

Student Media Board Special Meeting January 22, 2016

Those in Attendance: Susan Zake, Mark Turner, Cindy Kristof, Bruce Zake, Gene Shelton, Erik Alexeff, Dave LaBelle, Gina Leone, Melissa Puppo, Julio Salazar, Emily Mills, Ryan Dunn, Della Marie Marshall, Karl Idsvoog, Spencer Smith, Kevin Dilley, Justin Graci, Thor Wasbotten, Gary Hanson and Tami Bongiorno.

Susan Zake called the meeting to order on the behalf of the Student Media Board. Those in attendance introduced themselves. Kevin Dilley thanked everyone for coming. Dilley then explained that Susan Zake was the chair of the board in the fall, but has since taken over the position of the Newsroom adviser while Mitch McKenney is on sabbatical. Susan's vice chair is Mark Goodman, whom is also currently on sabbatical. Susan Zake nominated Mark Turner as the chair of the board while Susan is serving as adviser.

Turner thanked everyone for letting him serve as chair. Turned turned the meeting over to Dilley to propose his market research project. Dilley stated he came on in mid-June and has since then been learning the environment which we are in. He realized that we had good information, but we need something more in-depth and more scientific to help understand our audience and market. He is proposing two separate research projects. The first is with University Communications & Marketing (UCM) to conduct focus groups. The second is with the Survey Research Lab which will survey a poll amongst the market.

Dilley hopes to make strategic decisions based on these results. He is proposing a hybrid due to UCM's restrictions to only do part of the project due to timing constraints. He is selecting UCM to conduct the focus groups because they will locate the people to participate. Dilley stressed the importance of a third party to avoid bias. He then detailed the Survey Research Lab poll that would be created. The maximum amount required is \$2,940. Kevin proposed the amount come from the Innovation Account. Kevin referred to an April 10, 2015 board minutes to affirm that the board had wanted the Innovation Account to pay for this type of work.

Susan Zake asked when the last survey was completed. Tami Bongiorno stated we had a qualitative readership study completed in 2008 and the College of Business did several research projects in 2014. Karl Idsvoog asked what types of questions would be asked. Dilley stated he would like to focus on: Usage (how often used, when used, what used) and Attitude (how do you view Student Media, credibility, etc).

Bruce Zake asked if we plan on approaching the advertisers at all. Dilley explained that that is one of the goals eventually. Bruce Zake asked if we still receive the studies from Refuel. Bongiorno confirmed that we receive the national study every year and that it provides excellent information that is also broke down by media, but is limited since it is not catered directly at our readers.

Julio Salazar asked if there would be a second meeting to discuss the questions. Dilley said that if the board would like, we could establish a meeting to develop the questions. Dilley stated that this price also includes the group taking our questions and formatting them to be the most

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effective. Dilley stated the sample would be random and comprise of students, staff and faculty on the main campus.

Gene Shelton asked if the board approves the funding, and the study takes place, what is our next plan of action. Dilley said that they we could develop a strategic plan on how to move forward with all of our media. He said that the information could lead to big changes within Student Media based on what the audience wants. Dilley wants to best serve the students that we are educating, but also the students that are receiving the product that is produced with their student fees.

Shelton asked if we knew any schools that utilized an outside firm and what they did with the information. Bongiorno stated that several College Media and Business Advertising Managers (CMBAM) schools have done market research and that they found they could utilize the studies to aide in selling. Bongiorno also stated that schools found the information useful with distribution and audience awareness.

Turner asked if we already had clicks and impressions and the distribution, then why do we need this information? Dilley said that these numbers are not completely accurate because those doing the Stater audits (Midwest Offset) have a vested interest in our numbers being higher. Bongiorno also stated that this could provide us numbers specifically for our media instead of relying on national statistics drawn from numerous schools. Erik Alexeff stated that click through is nice, but this study could really provide much more detail of where our focus should be.

Bruce Zake stated that he feels \$3,000 is not enough, that there should a higher maximum. Susan Zake feels we will learn more from a focus group that we have in years. She also said she would like to see an analytical study done since we have not had one since 2008.

Susan Zake reminded the board that if more money is required, we could reach back out for approval of more.

Della Marie Marshall motioned that we approve the maximum amount of the proposal. Idsvoog seconded. All were in favor and none were opposed. No abstentions and the motion was passed.

Dave LaBelle proposed that we build in money to the budget to conduct yearly studies to have better understanding our media and its users. Marshall motioned that we include in our yearly budget money for research assessment. The amount can be determined later and the source of the money to be determined. Alexeff seconded.

Turner asked for discussion. Thor Wasbotten asked Dilley where the money would come from. Dilley said that we do have a marketing line in the budget that could aide in this. Dilley stated

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he would not like it to come off the Innovation Account but from the Operations Budget. The Innovation Account is not guaranteed to always have funds available.

Wasbotten stated that there are educational values to our products, but research may result in underperforming products to cease since we will have a decrease in allocations to the individual units. LaBelle stated that the education of learning the units is important but we need to understand that if no one is looking at us, we need to reevaluate our offerings. Emily Mills stated that we need to know our audience. Susan Zake said that this is an excellent way of learning the business side of a real world situation. Wasbotten stated that this is for Student Media as a whole and not just the newspaper. Wasbotten stated he loves the student opportunity, but as we look at the data, we may need to make hard decisions regarding the make-up of Student Media.

Alexeff stated that we can really differentiate what is done every year. Some years could only be for focus groups and then others use a survey as well.

Marshall stated she wants to make sure we make it a priority to know data regarding our media. Susan wants to have this result to make more money and we can only do that if we know our audience and grow our audience. LaBelle stated that this gives us facts to really access where we should go. Hanson reminded that we are more than a business and we need to also fulfill our educational mission. He said it is also very important that we ask the right questions. Hanson thinks we need to spend real time with the researchers to determine that we are getting what we are looking for. Susan Zake said that she can't teach in the classroom in one semester what she can teach in a newsroom in one week. She said we have to hold steady or grow our business.

Turner asked if there was any further discussion. Turner asked for a second to the motion. Alexeff seconded. All approved, none opposed and no abstentions.

Dilley asked if the board if they wanted to pick a group to aide with questions? The board said yes. Spencer Smith suggested that we ask people outside the JMC realm. The board agreed. Dilley will send an email to the board with the question committee that is moving forward.

Dilley thanked everyone for attending. Wasbotten thanked the students for their hard work with the breaking news. He mentioned that many people have said great things to him. Bongiorno stated that her staff has received great response which has resulted in the Twitter account being sold out for the next two weeks, the week sales goal being met and ads booked for Kentwired.

Della Marie motioned to adjourn. Gene Shelton seconded. All approved, none opposed and the meeting was adjourned.