

Minutes: Student Publications committee meeting, October 14, 2010

Voting members present: Irving Rothman, David McHam, Jack Wehman, Travis Hensley, Reyes Ramirez, Lucia Ayala

Ex-officio members present: Dick Cigler, David Small, Matthew Keever, Delores Crawford, Candy Littleton, Patricia Estrada

The meeting began at 4:05 p.m.

Several members arrived a few minutes late.

SGA representative Reyes Ramirez objected to the previous meeting's minutes, saying that he had not misread the bylaws, and stood by his comment that no publication editor could be elected to the chairmanship of the meeting. Ramirez asked for a change to the bylaws. The committee approved to remove the phrase "Ramirez had misread the bylaws."

Production Report

Dick Cigler read the production report for Matt Dulin who was absent. Cigler read that Dulin had successfully upgraded the web server, which would make the Daily Cougar site run quicker. The search function was also changed on the site and replaced with Google. Dulin also held a copy-editing workshop.

Cigler also told the committee members that if they would like to review the minutes of the meetings they could find them on the website. The archives he said go back a year.

Dulin is also working on documentation for the new layout workflow, providing feedback to editors on content, getting ready for advertising special sections, planning more workshops to train editors, and updating Houstonian website.

In regards to the 2009-2010 yearbooks, Cigler reported that it should be in by November. Cigler also said that the yearbook staff was consisting of 1 or 2 people, and that is why it had taken so long to complete.

Delores Crawford walked in at this time.

Lucia Ayala suggested the yearbook staff should reach out to high-school yearbook staffs to acquire more staff.

David Small made a suggestion that instead of calling The Daily Cougar and Houstonian editors a salary, to instead make it a scholarship, and promote these as heavily as other scholarships are promoted by the university. He said this would attract more interest for students. These scholarships would be the same amount as the salary.

Reyes Ramirez said he spoke with Provost John Antel and suggested that there be tours during orientation be given of The Daily Cougar and Houstonian offices for students planning to major on journalism. Delores Crawford and David Small liked the idea.

Travis Hensley said these tours would cause distractions for editors who are working on deadlines and in a small place.

Matthew Keever said he would like to see more communication between student publications and other media around campus, this he said would increase Daily Cougar awareness.

Advertising Report

Delores Crawford said September was an OK month. Advertising made \$52,000, which was \$8,000 under the goal for September; she said she plans to make this deficit up during the rest of the scholastic year. October and November are looking promising, she said. She said that they are working on a couple of special sections, Health 411 and Hot Spots. Hot Spots will be publish in November. She said they plan to be right on target for the \$70,000 for October.

There was some confusion on the numbers presented in the Advertising and Business reports, Irving Rothman asked for a better explanation of what the numbers meant. Dick Cigler said he would ask Candy Littleton to make a more comprehensive report or chart for next meeting.

Houstonian Report

Patricia Estrada reported the Houstonian staff had increased to 29 students, thanks to an e-mail sent by Dulin thorough the class server. She said she was still looking for someone to take over the marketing and sales position. Efforts to reach out to marketing professors and organizations failed.

She also mentioned that an effort made by the Houstonian to include a link through Taylor Publishing that would be free of charge, on their page for students to be able to buy their yearbook online, rather than filling forms, had been shut down by University officials. This she said was a problem because few students return the forms to purchase the books.

She reported she plans to have one section of the book completed by the end of the month. She praised her writers and copy editors for sticking to their deadlines. She also mentioned a trip to the Taylor Publishing Plant in Dallas, were the group was able to design the cover of the book, as well as come up with a theme: "Inside the Pride."

She brought a copy of the cover for the members to see.

David Small and Travis Hensley suggested reaching out the parents and alumni newsletters to increase awareness of the book.

Estrada said she is planning to work with the Homecoming board and other organizations to promote the book.

Editorial Report

Matt Keever said deadlines are being meet on a more consistent basis. He praised his editors for their work and printing quality sections, covering controversial and prominent news. He said

site stats for September were 54,000, which he hoped the number would be bigger, and that so far this semester around 10,000 page views or more were reached every week.

Rothman mentioned that on the front page of the Oct. 14, paper some of the pictures did not mention the name of the individuals captured. Keever explained that the rule of thumb is that if fewer than four people are in the photo, you list everyone's name, but if it's more than that, you mention the group name because of limited space. He admitted that in one of the pictures a mistake was made, and people should have been named.

Ramirez said that the Cougar had not covered everything going on, specifically pointing out the shift of kinesiology from College of Education to CLASS. Estrada said the Cougar in fact had covered that story last semester. Ramirez said he didn't know and suggested the Cougar report the loss of scholarships for these students because of the shift.

A suggestion was made by Estrada to Reyes to email the editors when he knows of information he thinks they should cover.

Chairwoman Estrada asked board members to send her names and information for candidates to serve on the board as professional representatives. She also said applications for editor of the Daily Cougar would be due Nov. 12 at noon, and the committee would elect the new editor on Nov. 18.

Dick Cigler addressed the board, and announced this would be his last meeting as director, as he will be retiring. He said this committee is very important to hold people accountable and address issues affecting the publications. He said participation, ideas and discussion are needed and those contributions will only make the newspaper and yearbook stronger. He said he feels privileged to have worked with students and it has been a great experience.

Rothman made a motion of deep gratitude for his role as director of student publication and his role in understanding the responsibilities, negotiations and the encouragement given to students engaged in this very responsible and important activity on campus. The motion of deep gratitude passed.

McHam suggested moving Cigler to be one of the professional representatives. Ramirez opposed on the grounds that he had not yet retired. A vote was not taken.

Chairwoman Estrada told the board members that reports must be sent when she ask for them, so other members could view them and ask the appropriate questions. She said she would like for the board to appoint members to serve on the publications excellence committee, as the bylaws state.