Report to the Board  
Texas Student Media  
Frank Serpas for Gerald Johnson, Director

There were a number of noteworthy events during the past five months:

Personnel

The evolution of TSM’s org chart continued apace and is nearly complete. The departure of Carter Goss and Felisha Cockran from the team of Media Account Executives was offset by the addition of new hires Celeste Schurman and Brady Beal, plus the promotion of Shukree Shabazz (whose Advertising Assistant position was filled by Izzy Ber). TSM’s fourth professional salesperson, Allysun Gutierrez, will return from maternity leave in October. The team of student sellers is being rebuilt from scratch, with Andrew Serice and Camilo Sanchez leading a growing group of trainees.

The long-vacant Broadcast Adviser position was filled by Robert Zimmer, who forged a career in television and film following two terms as Station Manager of KVRX-precursor KTSB. The departures of Digital Manager Curt Yowell and Graphic Designer Daniel Hublein afforded an opportunity to reconsider how their duties were distributed. As a result, Stephen Salisbury now has an expanded set of responsibilities in his redefined role as Product Manager and will supervise the new Graphic Designer, whose hiring is imminent. The new position of Media Support Technician will be filled by Zac Crofford, who starts on Monday and will report to Business/Operations Manager Frank Serpas.

Business/Production/Infrastructure

Following the Austin American-Statesman’s announcement on April 30 that they would be outsourcing their press operations, TSM moved quickly to secure a new printing and delivery vendor. The contracts were transferred to the New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung, a move that allows The Daily Texan to keep its midnight deadline, retain the existing crew of delivery subcontractors, and realize cost savings. The transition, which took effect on August 21, has been a smooth one.

The basement has benefited from new equipment funded by the Friends of The Daily Texan and computer upgrades implemented by the Moody IT team. Four new editing computers are now in place at TSTV, with high-definition studio cameras and Master Control improvements slated for installation over the next month. The HSM Building’s transition to a new network is complete; this upgrade will pay dividends in years to come.
Advertising Manager Denise Twellmann has overseen the rollout of Zoho as a customer relationship management (CRM) tool for sales staff to keep track of leads, activities, and sales. A new online ad server is being tested on TSM’s development site.

In July, the TSTV Productions Department contributed to the success of the high-profile day-long “Breaking Through” conference hosted by the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life. This week, for the second year in a row, TSTV is providing video production services for the School of Undergraduate Studies’ University Lecture Series. In October, TSTV will live-stream student-conducted interviews with political luminaries at the 2015 Texas Tribune Festival.

Arrangements are underway to expand the AudioVAULT radio automation system (currently in use at KUT/X) to the KVRX booth, in order to give a fresh start to the station’s live-assist and automated playout capabilities. The tower, antenna, and transmission line for 91.7 FM will be inspected on September 25 in anticipation of posting an RFP for a new transmitter.

Content/Outreach

Over the summer, the Texan highlighted the start of the Fenves administration, same-sex marriage in Travis County, allegations of academic cheating by members of UT men’s basketball team, and the underrepresentation of women in Austin’s music scene.

Print Adviser Peter Chen is working with the Journalism School to schedule guest critiques of the Texan and is arranging a field trip to the Statesman newsroom. In July, he attended the College Media Association’s Summer Media Workshop; in late October, TSM plans to have a strong presence at the national CMA Convention, which will be held in Austin. Earlier that month, KVRX will send a contingent to the College Media Journal (CMJ) conference in New York City.

Robert Zimmer facilitated the successful relaunch of KVRX’s monthly e-mail alumni newsletter, the restoration of KVRX’s stream to iTunes and the TuneIn smartphone app, and the reboot of TSTV’s website. KVRX and TSTV are working to better integrate operations with TSM Advertising, and both units had well-attended recruitment meetings. Here’s the count of students registered with TSM as of this writing:

- Daily Texan: 188
- TSTV: 88
- KVRX: 76
- Travesty: 27
- Cactus: 11
- Other: 9

TSM had a table at the six UT Family Orientation information sessions and produced related publications that were mailed to the homes of incoming freshmen. In Creative Services, marketing materials were developed for new advertising packages; in Special Editions, Longhorn Life processes and staff were streamlined to reduce overhead.
Cactus Yearbook- 9/25/2015

- Summer
  - Recruiting/hiring
  - Editorial staff of 14
- Late-August and September
  - Weekly editorial meetings
    - Training editorial staff
  - Developed concept/theme
    - Colors, layouts, design elements, fonts decided
  - Ladder
    - Summer- section editors
    - Space for senior and group photos
    - Deadlines set for the year
  - Photography/writing staff applications
    - Deadline: September 30

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Christy Zhang
KVRX Board Report for the Week of September 21st, 2015

Completed Projects Since I Have Assumed Office:

• We tabled all summer for new KVRX recruits, and our efforts were a fantastic success. We now have a high number of fresh faces, and the involvement at the station has been greater than anything I have witnessed in the last two years.
• As a result of our recruitment efforts, our Fall FM schedule has now been officially filled.
• We have ordered a new automation machine since our other one has been deemed outdated. KUT has been a great help in this process.
• We produced *Local Live Volume 19* and hosted a good-sized crowd at Holy Mountain for the album’s debut.
• We started a monthly alumni newsletter and have had rave reviews from our readers.
• We have also been building a better relationship with the advertising department and the rest of the downstairs staff to aid with promotional matters.
• KVRX will also be having a monthly concert series at Empire Control Room, and we are working on creating a partnership with the Hole in the Wall, regardless of their future at their current location.

Goals for the Near Future:

• We are still coordinating on updating the front end design of our website. I am hoping to complete this goal by February 2016.
• We have recently set a goal for completely filling up the internet schedule. I’m not sure how likely this goal is, but I am all for at least trying to reach it.
• A number of deejays and myself will be present for this year’s CMJ Music Marathon.
• A number of our staff and myself will also be attending this year’s CMA’s Fall National Media Convention 2015.

Best,
Blake Gentry
The Daily Texan had a great summer. We were able to cover the beginning of Greg Fenves' presidency, the beginning of the review of Texas Athletics, the celebration of marriage equality in Texas, Wallace Hall's lawsuit against the University of Texas System, the legalization of campus carry, and the task force's determination process and removal of the Jefferson Davis statue. Summer Managing Editor Brett Donohoe and I were surprised and delighted by the opportunity to cover all of the summer's news.

Since June, I have hired and worked with two different Daily Texan Editorial Boards and staffs. Since moving from a summer staff of 10 to a fall staff of more than 30 (which more than doubled the Opinion Department's spring staff), the issue staff has been able to cover a wide range of topics, from the relationship between Title IX and Texas Athletics to entrepreneurship in STEM (as well as a host of our usual hot-button topics, see above), and the editorial boards have been able to take a stand on many important issues to our audience, authoring 25 editorials since I began my term. A particularly proud moment of the fall editorial board was securing an on-the-record interview with President Greg Fenves to run with the Texan's full inauguration package.

This fall, we began a weekly speaker series titled The Texan Talks to accompany the Forum page, which also moved to become a weekly feature of the Opinion Department. While we are still working on marketing strategies to increase attendance at our events in partnership with Campus Events and Entertainment, we have been very happy with the number of insightful interviews and op-eds we have been able to secure from around campus. So far, we have hosted panels on Student Government and its effect on students, transgender rights and advocacy, student theatre and the arts, and campus safety and security. Moving forward, we plan to host panels and forum pages on campus carry, student involvement in the 2016 election, sexual assault and dating violence, student volunteerism in the European refugee crisis, and mental health on campus. President Fenves has also agreed to participate in the October 29 event.

@TexanEditorial currently has 1430 followers on Twitter. I hope to grow Opinion's media presence this semester, which I believe will be achievable as @thedailytexan has begun tweeting opinion content and tagging @TexanEditorial in the tweets.

Thank you to Peter Chen, Brett Donohoe, Gerald Johnson, Jeff Cohen, and all members of the board who have made the time to meet with me one-on-one since my election and visit our office.

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Claire Smith
Editor-in-Chief, The Daily Texan
Dear Texas Student Media Board of Trustees,

The board report calls for an update of all work we have done since June 1, but since I was a little late to the party, I’ll update you on news since I took over in August.

What I need from you/other concerns

● Come by the basement!
● I haven’t made any developments on a new website. We’re five weeks into the semester, so it’s too early to know that things won’t get better, but I’ve struggled to find time to dedicate to this project amid my other responsibilities. I’m open to any advice or help with developing a new website.
● Issues with new server, new software, new computers.

Online strategy

● We’ve gained over 1,000 followers on twitter and almost 300 likes on facebook.
● Our official pages, led by our social media editor Erin Duncan, is killing it, while individual reporters are also improving their live-tweet coverage.
● We are working to increase the amount of online daytime content, which will be easier now that we have a full staff.

Recruiting and hiring

● Mixed success with recruiting. We hit some new targets, while focusing less energy on recruiting initiatives of the past.
● Arguably our greatest success of the recruiting initiative was the visibility we established on campus through the first three weeks of classes by tabling daily on the West Mall and tabling at Party of the Plaza. Thanks to Izzy for her help there.
● We had 300 applicants of undergraduates, graduate students and even a staff member and ended up with 223 students on staff, according to the latest counts in the staff directory.

New initiatives

● Our special ventures department has put out two smaller scale projects, with their first in-depth piece coming out in at the end of the month.
● We have hired a technical operations director, Tom Li, who has assembled a small but promising team to develop online interactives and special pages for in-depth stories and special features. While I can’t say with certainty, the team should have launched a specially designed web page for a Life&Arts story Friday.
● We have hired a public outreach coordinator, Jenny McKay, to focus energy on outreach and engagement. She’s already worked to share information about The Texan Talks with a wider audience and increase the event’s overall success. She is working on
developing a weekly tabling event with opinion and other department, among other things.

Miscellaneous

- Thanks to the increase in the budget, we have increased the number of paid positions and increased wages by 15 percent across the board.
- Coverage has been strong, with many exciting things happening since beginning with the new staff, from the removal of the Jefferson Davis Statue to the inauguration of President Fenves and the resignation of AD Steve Patterson.
- The Life&Arts department, led by Danielle Lopez, has put out two special projects: one on bad habits and one on vinyl in Austin (see page 8).
- We’ve revamped the format of the Daily Texan Newscast, our weekly podcast hosted by Justin Atkinson and Anthony Green and produced by Bryce Seifert. Give it a listen here
- We sent a reporter and a photographer to South Bend, Indiana to over Texas’ opening game against Notre Dame.

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Jack Mitts
TSTV:

• Knight Center production in July
• New logo
• New website
• New equipment (almost)
• UGS Lecture production this week

- Christian
Staff Increases:

We’ve had exponentially greater numbers of applicants this semester compared to previous years, more than 35 so far (and counting!). At this point we’ve added 12, bringing staff up to its previous size, but have had to turn many people away due to limitations in the size of our office. On the one hand, it is nice to be able to be selective about the people we add to staff, however it is frustrating to have to turn away so much talent just because we physically cannot fit them in the room.

Online Content

Since we haven’t yet published an issue, all of our content so far has been released online. We set a record for the Travesty in June, posting a comic on Facebook that picked up 21.5 thousand views. Although we were not very active over the summer due to a widely dispersed staff, we have still managed to gather nearly 80 thousand views on different content on our Facebook page since the end of last semester.

First Issue

We’re on top of content so far, and are anticipating a strong first issue (knock on wood). Our deadline weekend is September 24th – 26th.

Critics’ Screenings

We’ve been invited to attend a number of different screenings for upcoming films (on the condition that we publish reviews) and are currently planning an ongoing column to take advantage of this.

And that’s about it! We’re still getting warmed up for the semester so I haven’t got a huge amount to report.

Josh Brenner
Editor-in-chief, Texas Travesty