BOARD REPORT
APRIL 2016
THE DAILY TEXAN
TEXAS STUDENT MEDIA

Housing Fair
2016
MARKETING/OPERATIONS

• Purchase order for new KVRX transmitter has been approved. Delivery in approximately 45 days.
• An archive of Daily Texan, Travesty and Cactus alumni has been created (1970-2005)
• SupportStudentVoices.org (April 18)
• TSM Social Media presence has been relaunched

ADVERTISING

• Housing Fair 2016 was in February - $70,000 in revenue
• Advertising Manager started 3/7
• HireUTexas – a recruitment insert publishes today. $3300.
• Summer Orientation sales underway

ADVISORS

• Peter led a group to relaunch the GoodFellows – annual outstanding student awards published in Cactus.
• StandoUT Awards
• 70+ applicants, 32 awarded
• Three outside productions for TSTV in April, including broadcasting Moody commencement ceremony
KVRX REPORT

• Coming off of a successful SXSW, we made some great partnerships for future shows with other radio stations and sponsors.
• Gearing up for SSV pledge drive.
• Have more live shows in the works.

TSTV REPORT

• New magic show
• Prepping graduation ceremony productions
• SXSW went well
• First two issues done
• One issue left
• Editorial Staff Selections
• 8 vs 12 pages?

Excerpts from Spring issues of the Travesty.
• Last deadline is today! (Friday)
• StandOut was pretty successful, had over 70 applicants and 32 award winners

Examples of inside spreads for 2016’s Cactus Yearbook.
• Selection of Rio representative
• Communication Council funding — yay!
• Up to four podcasts / Science & Technology in print weekly
• Coverage/analytics update: SXSW, Special Ventures, and more
• 25 more issues — lots to come!

Executive alliance race down to two

We’ve brought two new members to the leadership team: Nick Gonzales, a developer, and Grayson Blackburn, our new video editor.

We’re kicking off a social media campaign to reach out to the incoming freshman class (Class of 2020, yikes) on April 22. We will have a Twitter Q&A where they will ask us questions about the UT college experience and we will answer their questions on Snapchat.

Speaking of social media, since Professor Quigley gave us a social media talk last month, our Twitter growth has spiked 100 followers since adopting his strategy. Likewise, we’re reaching 90 percent of our Snapchat followership every time we have a story uploaded.

burnt x has been selected to run social media for the upcoming International Symposium of Online Journalism conference on April 15-16.
Dear members of the Texas Student Media Board,

I am writing to you today because I am away from campus for my brother’s wedding. I wish that I could be at the meeting to update you all on the Opinion Department in-person, but I thank you all for understanding my absence. In my place, I have asked Alexander Chase to attend in order to answer any questions you all may have and to speak on my behalf in the Board’s conversations regarding the budget and other items on the agenda.

Since we were all together last, the Opinion Department has had a busy period of growth and training.

First, the Opinion Department has continued to develop our staff of more than 30 while also adding an excellent editorial cartoonist, Patrick Trinidad, whose work you can find in today’s issue. After having retained more than 60% of my writers between the fall and spring semesters — after beginning the fall semester with only five writers, or 18% of my total staff, from my predecessor’s term, this is a marked improvement in Opinion staff retention — I am very proud of the work that we have been able to do.

In many respects, the strength of my department has been based on a two-tiered mentoring system. In addition to the investment that the associate editors and I make in the development of our staff, we also began a mentorship program that sees the staff split into cohorts divided among the six senior columnists. This has been a large factor in promoting morale and mentoring relationships among the Opinion Department staff, doubling the resources and support our writers have. I hope that this atmosphere will also aid retention in future semesters.

Our large staff has also allowed the Opinion Department to consistently produce a surplus of content, maximizing opportunities for online-only content. Additionally, through strong collaborative efforts with the Design, Multimedia and Comics Departments, I have been able to ensure that almost all of our content has been accompanied with original artwork, photography or infographics, creating more engaging content online.

Our large staff has also allowed the department to continue to cover diverse subjects. Since the last board meeting, I instituted a department rule requiring every staffer to provide one local (university, city, or state) pitch for every national, regional or evergreen pitch that they give me; I believe this has challenged our writers to grow as journalists and commentators by thinking outside the box, and sometimes, outside of their comfort zones. This rule led to Bailey Ethier’s column “Trump and Robert Morrow exist because of voters,” which was a hit with our audience but not Morrow; I understand poor Bailey is still receiving tweets on a daily basis from Morrow. However, we do not shy away from covering more national issues that affect our audience. Last month, Michael Jensen’s column “Clinton’s ‘invincibility’ is dangerous myth, could prove costly,” was picked up by one of Reddit’s homepages, which I understand gave the website a great boost in traffic for the day.

We have also been busy in our coverage of the Student Government election. We have published a number of excellent columns, as well as attracted great guest content from the center of the action, including from the SG Supreme Court Justices who resigned, several members of the Election Supervisory Board and all four Executive Alliance teams. After a lot of thought, the editorial board was also able to publish an editorial titled “Student Government: Shape up or ship out” after the movement to abolish SG picked up speed following the bogged down election process.

Amy and I were also able to select a Daily Texan staff member to attend the Rio Olympics as part of the Journalism School’s mission this summer. I was so impressed by the number of very qualified, passionate candidates, and I cannot wait to see what Cat Cardenas, current Life & Arts editor, does with the opportunity. I feel so fortunate that the Friends of the Daily Texan afforded a Texan staffer this fabulous opportunity.

Of course, in the interim period after our last board meeting, Alexander Chase was also elected to be the next editor-in-chief of The Daily Texan. After spring break, Alexander and I began training. In the time between now and the beginning of his term, I hope to give him all of the support and experience necessary to make it a smooth transition that he can feel confident and comfortable in.

Finally, I would like to highlight some of our stand-out content. This week, we had Forum on the upcoming ride-sharing vote in the Austin City Council, featuring an in-depth policy explainer by Forum editor Walker Fountain and op-eds from members of the respective lobbying sides. We also had columns arguing against student specialization in unsustainable fields in favor of the development of majors in sustainable energy and a column challenging Israel Apartheid week as an unproductive way of making an international impact or resolving tensions between student groups, from senior columnists Benroy Chan and Mubarrat Choudhury, respectively.

In today’s Daily Texan, you can also find a joke page with several satirical columns, in keeping with the spirit of April Fool’s Day.

The last several weeks have been a productive period of growth in the department, which I look forward to continuing in my last weeks as Editor-in-Chief. As always, if any members of the board have constructive feedback for my department, I would love to hear it and take the opportunity to continue to improve the department.

Best,
Claire Smith
Editor-in-Chief, The Daily Texan