



## Texas Student Media Professional Staff Report November 22, 2013

### **Director, Jalah Goette**

#### **Personnel Management**

I worked with a hiring committee to post, recruit, and interview for the Executive Assistant position. Chad Barnes started three weeks ago and has been quick to learn the multiple tasks that are involved in managing the business office and all aspects of our financials. Since our last meeting, I have been working with our Business Assistant, Barbara, to handle all aspects of accounts receivable, accounts payable, purchasing, payroll, cash handling and oversight of the business office. Going forward, Chad will oversee these functions of the business office plus handle personnel management, inventory analysis, general ledger reporting, customer service and serve as the human resource liaison.

#### **University Administration**

In working with the Vice President's office, I am completed the report for five year planning. This entailed many meetings and hours spent reviewing processes to complete the request before the Thanksgiving holiday. I also attended the Student Affairs Leadership Team meeting in which we discussed the mission of Student Affairs and what it looks like to be excellent in supporting the student experience at the University.

#### **Contracts**

I completed an open records request for information regarding publishing of the Cactus yearbook. We submitted a request for proposal to the University purchasing office over eight months ago, and we have been diligent in following up on the process. In the recent weeks we received advisement from Purchasing that due to hold up from their office we could move forward with negotiating a contract through a sole source agreement for the current year's book. Due to concerns with lack of sales, I am working with Jaclyn, the Cactus Editor, to assess the situation before securing a vendor. We coordinated with the Thorton photographers to set up the photo studio in a more visible location at the Flawn Academic Center with the hopes that more foot traffic will increase awareness.

#### **Production**

Despite the great content being produced by The Daily Texan, ad revenue fluctuates and occasionally supports a 10-12 page issue, but often does not support an 8-page issue. Our production manager, Michael Gammon, has been excellent in communicating the daily ad ratio to the newsroom, and myself. In meeting the requests of the newsroom and taking into account the perception of our readers and advertisers, we have arranged a minimum 8-page print edition regardless of ad ratio.

We did not have advertising revenue to support printing a Travesty edition this month, but we adhered to the calendar and printed a Travesty edition as scheduled, while running a minimum color and page count. When the student managers unanimously agreed to a 50% wage cut, amongst other cuts, the board took action last spring to adopt a budget for 13/14 that cut student wages and utilized reserves to ensure a five day a week print schedule for The Daily Texan AND to ensure the print schedule for Travesty. Thus we printed the Travesty edition at a loss, as directed by the board. Since that time efforts are being made to ensure we do not encounter the same challenge going forward.

#### **Financial Reports, Budget and Business Office**

As I alerted the board president and others, we are working on financial documents from last month. With the transition in staff we have had big hurdles to overcome, but you can expect that we will email out the reports for all to review once complete.

After the last board meeting, I began discussions regarding budget planning. I have met with staff, students, administrators, faculty, industry leaders and many board members to discuss the future of Texas Student Media. I also completed an exercise with the staff that assessed our strengths and weaknesses in

the areas of content, education, organizational structure/communication and revenue. My current assessment is that all can agree that we need help with alumni relations, staffing and marketing. The board must decide upon a specific budget strategy for the upcoming year that gives our organization the ability to explore new opportunities while working to fulfill the mission statement. I believe that the only way to do this is to experiment with evolution of the student media entities. We must be digital first in all aspects of the organization. Experimenting will require the organization to have the flexibility to act as a laboratory and we will have to test new things, measure and adjust. As we evolve, there will be moments of frustration, but experiencing growing pains now will set us on a path of evolution that reflects industry trends, and serves as a laboratory of learning.

### **Advertising Manager, CJ Salgado**

#### Achievements:

Hosted our client appreciation event and have already booked 60% of our upcoming housing fair

Local Live Remote (Pilot) was a success, client was happy with outcome, looks forward to future events and we are seeking to gain actual revenue from these events

Success of advertising reps graduating and or entering other internship opportunities, interviews for upcoming semesters currently being conducted

#### Challenges:

Lack of communication from other departments impacting sales for specific publications

Lead time of two weeks for Local Live Remote; Event managers and student assistant manager worked diligently to build client relationship and bring the event to their business, the ad department is hoping to sell this opportunity to future clients, faster and more substantial information earlier at minimum (4 weeks lead time) would be more efficient in promoting the event

Loss of seasoned advertising reps, needing to be replenished with new green student reps

#### Creative:

##### Achievements:

The Longhorn Life Fun Fun Fun Fest preview edition went really well. Especially the interviews with musicians and comedians. Our staff got some timely stories ahead of the festival. And our editors' on-the-scene tweets were retweeted by some big names. The Longhorn Life eyes on the festival gave a good view of live music life in Austin to our readership. Kudos to the writers, photographers, and editors. Their festival work is currently populating our website on an ongoing basis.

##### Challenges:

We continue to struggle for the target ad ratio. The Texas Travesty had only one ad in today's edition. However, the students are being proactive about finding a solution. The student ad team manager and student leadership from the Travesty have independently approached Michael G. to facilitate discussion between the advertising and editorial side of things. A greater level of communication and coordination may help ease the problem of diminishing ads.

### **Operations Manager, Frank Serpas**

The Local Live Remote event held at Maria's Taco Xpress on November 14 was a success; the eponymous Maria was happy with the crowd drawn by the three bands, who performed for over two hours.

I represented TSTV & KVRX at the College Broadcasters, Inc. National Student Electronic Media Convention in San Antonio during October 31-November 2, along with students Blake Carter and Cameron Kubena. I attended sessions covering topics including FCC regulations, online media legal issues, and assessment of student learning outcomes.

At the CBI Convention, it was announced that, in addition to TSTV receiving three award-finalist recognitions, the program "Shenanigans" won the national Best Television Comedy award.

Adjusting to the new advising structure remains a challenge for TSTV & KVRX, particularly in relation to content critiques and legal training (e.g. Dan Knight made a guest appearance in late October to do legal training for TSTV producers).

### **Digital Manager, Curt Yowell**

I continue to work with students to harness Google search and analytics; we've enabled Demographics & Interests reports for some of the media properties and will continue to roll this out; organic Google traffic for The Daily Texan is up from a year ago.

My team is recruiting for new digital positions to work along with the student digital manager; the positions are: digital media coordinator, digital advertising coordinator, digital inbound marketers.

In November I conducted a TSM-wide web/digital meeting. Student leaders and representatives were present from all five media groups plus Longhorn Life and the TSM Advertising Department.

We are assessing alternatives to our online web banner delivery software, OpenX. We have a need to be flexible and the desire to experiment beyond the web banner, while also making inroads into native advertising. A system and process that can support these new initiatives is a necessity.

### **Media Adviser, Michael Brick**

Accomplishments:

1. The Daily Texan's mobile-friendly digital redesign, DT Delta, is on track to launch next semester. The most recent milestone is the draft of an article page design.
2. Ambitious enterprise stories on underreported sexual assaults, the university's water usage and football ticket hoarding have driven the campus conversation.
3. Sports, multimedia and other departments have made good use of visits from professional journalists, including a Austin Statesman department head, a Detroit Free Press baseball writer and a New York Times videographer.

Challenges:

1. Covering breaking news with a strong competitive metabolism remains problematic. In part this is due to lack of resources. Due to pay cuts, editors say they have little leverage to compel reporters to arrange their classes around coming in to the newsroom and performing beat checks.