February 22nd, 2013

Texas Student Media Board of Operating Trustees:

In the last few weeks, Cactus has shifted into full-blown marketing mode. Our photo studio was planned and scheduled extremely quickly leaving my staff with a little under two weeks to fully promote it. That being said, we have been using our website, Facebook fan page and Twitter feeds to their full capacity to get the word out to students about the studio. We’ve also reached out to Texas Parents, utilized the DigiKnow screens around campus, scheduled ads to run in the Daily Texan and flyered extensively. I’d also like to give a big shout out to TSTV for creating a promo commercial for the studio as well.

Cactus’ annual Outstanding Student and Cactus Goodfellow awards are in the works right now as well. Nominations are due on Monday (Feb. 25th) and the selection process will occur the following week.

Because of Texas Student Media’s current situation, I understand that times are tough and budgets are dwindling. I have had several conversations with my staff and some of TSM’s professional staff about ways to tighten Cactus’ budget without compromising the value of the book or its history:

1. Reduce page count — While I personally would not like to see Cactus’ page count diminish below our current total of 320, I think it would be safe to trim down the book a few pages in order to reduce printing costs. This could be achieved easily by simply reducing the size of portraits and having more per page, thus saving the pages typically allotted for coverage of the University.

2. Rethink wages — As I said in my last report, nobody does yearbook for the money. They do it because they love it and because they want to learn and develop their skills as designers, writers and photographers. Similarly to the Daily Texan, I think we could shift our paid staff photographers and writers to volunteers and also tighten up our editorial payroll.

3. Stimulate future sales — We are currently reaching out to UT’s orientation program so that we can have a bigger influence among incoming freshman. By following Baylor University’s model, we would have our photo studio immediately after the students get their UT ID photo taken at orientation. This would make our photo studio practically mandatory, familiarize freshman with Cactus (encouraging repeat buys in subsequent years) and dramatically increase book sales.

4. Develop group portraits — Like I’ve mentioned before, historically book sales were higher when we included group portraits. While this task has been daunting to build from the ground up this year, I firmly believe that as it grows to include more and more student organizations it will become a tradition among those orgs and not only lead to more book sales but enrich the historical archive of the University and its students.

5. New revenue — We are also looking at potentially bringing the Cactus photo studio in-house, which would also give us control over selling photo packages and prints, generating revenue for TSM that we have never had before.

Stay prickly,
Hunter Ellenbarger
Cactus, Editor-in-Chief
February 2013 Board Report

REVENUE INITIATIVES

• MERCHANDISING
  o Best of Compilation book for sale, with content highlighting every year since 1997 to be
    sold on the website, to alumni and on campus.
  o I [heart] Powers T-shirt sale
  o Men in Bikinis Carwash

• BRAND PROMOTION
  o Talk show on KVRX and/ or TSTV
  o Print and digital subscription service offered on website
  o Increase video offerings

• DONATION ACCRUEMENT
  o Pledge Drive comedy show
  o Alumni Benefit
  o Campaign on Kickstarter or Indiegogo: Websites that allow for viral fundraising based on
    a short video.

BRIEF GENERAL REPORT

• REVENUE: The advertising department has secured a contract selling half-page, full color ads in
  both of the Spring issues as well as selling the Twitter background to Austin Psych Fest for 10
  consecutive weeks.

• STUDENT GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGN: Satirical campaign gaining traction.

• BRAND AWARENESS: An article entitled “College Humor Publications Get the Last Laugh” in the
  New York Review of Magazines reviewed three of the most elite college humor publications: The
  Yale Record, The Harvard Lampoon and The Texas Travesty. The article can be read here:
  http://nyrm.org/?p=104

• PODCAST: Recording in KVRX studios every other week.

• WEBSITE: Close to launch.

• PRINT ISSUE: Planning for 3/6 issue.
We just emerged from our annual pledge drive, which ran par with the historical course in terms of the net amount of funds generated. However, it was a remarkable year for trying new avenues of outreach, and our DJs and volunteers were more invested than ever in raising money and awareness for KVRX. Even though pledge drive feeds the gift account (which is at its historical apex), the pledge drive mindset and methodology lends itself to year-round strategies for revenue generation.

For a radio station like ours, revenue comes from support, like-mindedness, and partnership, which require somewhat of a mutual understanding between members of our station and the particular audiences we serve. These contacts should be pursued as sustained and reliable sources of income. Organizing and centralizing our alumni contact information and opening lines of communication with them has had spectacular results in terms of monetary support as well as in terms of connections since many work in PR, music distribution, booking, media, and non-profits. By centralizing contacts for venues, bands, and distribution and promotion agencies we can seek promotion partnerships, which will at least establish the norm of paying for on-air and on-campus promotion. This model is also beginning to take effect for the monetization of giveaways, in which ticket giveaways are treated as underwriting spots and sold at a weekly/monthly rate.

KVRX ought to also aspire to a more coherent schedule with a higher degree of “blocking” similar programs into a few consecutive hours (at least during prime time evening and morning drive-time hours), thus increasing listener retention and making our programming more legible and salable to sponsors. This applies to genre and style as well as general quality and popularity. Our web statistics distributed by Curt provide a lot of insight to the times and shows which generate the most web visits, which is information that should have greater bearing on our schedule.

Our on-air presence and community presence ought to be more complementary, and sponsoring shows, doing DJ sets, and doing remote broadcasts are excellent opportunities to expand our fanbase and they should also involve compensation. Doing live DJ sets and/or remote broadcasts would also increase our listenership, provide more exposure to the station, and attract/reward business sponsors, as could sponsorship of events or assisting with booking at local venues like the Scoot Inn and Hole in the Wall.

On-air promotion and event sponsorship ought to be targeted toward specific events. Austin, a city which forged its reputation and nickname on the basis of live music, shows year-after-year new success stories of grassroots music events which quickly become massive commercial successes as well as touchstones for rabid fans. Obvious examples include ACL,
SXSW, and Fun Fun Fun Fest, but large-scale attractions and festivals like these (along with up- and-coming events like Utopia fest and Psych fest) are year-round opportunities for sponsored programming as well as strengthening our position in the live music community.

Now more than ever the staff and volunteers at KVRX are interested in and committed to seeking new sources of revenue and bolstering traditional methods through more coherent and targeted promotion. I'm very excited to move forward.

Thank you,

Katy Aus
KVRX Station Manager 2012/2013
March Board Report

To the TSM Board,

Revenue Initiatives
1) Long Term
   a) TV Advertorials
      i) Add more focus on producing content to cater specifically to advertisers; TV equivalent of Longhorn Life
         (1) EX: Texas Eats, Weekly Wheel Deals
   b) Marketing Productions Department
      i) Currently getting referrals from RTF and past clients
      ii) Work with Creative Services to market Productions Department
      iii) Advertise and reach out to student and Greek organizations to create promos for their organization and other opportunities for a charge
         (1) Examples
            (a) Cover philanthropic events of Greek organizations
            (b) Film meetings and panels
            (c) Highlight reels for clubs like Quidditch
            (d) Create show to feature different student orgs, who pay to be featured
   c) Better video player for website
      i) Easier to put videos on website
      ii) Centralize content for better advertising
   d) Sell commercials to run in online videos
   e) Sponsors for individual shows

2) Short Term
   a) 24Seven
      i) Pledge Drive
      ii) Donation Incentives
      iii) Reach out to Alumni
      iv) Programming- charge people to host or create their own mini-show on TSTV
   b) Mr. Texas Student Television
      i) Fundraiser
   c) Events
      i) VGHL Tournaments, Sports debate by College Crossfire
TSM Board Report
March, 2013
Dan Knight, Broadcast Adviser

TSTV and KVRX
"Local Live" is making great leaps forward. The sets and lighting are becoming so elaborate, you wouldn’t necessarily recognize our studio. And the sound mixing is professional grade. If you’d like to take a look and listen, find "Corduroi" and "Full Service".

KVRX
This month’s focus was pledge drive. The pledge drive concert was very well attended with probably a record number of KVRX listeners/fans. Several top grossing DJ programs made $400 each. Last year was a very pleasant anomaly with the one-time large matching grant. The total this year was on the high end of the historical average, over $6000.

We began keeping a pledge drive binder year before last so we don’t have to re-invent the wheel each time. This year we had some new additions. One is the addition of NPR type guidelines. Another is a special bootcamp orientation with all DJ’s. We are also are keeping accurate records of all donors from the last several years. The idea of not re-inventing the wheel each year, but making it better, rounder, faster, seems to be working.

Also, I have to say that many of the DJ shows are moving their game up a notch. The DJ’s are becoming more professional about what they do, while maintaining the flavor and uniqueness of the station. For instance, we know that we are one of the few stations with real people on air during the graveyard hours, so we want to use that as one of our selling points.

TSTV
The virtual sets in the Tricaster have given the shows much more credibility. But the biggest improvement has been the content of many shows. The elements of drama are showing up in several places. The talent are making themselves characters, one of the biggest stepping stones to bringing viewer interest. The characters are appropriate for the program. For instance, the "Movie Junkies" host and players are taking on personas. The "Press Box" hosts are really beginning to think of the audience as another person in the room, participating in a conversation. And, of course, "College Crossfire" has always thrived with well-drawn panelists.

I think we have two shows that are ready for syndication. "Local Live" has enough episodes in the can, and the production has been especially stellar since Fall. "Crossfire" has always had the content with a very well produced program, great format, and consistently great characters as contestants. Now they’ve got the graphics and transitions that should easily make it award winning.
The first episode of "Face the University" premiered with representatives from the Texan and TV News moderating discussion with Student Government officers.
TO: The Texas Student Media Board of Operating Trustees  
FROM: Susannah Jacob, Daily Texan Editor  

In the coming months I hope to collaborate with my fellow students, the professional staff, and board members to accomplish two tasks: 1. Develop long-term revenue-generating structures and 2. Heighten the relevance of our work at TSM and The Daily Texan by aggressively increasing campus-awareness of our print and digital products. Making our work more relevant does not guarantee we will make more revenue, but it increases awareness of our work and, I believe will help us develop methods to generate revenue. These goals mandate we work closely with our successors in the coming months, as many student managers and editors (including myself) will graduate in May. Here are some of my ideas:

1. Re-launch the Texan website and re-design the Texan with an August 2013 launch date as a goal. Make this a staff-wide-effort, and make decisions about redesigns based on input from the entire staff and UT students. Market heavily our plans to re-design and re-launch the website.

2. Develop a search committee among Texan staff to seek out existing UT bloggers, vloggers and photo vloggers for the Texan to increase and expand the amount and type of content on our website.

3. Research our audience. Hayley Fick has spent some time learning how to design and execute a survey. I believe we need to aggressively survey UT students about their news reading habits before we make dramatic changes to the website.

4. Develop a mobile app that serves as a “guide to UT” and includes a message board for students to post their own information about events, housing and sales. Make sure the mobile app pushes breaking news links as text messages two-three times a day. We could have an app-design contest; there are many students who know a lot more about app-design than in previous years.

5. Study box placement. I believe we could increase pick-up rates if The Daily Texan boxes were more strategically placed.

6. Offer student organizations free online advertising in exchange for handing out The Daily Texan at specific locations on campus each morning.

7. Increase/create optional/mandatory Daily Texan subscription fee when students register.

8. Create formal alumni organization that seeks to raise annual donations and repeated donations.

9. Create an advisory committee made up of alumni, journalism school professors, local journalists to assess the paper’s community impact and business model.

10. Make it possible for more students to put their voice into the paper via social media outlets, online discussions and interactive opinion features such as polls and interviews.

11. Create new revenue streams by building app features that connect students to local businesses. Events and housing opportunities.

12. Share content with other TSM entities like KVRX and TSTV.
13. Run radio and videocast from KVRX and TSTC websites on Daily Texan website.
14. Develop a separate website for Longhorn Football.
15. Build a form on our website where any advertiser can go in and do a do it yourself cheap text ad.
16. Have DT videographers create students own graduation/resume videos and charge premium rates.
17. Have DT Comics department draw artfully-designed graduation rates
18. Create campus/close-to-campus menu-page database for all nearby restaurants and include the Texan reviews. Make available on the Texan app.
19. Print DT photos (especially sports photos) on posters, sell ads on them and distribute to students to decorate their dorm rooms.
20. Host prominent events with wide appeal to the university community, film them, and put them on our site but also sell tickets to attend in person.
21. Reach out to the Business School to develop group of students to conduct as part of class-work holistic review of TSM.
Instead of the usual board report, here are some alternatives.

First, to ensure the Texan can handle any changes that might come in the coming months or years, I think we have to develop a better website, one that we can have full control over, that would give us everything we need: more opportunities for interaction, comments, related content, the ability to shift the front page layout around (our most important stories, because they have little art, are never able to be displayed prominently).

Our website has to be a place for the UT community. To do that, we have to cater better to our audience. I think the Texan has shown it can do that, but message board-type features — maybe only UT students are able to access it, via their EID — would serve myriad purposes: complaints, questions about class and campus, items to be sold and bought. This wouldn't be an easy thing to monitor and so for that, you'd want several Moderators. Also, I imagine SG would want some control in this. Just an idea; I know it's something I'd visit.

Because there is nothing I can do to sell ads, I think we need to acknowledge the only thing that really makes money here are the Double Coverage and Longhorn Life inserts, and build off that. Why not compile the "best of" comics for the semester in a glossy graphic novel type? I think there's an audience for that. Why not come out with Texan Quarterlies — featuring the best in long-form journalism, profiles, design and photography. Our 10 pages per day are not enough to show off our talented staff, and the news stories photogs are assigned to don't do them any favors, either.

We should have a Texan app with push notifications (Breaking: Mack Brown has resigned. View article:) and severe weather updates. We could push this at orientation.

We should see what we can do to have "subscribe to The Daily Texan" as an option when students pay their tuition. For instance, LASP passes are $75, parking is $150. Don't you think the option of paying $5 to "subscribe" to the Texan seems very undaunting. Because the Texan is free, you don't really subscribe to it, so maybe just "donate," but I don't know if that is appealing enough. Could we team up with our advertisers? "Donate to The Daily Texan, get added to our mailing list and download and print your coupon page." We could see what Drag businesses would like to do for that.

Speaking of a mailing list ... why not have a daily email blast to go with monthly letters from the editor or managing editor? This makes it super easy for anybody to access our site.

"Good morning! X insert weather report here X. Here's a sampling of today's stories: slug/link, slug/link, slug/link, slug/link. Let us know of any concerns or corrections: @managingeditor@dailytexanonline.com"

This, I think, would make the UT students feel more like the Texan is THEIR newspaper. Every month EIC could write something: here's what we're doing well, here's what we're struggling at, here's where we need your help, here are some things to watch this month."
Let's not let us printing five days a week blind us to the fact that when news breaks, the website is an incredibly important tool. Honestly, I think that has been forgotten this semester. We have to become flexible enough to break our paper production routine and shift to an online focus, at the snap of the finger. We aren't even close to being good at this.

To better the Texan going forward — no matter if it's still daily — we have to continue to adapt. If the TSM board gives us another year, then that's cool and all, but doesn't change the fact that we will not survive if we can't learn how to better resemble a news organization of the 21st century. Innovation is a must.

Thank you,

Trey Scott

Sent from my iPad
Let me start with a fact: The Daily Texan staff this academic year is doing the best work I have witnessed in the three-plus years I have served as editorial adviser. Coverage of the campus bomb threat, the Fisher case, diversity issues, parking, news boxes at Belo, the presidential election, the Alamo Bowl night out, the regents, the Major Applewhite scoop, the list goes on…and the very best may be still to come. Congratulations to all involved.

Here’s another fact: I’ve been to most of the meetings and I haven’t heard anyone talk about “the possible elimination of the pub’s daily print edition,” which Dan Reimold refers to in his current posting about the Texan on his respected (and widely read) “College Media Matters” blog. That’s how emotional issues get blown out proportion and into the realm of fantasy. I have heard the Texas Student Media Board ask Director Jalah Goette to explore possible cuts to balance next year’s TSM budget. I have heard savings estimates based on publishing only Double Coverage, the Texan’s outstanding stand-alone football section, on Fridays in the fall, and possibly printing Monday-Thursday in the spring. I also know that printing and distribution costs and student wages make up the vast majority of the Texan budget and if significant cuts are to come, they have to come from there. And nothing has been set in stone, nothing has been decided.

A few more facts: TSM as an organization is at a crossroads – and it has been for a while, scratching its collective head and trying to figure out which way to go. But time is running out and the money, eventually, will, too. Print advertising in newspapers is not going to come back. Digital ad revenues will not make up for that loss. Changes will have to be made and new revenue streams will have to be established if TSM wants to survive. That is a hard truth for all media companies, as I’m sure many Texan alumni are aware. It should also be pointed out that TSM, of which I am an employee, has cut and combined staff positions, tried new sales techniques (including a Groupon variation that didn’t work), hired a much-needed digital director and generally tried to mitigate the impact of declining revenues on core entities. It has also provided the Texan with an impressive, newly renovated newsroom (largely through the largess of the Longhorn Network.) I urge anyone interested in the work of the Texan to come and take a look.

I’m a newspaper guy. I started working as a reporter a week after I graduated from college and stopped 32 years later when I left The Boston Globe after 21 years. Never did anything else. Never wanted to. I am not nostalgic. Some of the papers I worked for and competed with no longer exist. The Miami Herald, where I spent five great years, is a shell of its former self. The Globe is on the auction block. Them’s the facts. When I was at the Globe in the 1980s, we sold well over 500,000 papers daily and 816,000 papers on Sunday. Those numbers are now 230,000 daily and 372,000 Sunday. Advertisers used to dump wheelbarrows of money at the front door (not quite a fact) for the privilege of advertising in what was basically a media monopoly. Same thing, to a certain extent, used to be true for the Texan.

No more.
So let me outline what I see as the key problems confronting TSM and the Texan and then offer some possible solutions.

THE PROBLEMS

1. TSM over the years has basically been a collection of student clubs – the yearbook club, the comedy club, the radio club, the television club and, yes, a newspaper club (although held to a much higher standard) – largely funded by Texan revenues. Those revenues have declined to the point that TSM can no longer be in the business of supporting clubs. In my experience, these clubs have not collaborated and generally don’t seem to even like each other very much. That also has to end. It is my belief that all entities of TSM will have to work together and contribute high-quality, student-generated content that can be branded, marketed and monetized on a variety of platforms – or they have to be gone.

2. The structure of TSM is holding it back. The board of directors is not involved enough in the overall operation and unfamiliar with its workings and its offerings. The board meets too infrequently, its membership is constantly shifting and it simply bounces from crisis to crisis. TSM’s inclusion in the Division of Student Affairs is awkward, as we saw in the handling of the Gary Borders situation. Personally, I don’t attend Student Affairs events because I think they are a legitimate part of the Texan’s news coverage purview and I think it presents a potential conflict of interest. Given TSM’s tendency to garner headlines (both good and bad), I can’t help thinking Student Affairs views the entire operation as something of a headache.

3. TSM itself has lacked stability. I’ve worked for three directors in my three-plus years at the Texan, and I missed a fourth by just a couple months. Since I arrived, the professional staff – the one constant in an always changing stream of students and board members – has been cut in half. Currently there is no Cactus or Texas Travesty adviser (if there ever was one for that bunch). Financial crises have been the rule, not the exception.

4. Alumni have little involvement. Despite the recent outpouring of support for “keeping the Texan daily,” I never hear from alumni – except those I worked with in recent years -- and very few appear to have been clicking the “Donate Now” button on the Texan website until now.

5. I don’t think we are fulfilling our primary educational mission by keeping the Texan a print-centric news operation. Our digital product has improved – it is more frequently updated with breaking news and blog postings. It is viewable on a number of digital platforms, so a Texan app isn’t really needed. But the home page largely remains a repository for Texan print stories with a few online-only supplements. More importantly, the newsroom has yet to fully embrace the “deadline is now” demands of the online news cycle. That is what our students will be encountering in the working world outside of the Texan basement and we are doing them a disservice if we don’t prepare them for that.

6. We aren’t going to solve TSM’s financial problems on the backs of an endlessly changing crop of student ad reps trying to learn their jobs while boosting the sale of local print ads to make up for the continuing decline in national and classified advertising. It’s illogical, as Mr. Spock would say. We need to create new revenue streams, remake and rebrand what we have to sell to advertisers and sell both print and digital. Hard.
OK, wise guy, so what are we going to do? Well, I don’t have all the answers, because if I did, I would be up advising Arthur Sulzberger, the guy who pays my pension, instead of cooling my heels in Austin. But I do have some ideas.

SOME SOLUTIONS

1. No more clubs. I would drop the Cactus and the Travesty now because I don’t see them as part of TSM’s core mission. (Angry alums please line up – scythes and pitchforks on the left, firebrands on the right, thank you.) They don’t cost a lot of money, but they also don’t bring in revenue and they do tie up TSM employee time and effort. The students at the remaining entities have to agree to collaborate effectively. I would remake TSTV as a news operation with “60 Minutes”-like features and daily news and weather programs, along with revenue-generating outside production work. I would lease out unused channels to generate income. KVRX would be tasked with producing NPR-like news programming and podcasts that could be branded and sponsored. Maybe they would even play some of the hits some of the time.

2. The remaining TSM entities would be rebranded as “Texan Media” with the best of the day’s content going up throughout the news cycle on a professionally designed and maintained, but student-operated, combined website. It would have the capability to stream radio, broadcast multiple videos, offer surveys, polls and contests along with the best of the Texan newsroom’s stories and multimedia offerings. The individual entities could have tabs to their own similarly professionally designed and maintained home pages. This combined TSM effort would give our advertising staff something new and exciting to sell across multiple platforms. We would monetize use of e-blasts and social media. The print schedule would be worked around what makes sense, what makes money and what makes this digital-first approach possible.

3. The TSM board has to care and be pro-active – not in controlling content, but in making sure that the system works. It needs to be looking at the overall operation as well as the bottom line. The members need to read the paper and website, watch the TV offerings and listen to the radio.

4. The administration has to buy into helping TSM survive, again without attempting to control content. Newspapers across the country are raising circulation rates and putting paywalls in place to the extent that “circulation” revenue now matches ad revenue at The New York Times. We need to do something like that, despite the fact that the Texan is free. I would consider putting in place a paywall charging a nominal annual fee to users outside a 100-mile radius of Austin. I would ask the University to impose a $5 annual fee on all students, in addition to SSBC money, to support student media. I don’t know how that gets done, but it should be. That could mean an additional $250,000 to our coffers annually. The Arizona State paper just shifted to a weekly print, digital-first model and it got the University to agree to let the print product be delivered directly to students’ dorm rooms. Think we could get the UT-Austin administration to agree to that? Think that would be attractive to advertisers? I think we should check it out. And while we’re at it, could someone tell me why Walter Cronkite, former Daily Texan staffer, gave his name and more to the journalism school at Arizona State? He might have solved all our problems.

5. It’s great to see Texan alumni putting their money where their hearts are by contributing to place full-page ads protesting alleged printing schedule cuts in the paper. It would be
more helpful for them to commit to organizing themselves into a fundraising juggernaut that would pledge to raise a certain amount every year that could be built into the Texan budget – with no strings attached as to delivery platforms or content control. That’s essential. There is presently no one at TSM available to take on this important project. Perhaps an unemployed former Texan staffer out there could step up, become a fundraising committee chairman and guarantee that alumni will contribute $25,000 a year ($50,000?) for the foreseeable future. That would be a real help. It would also be great to use the names and email addresses on the petition to create a mentoring and job-searching network for graduating Texan staffers. Really nothing like that exists now, to my knowledge.

6. As to the educational mission, we need to continue to promote solid, basic journalism techniques while preparing our student staffers for the “real” world outside. The journalism school has tried to do this by totally revising its curriculum toward a digital-first mode. Of course, they don’t have to put out a daily newspaper. Shouldn’t that shift be reflected in the training the students receive at the Texan? I can assure you it isn’t to the extent it needs to be, and it won’t be as long as the newsroom is a slave to the demands of the print news cycle. Let me quote my friend John Yemma, a former colleague at The Globe, a former Daily Texan managing editor and the guy who took the well-respected and financially troubled Christian Science Monitor to what has been a successful digital-first format three years ago:

“Personally, I can't see how continuation of print can be helpful to student journalists. Digital journalism is the present and future. And it is a huge, unresolved business challenge that requires the engagement of the best and brightest young minds. Sure, do print weekly if that is a real revenue producer, but not because it is print. It would be much better if the Texan put its energy into … social media, and SEO, retention, audience development, niche feeds, etc. Maybe there's already a lot of effort in those areas, but the problem with doing print is that it consumes time and effort that would otherwise be freed to carry out a Web strategy.”

7. As for other revenue streams, I would take money out of reserves (while we have some), get the website help we need, hire a professional ad rep to sell local (with an emphasis on digital) and free professional advertising staff member Carter Goss up to focus more on TV, radio and particularly events. Texan Media-sponsored events, perhaps in partnership with the Texas Tribune, the Texas Observer or other local media could help raise funds for TSM while also giving those operations access to the student market they might crave.

I can’t guarantee that all these possible solutions will work, or that they will ultimately preserve TSM if they do. I do believe that if we don’t get buy-in from all interested parties and over the next year adopt some of these measures, we risk not only failing our students in our essential educational mission, but also the entire future of the organization.
The Daily Texan web team, under the leadership of digital director, Hayley Fick, trained 26 student staff members on using the website. The training is part of a strategy we have been working on, which seeks to free up the work time of the web team. The goal is to create an environment where the web team has the time and resources to work on web-specific projects.

In February, we hosted a Texas Travesty strategy work session with alumnus Todd Nienkerk. The work session focused on the history, brand, print and digital products of the Travesty. Nienkerk is a co-founder and partner at Four Kitchens, a web design and development whose clients include the Wikimedia Foundation and The Economist. Nienkerk is a former editor of the Travesty.

The TSM iOS app is in a state of limbo. Spread, the company that developed the app over four years ago, has not been responsive to our requests after make a few updates several months ago. It is recommended that we engage the student population for our future mobile and tablet app needs. TSM provides a unique opportunity for students to develop apps in a real-world setting.

We soft-launched the Texas Student Media Digest in February. The email communication consists of content from each TSM media property and is currently sent out on Tuesdays. Nick Cremona, advertising student and Double Coverage editor, is populating the email with content and sending it out.

Stephanie Vajda is now officially working as the student digital assistant. In this capacity Vajda will be working on web analytics across the TSM media properties, among other projects. We are working to provide the student content creators with critical insight into the online behavior of our audiences.

The UT Libraries department has agreed to work with us to create and maintain the TSM digital asset archive. The first step of this project involves gathering high-risk digital content – content on CDs, DVDs, and old external drives. The goal is back up this year’s content continue that process into the future, while also working to digital archive historic content.

We continue to work on best practices for each media property in terms of utilizing the websites and online spaces, including: updating Daily Texan content throughout the day based on traffic, working with our server hosting organization to create the ideal configuration for influxes of web traffic, providing show descriptions on KVRX, and re-assessing the TSTV layout, among other projects.
TSTV is now able to use its high-definition video server to insert advertisements into its feed of the Fuse network, a music channel which has historically been a big part of TSTV’s programming line-up. TSTV’s hourly allotment consists of a pair of one-minute breaks; at present a 30-second Domino’s Pizza ad is running once per hour, so 75% of the inventory is still available to be sold.

TSM sold its 12 year-old John Deere Gator vehicle to UT Parking & Transportation Services for $400. The Gator has not been used much in recent years; the sale will eliminate the need to pay for its parking spot in the alley of the Communication complex.

Work is underway to secure vendors for various tasks associated with the Cactus Yearbook (printing/marketing/distribution, photo studio, advertising), because all related contracts will soon be expired.

Similarly, the contract for Daily Texan printing services will expire in August, so the RFP process will begin in March. I expect there to be at least one bidder in addition to the incumbent (Austin American-Statesman).

Frank Serpas III
TSM Operations Manager
Advertising Department  
TSM Board Meeting: 3/1/13

Advertising:  
The advertising team did a great job selling into our Housing Fair, which is one of our largest events of the year. The team is currently focusing on “Transcend” the upcoming Fashion show which will be held at the Frank Erwin center on April 18th.

Special thanks to both TSTV and KVRX: Dan, Frank, Becca, Katy and their teams for taking the time to meet with Advertising to provide data and production support which will assist in upcoming sales and new initiatives which will assist in increasing revenue.

Also a big thanks to Curt our Digital Manager, Trey the current managing editor or The Daily Texan and Nick our Advertising Account Executive who worked together to get a new sales initiative passed. Trey authorized the sale of The Daily Texan twitter background to advertisers which allows for a new outlet our clients are able to advertise in. Although a number of clients declined the offer due to no twitter-sponsored posts within this buy, this is a step in the right direction and the new product was sold the following day.

Creative:  
Since the last board meeting Abby our special edition coordinator and her team successfully produced our largest edition of Longhorn Life. Longhorn Life advertising supplements have generated over $17,000 in advertising for the month of February.

Events:  
Carter and the team did a great job with Housing Fair, which was held on Wednesday February 20th, we reached our goal of over $75,000 in revenue. UT Fashion show, Transcend, is in full bloom. We have our packages ready to sell and expect a nice turnout.

TSTV:  
We finished the rough pilot of the new food show, Texas Eats. We plan to film the next episode at County Line BBQ in the next week. We are planning sponsorship packages for 24seven and should be ready to sell them by next week.

TSTV filmed their interview segment of the Housing Fair on Wednesday. This Housing Fair segment should be ready to air by mid March.

KVRX:  
KVRX finished up their annual pledge drive this week. Carter worked very closely with the team and as is very proud of the team Katy put together including Evelyn Gaucin, the pledge drive director. We had support from businesses, listeners and concert attendees.

Hook'em & Sell'em!!!

CJ Salgado  
Advertising Adviser