

MINUTES

Tuesday, Feb. 2, 2010 • 7 p.m.
Talley Student Center • second floor • North Gallery

CALL TO ORDER — The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m. by Al McArthur, chair.

PRESENT: Al McArthur, John Sanderson, Bob Ashley, Dean Phillips, Michele Chandler, Helen Dear, Mike Alston, Charlie Weinfield, Bradley Wilson

ABSENT: Denise Gonzales Crisp, Meagan Gay, Al McArthur, Jim Ceresnak, Kelley Brackett, Lyndsey Warhurst, John Clark,

GUESTS: Jamie Lynn Gilbert, Martha Collins, Biko Tushinde, Russell Witham, Kate Shefte, David Mabe, Lauren Blakely

Al began the meeting by introducing John Sanderson, a new, appointed, at-large Board member. John is a senior in biomedical engineering. Al also thanked Mike Alston for serving as chair at the last meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

- Hiring of a *Technician* editor

Al told the candidates for Technician co-editor that they could begin by introducing themselves. Then they would have a few minutes to give an opening statement and then the Board would ask them questions.

Russell began by reviewing the past two weeks after the previous editor became ineligible to serve in a campus leadership position. He said the three of them were the most senior people on staff. "I don't think any of wanted to be editor." Someone had to step forward and to provide guidance. Lauren said the staff seems very comfortable with this group of leaders.

Then Al opened the floor to questions from Board members.

Dean Phillips asked the three if they were excited. Russell said this was his hobby. Kate she wasn't particularly eager. She said it was her love for the paper and a commitment that made her consider it.

Helen asked if they had a top goal. Lauren said: "to make deadline consistently." Russell said he wanted to focus on retention. The staff has a lot of freshmen and sophomores. We don't want them to burn out.

Mike pointed out that Russell was going to graduate in May. Mike asked if it was one of their goals to encourage people to apply for editor. Who is going to apply? How are we going to avoid this in the future? Russell said they were experimenting with having three people as editor. "It's a little strange." He said there were not a lot of people eager to serve as editor. Mike asked if they were talking it up. Kate said they were focused day-to-day on getting the

paper out. She said maybe now they could turn some attention to a bigger picture. Lauren said it was a very young staff. Mike said “convince” was the key word. He said the senior staff members needed to convince someone they’re capable of being editor. Russell said he didn’t want to push someone. Kate said they’d try to get someone ready for it.

Bob asked how the last two weeks have gone. Lauren said they’d been splitting the late nights with Lauren doing two, Russell doing two and Kate doing one. We’ve missed deadline quite a bit. Russell said they’d missed deadline about 50 percent of the time but often because of things like the satire issue or late basketball games. Bob asked how they’d felt about content. Kate said the news section could stand to improve. They need to spend time rewriting. News is our biggest weakness. Lauren said features was doing really well.

Bob asked how staff morale was and how their morale was. Russell said most people have taken it in stride. I can’t think of anyone, especially any high content producers who have said they didn’t want to do it any more.

Dean said this group and the staff is to be congratulated for their work in the last two weeks.

Bradley asked how they would work to meet deadline since that is a primary way of preventing burnout and improving retention. Lauren said the key was training writers and making sure editors stay on top of reporters so stories come in on time. Russell said the key was getting people in the office earlier. He said he comes in the office earlier but does so to do administrative stuff. The challenge is to get people up here earlier and to have stuff done before the budget meeting. Bob said the key was that at a certain point you just have to cut it off. Have deadlines for pages — you have to make those deadlines. Maybe sacrifice some late-night stuff to meet deadline. He said it’s easy to ignore early deadlines, but that’s where the snowball starts to run downhill.

Charlie said that in the business office they’ve never had a problem with people wanting to become editor. Kate said she thought it was that the business office were paid commission. Charlie said their desire to be leaders in the business office didn’t come from money. They’re passionate. They want to do it. Lauren said her concern was the time commitment. Russell said if you’re in charge one night you’re going to spend 10-12 hours. It’s a full-time job.

The group moved into executive session to consider the applicants. The Board came out of executive session at 8:01 p.m.

MOTION: After discussion, Bob Ashley moved to approve the hiring of Russell, Lauren and Kate as co-editors of the Technician for the remainder of the academic year. Further, the Board urges them to work with the professional staff on procedural issues and to bring any policy issues to the Board in March. The Board unanimously and enthusiastically approved the motion.

The Board then had some discussion of items not on the agenda including a lengthy discussion of the writing coach. Russell said many of the staff members just can’t find time to meet with the writing coach. Then he said that some of the editors wanted to require their staff members to meet with the writing coach more often. Bradley said the staff sets minimum expectations for training. If the staff wants to exceed expectations, they certainly can. Martha asked why this

was a concern. With so many young writers, clearly they need instruction. And she pointed out that many go visit with the writing coach more often than twice a month now. Russell acknowledged that the writing coach was an essential part of training and education, but “our training needs need to be flexible.”

Bob Ashley said if the real conflict was scheduling. Russell said, “Absolutely.” He said that visiting the writing coach for a total of 30 minutes per month was simply not a functional system. He said the frustration was that people weren’t getting paid because they weren’t meeting this requirement. He said that Jake Goldbas hasn’t filled out his timesheets and hasn’t gotten paid. Bradley reminded the group that it was illegal to pay a person without a timesheet. In fact, Bradley said he met with Jake today for a long time partly coming up with column ideas. He’s done more than enough to get a writing slip.

Kate said some of the sports reporters can’t meet with the writing coach to review game stories and that’s all they write. Bradley said that wasn’t true that a sports reporter could easily meet with the writing coach to talk about story angles, to brainstorm story ideas, etc. before the game with the writing coach. The point of visiting with with the writing coach was to improve the quality of the product.

Mike asked if any of the people who had concerns had asked for an appointment with the writing coach. None of the candidates answered. Mike said “If they don’t ask, it’s their fault.” Bradley also said that he and Martha on occasion would meet with writers and he thanked Martha for taking time to do that.

Bob reminded the group that they had made an enormous commitment. He said that clearly Bradley values education. Providing this education is Bradley’s responsibility, and it’s your responsibility to carry it out.

Michele said there had been some concern with the photographers not being required to get writing coach slips. But she pointed out that the photographers usually ask for critiques with each assignment, which Bradley reminded them was part of the assignment.

Bob pointed out that the issue of the writing coach and the issue of problems with the budget meeting were really procedural issues. These are not Board issues.

Al suggested that the group work through these issues with Bradley and that they come talk individually to Board members with lingering concerns. Bob also invited them to call him and to talk through issues if they wanted to.

The group adjourned at about 9 p.m.

ADJOURN

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Student Media Advisory Board may adjourn into executive session to discuss matters of litigation, potential litigation or personnel.