IRE Training Committee Meeting

Report | January 11, 2023 | Via Zoom

Task Force Members Present
Josh Hinkle, Katrina Janco, Aaron Kessler, Emily Le Coz, Alex Richards April Simpson, Lam Thuy Vo, Simone Weichselbaum

IRE Staff Members Present
Adam Rhodes

Working Group Recommendation Summaries

Inclusivity/Representation

- Surveys should include measurements of impact and efficacy of training
- Targeted outreach: continuous targeted outreach to diverse groups (including Disabled Writers and, in the future, the Disabled Journalists Association)
- COVID precautions: IRE should put together a COVID protocol for trainers and participants

Local Journalism

- IRE would take its training to two university campuses within a major media outlet/company's* existing, diverse network of colleges and universities during the 2023-24 academic year.
    - *IRE is still in the pitch/planning phase with this outlet/company, so it will not be listed on this report. Please see Training Committee Chair Josh Hinkle with specific questions.*
- The training would take place in Fall 2023 on dates that's mutually acceptable to all parties. If the initial partnership is fruitful, we hope to propose a second training in Spring 2024.
    - The proposed schedule would include be a half-day in the afternoon or early evening, devoted to students at the chosen university, who would hear from journalists at the above-mentioned outlet/company about what it means to be an investigative reporter and learn tips for securing public records specific to student journalists.
    - Two training days (one full day; one half-day) to follow would offer deep-dive sessions for local journalists in the area, each designed to build fundamental skills they need to serve as watchdogs for their local communities, with an emphasis on historically underrepresented areas.
        - Sessions would cover best practices for diverse sourcing, interviewing, backgrounding and obtaining public records as well as gaining practical skills in using spreadsheets and building databases.
        - Interactive sessions would be led by IRE staff trainers, conducted with the help of experienced IRE members, including members from the above-mentioned outlet/company. These sessions would feature hands-on training, networking and small-group discussions to foster learning and mentoring.
- Under this proposal, IRE would not have to pay a location fee. IRE would provide the curriculum and organize the event logistics.
- All students attending the initial-day event could do so at no cost, limited only by room capacity. For the professional days of sessions, IRE would provide fellowships for five faculty members and 10 students to attend at no cost. We anticipate that the cost for local journalists would be $50-$75, but that depends on how much funding IRE is able to secure from donors.

<u>**Advanced Training/Veteran Members**</u>

- Launch a multi-week (extended) pilot program with one or two advanced, online workshops organized around a certain niche or topic identified through surveys to IRE members. These topics could be beat oriented (investigating businesses, for example) or they could be oriented around a specific skill (fighting for public records, for example).
- Cap the class cohort to 10 or 15 people to encourage dialog and sharing of ideas and ask each cohort before the course begins to identify what they hope to learn/get out of the course.

Recommendation Implementation Timeline

February 2023
- Committee chair (Hinkle) reviews recommendations with executive director and staff

March 2023
- Committee chair presents action item recommendations to board for consideration/vote
  - *This step is only necessary for policy changes/funding items – to be determined during executive director conversation.*

April 2023
- Staff begins implementation of recommendations

May 2023
- Committee chair reviews implementation timeline with staff
- Committee meets to make suggestions for next year's committee members