Nov. 2, 2017

Student Media Leadership selection subcommittee Interviews

Present: voting members - Hannah Wagner, Noah Sitch, Thor Wasbotten, Mark Turner

 Non-voting – Sue Zake, Kevin Dilley

 Others present – Ray Padilla, Cameron Gorman, Ben VanHoose,

Lydia Taylor – Kent Stater Editor

Introductions all around.

Thor asked Lydia to introduce herself.

Lydia – Talked about her goals from last time and that she’s improved on somethings and would like to improve on others. Connect with audience has worked. More visual, more engaging. Enterprise reporting didn’t come through as well. Needs to work on infrastructure. Collaboration has really worked. 9 a.m. meeting with TV2, shared budget and newsroom environment. Last semester there was a big divide between Stater and TV2. Now it’s much more collaborative between groups. Wants to improve on this by doing packages with both teams. Working on a sexual assault package. Talked about coming a long way, but wants to work on engagement. Talked about KentWired be flat. Wants to really promote KW through social media. Talked about her experience at ONA (Online News Association). Learned that they have to focus on the future of news, not just the present. Introduced podcasting to the newsroom and an innovation structure. Lydia says she is the best person for the job.

Thor – Asked about relationship with TV2 general manager as far as collaboration at the top level.

Lydia – We’ve been working on forming a mindset and culture together and show that to the staff. Helping to install that mindset/culture with the staff.

Mark – What is the biggest challenge as a newspaper/newsroom

Lydia – The collaboration mindset. Some still see it as a competition between sides. Said that has improved, but that it could change back with new people

Mark – How is diversity going?

Lydia – We need to do more, we need to reach out more. Planning to go to general classes – Intro to Comm, MPC. Will talk to professors about how to do this better.

Thor – Followed up with the question about diversity. How do you know you have different perspectives. Do you measure this? How do you look at diversity?

Lydia – Several ways we try this. Talked about getting both sides of the story and how she works with Mitch McKenny in the beat classes to understand the variety of sources that they are reaching out to.

Mark – Is it difficult to get your staff to be diverse? Is it pretty homogenous

Lydia – It’s gotten broader. Everybody wants everybody to be involved. Encourage people to get involved.

Sue – Beat classes are not very diverse. Racial diversity is not where we’d like it to be. LGBTQ diversity is good.

Lydia – We want people to feel comfortable to work with us or even just come talk to us. You want people to come in and talk to you.

Mark – Sometimes you just don’t think about these things without somebody at the table from such a community.

Lydia – Talked about Kupita Trancisiones story at start of semester that caused hurt to some groups. She talked about opening that dialogue.

Sue – What do you as a manager do if somebody is not doing what you need them to do?

Lydia – I talk with them and help them understand their job. As for workflow and structure, realized that a higher up editor in charge of enterprise team will help push this forward.

Mark – Was enterprise team new this year?

Lydia – Not really new, but the partnership with TV2 was new. This was a team between TV2 and Stater and the productivity wasn’t quite there.

Discussion about the difficulties of the enterprise team between Sue, Lydia, Mark and others.

Thor – Are you working with anybody on staff to help them be prepared for leadership next fall.

Lydia – Yes, the top level people know how to do each other’s jobs. We’re very open about what we do.

Kevin – Followup to the preparedness question. Go beyond training for jobs.

Lydia – She said she’s open about handling top issues. She said she knows she is the final decision, but she shares decisions with others. Have to have passion and drive.

Mark – You mentioned flatness of KentWired. What can you do that will increase the number of visits.

Lydia – Quite a few ways. Use the paper to push people there. Discussions about best practices for social media use and promotion.

General discussion about engagement and the different little things you can do.

Thor called for closed session discussion.

Open session to vote:

Thor – we had a good conversation and motioned to recommended Lydia as editor for The Stater. Mark seconded. Vote was unanimous.

Discussion about reaching out to other parts of the campus, either coverage, involvement, marketing.

Anna Huntsman – TV2 General Manger

Introductions all around.

Anna – Talked about her background and her leadership experience. Started off as director of new and social media. Realized how important digital/social media is to TV station. Went into reporting. Oversaw content, producers. Head of a team 5 producers plus their staffs. This past fall has been head of 250-person team. Oversaw all departments. Said that is not easy. But was able to understand the position. On personal not realized her leadership styles and learned how to use skills and abilities in the best way. Talked about seeking out advice from others to learn how to grow. Live, Local and Leadership. Talked about the LIveU technology and how that has helped her team. Talked about entertainment side being stronger. As a leader, she brought back frequent board meetings, weekly content meetings, daily morning meetings. Talked about Extra-Life fundraiser to benefit Akron Children’s Hospital. Talked about this and how it’s going to work. Vision for spring – great programs exist, now it’s time to market TV2. DOPE. Digital Outreach Promotion. Push digital first. Add an MMJ position to daily staff to focus on a web-first KentWired story, may or may not air on TV2 news. Wants to focus on writing experience. Establish a TV2-specific social media team. Will work with digital director to help with this. Encourage all departments to focus on digital. Outreach – hold community forums, promote tip line, engage in special projects. Promotions – prioritize the promotions director position. Shoot new promos, add commercials and update elements. Elevation – brainstorm with KentWired, podcasting, data-oriented articles. Ended with summary of why she wants the job – familiar with position, has specific realistic goals for station, and is passionate about TV2 and its legacy.

Thor – You want to start things that are already happening. Are replicating things being done in Student Media.

Anna – She’s inspired by what’s been done, but wants to implement things focused on TV2.

Thor – You want to hire 6 people, is that being siloed or not?

Anna – Talked about wanting to focus on TV2 but will work with KentWired, Stater. This would be one person per day and and a group leader.

Mark – What are the challenges of the job

Anna – The challenges are on the HR side, how to deal with conflict and drama. She said she’s never been taught that, so she’s learning as she goes. One semester has really helped prepare her.

Hannah – How are you going to get more people to tune in?

Anna – Continue promoting the KentWired stream. Working with promotional aspects and trying to highlight it on the website

Noah – Have you talked to entertainment groups to about promoting the entertainment shows.

Anna – Yes, but the entertainment side is doing really well, and wants to implement more on the news side.

Sue ­ – Can you see the MMJ or producer pulling out packages from newscasts for use elsewhere in KentWired.

Anna – Yes, she wants to do that more and sees that as possibly the digital team leader’s job.

Discussion about this continued.

Thor – We’ve changed the advising structure, TV2 does not have it’s own adviser. What are the challenges and is the school doing a disservice (and Thor let the group know he made the decision to change the adviser structure.)

Anna – Talked about the challenges of not having somebody to call about technical issues. It would have been nice to have somebody in her corner to talk about the management side of to talk about managing a TV station. News and content is going well, but TV-specific advising is a struggle.

Thor – Talked about how this was anticipated and that this is working out how it was expected, for better or worse. It’s good to get this feedback to help make sure we’re doing the right thing.

Anna – It’s good to have technical help, but also somebody who understands how a TV newsroom works. No offense to Sue (none taken), but there are different TV newsroom experiences that are hard to understand. It has been a bit of a disservice.

Noah – Would doing cross promotions between entertainment and news help to draw people to other parts of TV2.

Anna – Yes, this is great idea. Talked about Extra-Life and how they are doing some of this.

Discussion about this ensued back and forth for a bit.

Thor moved to closed session.

Thor thanked Anna for presentation. Thor motioned to recommend Anna as GM, Noah seconded. Vote was unanimous.

Thor talked about how board discussed and interested in providing support and resources to TV2.

Thor adjourned