with those newsrooms to convert this training into virtual custom workshops.

Custom Training: Like all our programs, custom training has also been affected by the pandemic. Some are on hold until travel is safe again, though we do have some upcoming trainings and strong interest in custom data bootcamps.

Upcoming custom trainings:

- Media Institute of the Caribbean
- CT Public
- Judith Neilson Institute in Sydney, Australia
- University of Iowa

Trainers have also reworked all of our custom training curricula, including updating our presentation templates with IRE's new branding, adding several new sessions and updating our session offerings online.

Diversity, equity and inclusion efforts: We now offer a DEI session as part of our custom training for newsrooms, thanks to the work of trainer Francisco Vara-Orta, and we have already trained one newsroom and received interest from others. In addition, the IRE staff has created an internal DEI committee that is gathering ideas for staff training and projects to move us forward in this area.

IRE on Campus: This new training program includes data bootcamps for educators and campus workshops for HSIs and HBCUs. Our grant from Lumina Foundation included funding for one HSI and one HBCU in this initial round. Because we can no longer conduct those workshops in person, we are using travel money from the grant to expand our reach and conduct virtual workshops for four additional schools (two HBCUs and two HSIs). We are thrilled to be able to reach more students with this format and grateful for Lumina's support.

Bootcamps: Throughout the pandemic, the training team has pivoted to online data bootcamps and come up with creative ways to engage participants online. We've had a great response to our two-day mini bootcamps online and have planned a number of them:

- Spreadsheets and viz: Oct. 13-14 & Oct. 19-20
- Spreadsheets: Nov. 16-17
- SQL: Dec. 7-8
- Tableau: Feb. 1-2
- Python: Feb. 8-9
- R: Feb. 16-17

We also have converted our regular data bootcamps online and hosted our first-ever data bootcamp for educators online in July/August. All our online bootcamps so far have been at or near capacity.

DATA SERVICES | Charles Minshew

Data sales: As has been the case for years, data sales have continued to decline. We find that we are seeing more business from people needing datasets cleaned and analyzed (and most of this data is data that is the result of a FOIA request, or state-level data.) We'll work this year and next year to update datasets as necessary. Greater availability has made selling data a bit of a tightrope for the Data Library. Some examples that impact our ability to sell: 1.) Due to continued quality issues of FBI's UCR data, it is not sound for us to continue updating this. 2.) Additionally, we have had requests for FEC campaign finance data, however, it is readily

available from the agency without additional cleaning. 3.) Data that we would scrape and sell, like the National Inventory of Dams, can now simply be downloaded.

Data services: We've seen a steady increase in demand for data services work as we get closer to the election. We have had growing interest from newsrooms working with COVID-19 data and have continued producing interactives for clients like Gray Television and Media Institute of the Caribbean.

Total revenue for the Data Library so far this fiscal year: Including work that is near completion, we are already at **\$6,090** for the fiscal year.

EDITORIAL | Madison Fleck Cook

The IRE Journal: Several issues of The IRE Journal are in the works. Fourth Quarter 2020 will focus on COVID coverage that has come out since March and how reporters can continue to use similar tactics as new COVID information is released. Q1 2021 will focus on Census coverage and demographics as the Census numbers will be released in March 2021.

IRE Radio Podcast: The podcast continues to be put on hold as IRE staff works from home and studio space is limited to staff at KBIA.

Social Media: We're continuing to gain followers on social media. Every platform has seen growth since June.

- Facebook: 20.9K followers
- Twitter: 35.1K followers
- Instagram: 436 followers
- LinkedIn: 5.6K followers

NICAR-Learn: More than 670 people are using NICAR-Learn, which we made free for one year during COVID. We've added new videos to the site, which was utilized during the virtual IRE20 conference as our 'Data Training on Demand' series.

IRE website: We expect to launch the new IRE.org website by the end of 2020.

Newsletters: Email newsletters also continue to grow (all have grown since June).

- Quick Hits: 19,084
- Local Matters: 4,893
- I-Team toolkit: 1,622
- Fellowship & scholarship reminders: 313

RESOURCE CENTER | Lauren Grandestaff

Contests: The Philip Meyer contest is slated to open later this month. We will continue to use a combination of Dropbox, Wufoo forms and Google Sheets as a solution for the Phil Meyer contest entries and judging. However, later this month we will begin working with OpenWater to build a new contest platform for the 2020 IRE Awards. We will use OpenWater as our contest solution for both Phil Meyer and IRE in 2021.

Research Desk: Requests for the research desk have slowed dramatically, likely due to the pandemic. IRE is currently fulfilling contractual obligations with FIRE. No other research desk requests have been made.

Course Packs: Thanks to countless hours spent by the training team, the course packs have been fully updated for the latest versions of Excel on PC and Mac, plus a new Google Sheets edition. \$3,500 in revenue (175 packs sold).

Book sales breakdown: To date, more than 100 copies of the sixth edition of the Investigative Reporter's Handbook have been sold through the IRE's store. In total, book and course packs sales come in at \$10,984 from July 1 through September 30.

	A	B	C	D
1		Final 6.30.20	Proposed Year End FY 2021	Actual 9.30.21
2	REVENUE			
3				
4	MEMBERSHIP			
5	New Membership	\$81,686	\$75,000	\$55,080
6	Membership-student	\$25,220	\$10,000	\$7,475
7	Membership-international	\$7,750	\$6,000	\$1,575
8	Membership renewals	\$124,800	\$115,000	\$27,440
9	Renewals-student	\$5,575	\$5,000	\$2,275
10	Renewals-international	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$750
11	Membership revenue	\$249,031	\$215,000	\$94,595
12				
13	IRE SALES & SERVICES			
14	Data analysis/visualization & database sales	\$15,855	\$7,500	\$736
15	IRE Journal subscriptions/advertising	\$5,124	\$3,000	\$165
16	Book sales and royalty	\$25,470	\$15,000	\$10,984
17	Story/tipsheet sales & Research Desk	\$2,958	\$2,500	\$0
18	Award Contest fees	\$40,673	\$40,000	\$0
19	Web ads/services	\$39,797	\$30,000	\$9,550
20	Fiscal Agent fees	\$16,937	\$12,000	\$7,150
21	Other	\$1,617	\$1,000	\$0
22	IRE Services / Products revenue	\$148,431	\$111,000	\$28,585
23				
24	CONFERENCES			
25	Registrations and fees (IRE20, NICAR21, IRE21)	\$276,525	\$766,000	\$336,495
26	Hands-on training classes	\$30,511	\$34,000	\$14,400
27	Other revenues	\$14,000	\$47,000	\$17,390

	A	B	C	D
1		Final 6.30.20	Proposed Year End FY 2021	Actual 9.30.21
28	Sponsorships	\$66,250	\$495,000	\$263,250
29	Conference revenue	\$387,286	\$1,342,000	\$631,535
30				
31	Program Revenue			
32	Watchdog workshops	\$14,940	\$20,000	\$0
33	TV watchdog workshops	\$3,225	\$4,000	\$0
34	Data in Local Newsrooms	\$0	\$0	\$0
35	Custom newsroom training	\$66,855	\$30,000	\$500
36	Boot camps	\$52,195	\$96,000	\$20,495
37	Program Revenue	\$137,215	\$150,000	\$20,995
38				
39	GRANTS / FOUNDATIONS Released			
40	Google News Initiative: Data in Local Newsrooms (restricted)	\$149,000	\$16,000	\$0
41	John S. and James L. Knight Foundation: TV initiative (restricted)	\$75,000	\$142,000	\$0
42	Kohlberg Foundation: TNT (unrestricted)	\$83,000	\$217,000	\$0
43	Excellence and Ethics in Journalism: Watchdog workshops (restricted)	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$5,000
44	Lumina Foundation: IRE On Campus (restricted)	\$1,000	\$94,000	\$0
45	Dow Jones Newspaper Fund: intern data boot camp (restricted)	\$21,625	\$0	\$0
46	Arnold Ventures (unrestricted)	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$0
47	Jonathan Logan Family Foundation (unrestricted)	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$0
48	Park Foundation (unrestricted)	\$40,000	\$0	\$0

	A	B	C	D
1		Final 6.30.20	Proposed Year End FY 2021	Actual 9.30.21
49	Grants / Foundations revenue	\$694,625	\$794,000	\$5,000
50				
51	INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS			
52	Unrestricted/temporary restricted	\$68,766	\$30,000	\$2,347
53	Perm. Restricted -Endowment	\$12,254	\$25,000	\$3,988
54	Individual donations revenue	\$81,020	\$55,000	\$6,335
55				
56	INVESTMENT INCOME			
57	Income released-fellowships,administrative	\$152,000	\$150,000	\$0
58	Income not released	\$0		
59	Investment income revenue	\$152,000	\$150,000	\$0
60				
61				
62	Reserve for website FY20, carryover from FY19	\$40,000	\$0	\$0
63	Paycheck Protection Program	\$233,400	\$0	\$0
64	TOTAL REVENUE	\$2,123,008	\$2,817,000	\$787,045
65				
66	EXPENSES			
67				
68	PERSONNEL			
69	Salaries: full-time staff	\$904,162	\$987,000	\$238,862
70	Benefits: full-time staff	\$311,857	\$326,000	\$83,039
71	Part-time wages	\$72,000	\$75,000	\$8,347
72	Student wages	\$29,362	\$40,000	\$2,094
73	Personnel expenses	\$1,317,381	\$1,428,000	\$332,342
74				
75	IRE SALES & SERVICES			
76	Membership	\$1,420	\$2,000	\$200

	A	B	C	D
1		Final 6.30.20	Proposed Year End FY 2021	Actual 9.30.21
77	Data Library	\$1,353	\$2,000	\$475
78	Journal	\$33,071	\$35,000	\$8,197
79	Book costs	\$13,520	\$15,000	\$7,373
80	Resource Center	\$12,505	\$10,000	\$3,197
81	Contest (platform, plaques, awards)	\$2,477	\$15,000	\$0
82	Web services	\$2,946	\$2,000	\$200
83	Other	\$2,833	\$1,000	\$0
84	Sales/Products	\$70,125	\$82,000	\$19,642
85				
86	PROGRAM EXPENSES			
87	Conferences	\$301,462	\$839,000	\$27,095
88	Watchdog workshops	\$30,128	\$5,000	\$0
89	TV watchdog workshops	\$4,099	\$5,000	\$0
90	Data in Local Newsrooms	\$13,149	\$0	\$0
91	Total Newsroom Training (TNT)	\$10,000	\$0	\$0
92	Lumina-IRE on Campus	\$409	\$5,000	\$0
93	Custom newsroom training	\$31,059	\$5,000	\$590
94	Boot camps	\$23,824	\$5,000	\$0
95	Fellowships/scholarships	\$44,121	\$100,000	\$49,705
96	Program Expenses	\$458,251	\$964,000	\$77,390
97				
98	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES			
99	Investment management fees	\$18,497	\$18,000	\$3,587
100	Accounting	\$25,020	\$25,000	\$0
101	Legal	\$658	\$5,000	\$657
102	Professional services expenses	\$44,175	\$48,000	\$4,244
103				
104	BOARD OF DIRECTORS			

	A	B	C	D
1		Final 6.30.20	Proposed Year End FY 2021	Actual 9.30.21
105	Retreat-audio/visual, room rental, facilitator	\$12,433	\$0	\$0
106	Board travel assistance	\$0	\$1,000	\$0
107	Election software	\$2,060	\$2,500	\$0
108	Board of directors expenses	\$14,493	\$3,500	\$0
109				
110	GENERAL OFFICE			
111	Telephone and fax	\$6,670	\$6,000	\$2,310
112	Postage	\$6,852	\$3,000	\$1,083
113	Office supplies	\$1,499	\$6,000	\$769
114	Photocopying	\$1,954	\$3,000	\$567
115	Insurance	\$17,789	\$20,000	\$0
116	Computer supplies	\$1,192	\$2,000	\$0
117	Credit card service fees	\$39,856	\$40,000	\$7,337
118	Dues/fees/subscriptions	\$2,680	\$2,500	\$1,314
119	Office Travel/Executive Director Travel	\$6,742	\$5,000	\$0
120	Marketing/promotions	\$8,474	\$9,000	\$47
121	Staff retreat / professional development	\$10,851	\$3,000	\$0
122	Software/equipment/maintenance/hosting	\$34,230	\$30,000	\$4,090
123	Web design/updates	\$22,250	\$40,000	\$23,027
124	Office relocation expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0
125	Other office expense	\$3,536	\$4,000	\$89
126	General office expenses	\$164,575	\$173,500	\$40,633
127				
128	Fundraising expenses	\$8,871	\$10,000	\$178
129	Depreciation	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0
130				
131	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,087,871	\$2,719,000	\$474,429

	A	B	C	D
1		Final 6.30.20	Proposed Year End FY 2021	Actual 9.30.21
132				
133	Reinvested Investment Income	\$0	\$0	
134	Permanently restricted-Endowment	\$12,254	\$25,000	\$3,988
135	PPP loan payoff	\$0	\$47,000	\$47,000
136				
137	REVENUE MINUS EXPENSES	\$22,883	\$26,000	\$261,629

IRE20 Fellowships: Summary Report

The Knight Foundation allowed IRE to redirect unused grant money for IRE20 fellowships for students, educators and journalists of color.

- \$26,452 was available from the unused portion of the Knight grant (it was travel money that wasn't needed due to hosting a virtual conference).
- IRE awarded fellowships totalling \$16,315 - equal to 88 fellowships
- Difference of \$10,137 will go toward the JOC Fellowship and/or general operating, approved by the Knight Foundation.
- Knight money was for students and professionals.
- No one who applied for these fellowships was turned away as long as they qualified and submitted a complete application form.

As a result of the Knight Foundation money, IRE did not dip into its funds for journalists of color fellowships. This will allow for the IRE diversity fellowship funds to earn more interest, which in turn will create more fellowships for 2021.

For all annual IRE conference fellowships, the following applies:

- 101 out of the 117 fellowships were awarded.
- 16 were not awarded due to insufficient applications.
- The scope of the fellowships which did not award all fellowships is more narrow than the others, and IRE receives fewer applications for those fellowships in a typical year.
- The money for the 16 fellowships that were not awarded stays in their respective funds.
- The money will continue to earn interest, which could in turn create more fellowships for 2021.
- The chart below illustrates the available fellowships, the number awarded and a brief description:

Fellowship	Audience	Available	Awarded
Leonard	Females: early-career and student	21	21
Sager	Anyone	15	15
Torchlight/Houston	International	22	22
Greene	Early-career	2	2
Marx	Student & early-career	7	7
Dietz	Business reporting	6	3
Napoli	Broadcast: Early-career	17	8
Stancill	Newspaper: <50K Sun circulation	17	14
Bennett	Students: OK, AR, MS, LA	10	9
Sub total	IRE FELLOWSHIP	117	101
Knight Fellowships	Students, educators, journalists of color	*	88
TOTAL	Fellowships Awarded to IRE20		189

*Amount of fellowships available is determined by the amount of money from the Knight Foundation which totaled \$26,452 and that money was used for student fellowships (\$70/each) and academic/professional fellowships (\$245/each). As a result, cannot determine a set number of available fellowships since the fellowship dollar values are not the same.

Strategic planning report

Executive summary

Strategic planning is a broad concept that can encompass a variety of approaches. It can be a fairly simple effort, in which goals are spelled out and prioritized by a board and staff, along with a consultant, perhaps over a couple of days in meetings. Or it can be an elaborate years-long affair that results in a comprehensive report: vision and mission statement; goals for six months, three years and five years; lengthy to-do lists; and built-in milestones for checking progress and gauging accountability.

Most strategic plans typically tackle some core areas, such as investment and funding, growth, diversity, board training or communications. There may be other topics as deemed necessary by a specific organization.

Most who have gone through the process agree the most useful aspect of it is that strategic planning forces an organization to set goals and prioritize them. It helps to strip away distracting activities or goals that are laudable but unrealistic.

The more modest plans can be executed in a fairly short period of time, but might mean sacrificing valuable input from many voices, said Irving Washington, executive director of the Online News Association. He has been through three incarnations of strategic planning with the organization. A more comprehensive approach can take longer, but it enables an organization to bring in members or donors who help the board see things from different perspectives. Member engagement in the process has been a key component of multiple organizations' strategic planning efforts.

The best outcome of such an effort is to produce an agreed-upon plan that everyone (largely) has bought into. It can also provide a means to measure whether the organization is making progress toward achieving those goals. For example: If IRE wants to raise \$1 million in a fund within three years, the plan would spell out who is supposed to be doing what to make that happen and would have intermittent deadlines for raising certain amounts toward the total.

The strategic plan can also help to curb mission creep. Before the nonprofit marches off in a direction, the plan can be consulted. This is particularly useful to a board that changes often. It provides continuity. "The reason to have a plan is that leadership changes. When new leaders come in, there's a book that says what the goals are. That's literally why you do it," said Mark Horvit, who currently is on the strategic planning sub-committee for News Leaders Association.

Also, some big grant-making groups want to see a concrete plan before distributing dollars to a nonprofit. They want to know the organization has its act together.

Some basic recommendations

— A board such as ours could benefit from strategic planning, since the median tenure is very short. It would allow everyone to come up with common goals, have a plan to meet them and understand their respective roles.

— Early 2021 would be a good time to embark on strategic plan if we should choose to do so, as the board is making decisions in the face of a new paradigm: a virtual conference (and possibly more of them in the future) which means that much of what has been standard operating

procedure for IRE could no longer apply. It also seems a good time to set long-term financial goals for the organization that will extend beyond the tenure of any current board member.

— The board should weigh the considerable time commitment, especially for task force members if one is appointed. It could be long hours for thankless work unless the entire board and the executive director is supportive of the endeavor and committed to making the plan work when finished.

How we did it

Board members Jennifer Forsyth and Marisa Kwiatkowski spoke with representatives of the following organizations that have been involved with strategic planning: News Leaders Association, National Association of Black Journalists, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, Online News Association and the Society of Professional Journalists. We also spoke with James Grimaldi, who was board president the last time IRE went through a strategic planning process.

The strategic planning process

Scope

The time investment and workload can be significant. SPJ created a strategic planning task force about two years ago, and the board only approved its one-year strategic plan in September. Its effort included member surveys, data and focus groups. The NLA subcommittee has been meeting since January and is still not done. Each subcommittee meeting requires a four-hour Zoom call plus homework. Some organizations engage staff, board members and general membership in such committees. Others also engage major donors.

What works

Most representatives agreed the strategic planning process was best handled outside of the traditional board structure, either by a committee or task force. Diversity is incredibly important — in race, gender, geography, professional background, connection to the organization and more.

It's also important to engage the organization's membership and broader community, to understand what they need and want. Member surveys, calls for recommendations, focus groups and public meetings are some of the options for engagement.

It is key that the strategic plan, budget and staff priorities all work together.

Common mistakes

It's possible to set too many goals, so much so that the plan is overly ambitious and difficult to execute. ONA is already paring back some of the goals it set in its plan. SPJ recognized that its last strategic plan — which was seven pages long and included multiple goals for each priority — was rarely, if ever, consulted after its completion. So this time, the organization deliberately created a simple one-page plan that is tied to its executive director's priorities.

It's also important that stakeholders feel like they had a voice. Washington said he's seen examples of the plan mapped out by a committee without enough board involvement or without input from staff about how workable a plan is.

Strategic planning also works best in an environment in which the board members trust each other. It takes a team approach, not individuals posturing for their own positions.

“Strategic planning is really an intimate process,” Washington said. “You have to decide what you’re not going to do. You have to be in a really good place as a team to make this work. There is an emotional attachment to some of the things that you decide not to do.”

Washington says that it’s not realistic for a consultant to patch up boards that are broken. If that’s needed, team-building should be done as a board before the strategic planning begins.

“You have to have the right environment to be able to make the tough choices,” he said.

Use of consultants

There are consultants who specialize in facilitating strategic planning for not-for-profits, including some who have worked with several journalism-related organizations. The consensus is that they are pricey—in the six figures for facilitating a full-on strategic plan. (A facilitator who just leads a few days of mission-building costs considerably less. They really just get the conversation going and then expect the board to take it from there.)

Some organizations, including NABJ, NLA and Reporters Committee, hired consultants for the strategic planning process. Others, such as SPJ, did not.

Some who’ve gone through the process say the money for full strategic planning is worth it; others are unsure. Some believe that the consultants just photocopy their materials and use them over and over for every group that hires them, which makes it look like a lot of money for not a lot of original work. And the heavy lifting is still done by the board (or a strategic planning committee). The consultant just keeps the process moving over the months of planning.

Still, they say the facilitator can play a valuable role in that he or she can keep things going and can be an independent arbiter in matters of dispute. They also provide useful perspective of what has worked and not worked for other organizations. “They can be the adult in the room, if everyone doesn’t agree,” Horvit said.

They may also come in with potential donors an organization may not have thought of.

The plan

The type of plan organizations approve can widely vary.

NABJ approved a 44-page, three-year strategic plan that outlines the environment the organization operates in (threats, opportunities, strengths and weaknesses) and then details NABJ’s top five priorities. Each priority includes a list of key projects and anticipated outcomes. The plan also includes performance and membership metrics.

SPJ approved a one-page, one-year plan that details four components that are its focus. A separate document outlines the executive director’s priorities, which are task-driven breakdowns of each of the four pillars. Some of its analysis of the environment and members’ needs appears in a separate focus group report. Their plan is to revisit the plan every April.

Reporters Committee produced an 11-page summary that includes an explanation of why they were doing the plan and why at that particular time, a vision statement, an articulation of how the organization differs from others, and its three strongest strategic imperatives. An

accompanying document of 42 pages spells out in greater detail how the plan is to be implemented, with timelines and intermittent goals.

Implementation

One of the biggest flaws in strategic planning tends to be the lack of follow through. Organizations have trouble making sure that someone stays on top of the benchmarks and ensures they are being met. It also can be challenging to put in a real accountability component into them. If progress isn't made on the benchmarks, what happens?

Some of this problem can be avoided with regular board training that's focused around the plan, Washington said. "It's actually harmful for the organization to have a constantly shifting strategy based on personality. That makes it difficult for staff. When you have that governance oversight, you're agreeing on the goals and then giving the staff a path to how we get to those goals."

Again, it is important that the strategic plan, staff goals and budget all align.

Additional resources

NABJ's strategic

plan: https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.nabj.org/resource/resmgr/Strategic_Plan_2017_2020/NA_BJ_Strategic_Plan_2017-202.pdf

More information about SPJ's strategic planning process: <https://www.spj.org/strategic-plan.asp>

SPJ's strategic planning focus group

report: <https://www.spj.org/pdf/strategicplan/spj-strategic-planning-focus-group-report.pdf>

SPJ's strategic plan: (See strategic planning folder)

The SPJ executive director's priorities: (See strategic planning folder)

Reporters Committee strategic plan and strategic memo: (See strategic planning folder)