

## **Board of Student Communications Report 2016-2017**

Jeff Inman, BSC Faculty Co-Chair

**Voting Members for 2016-2017:** Beth LeValley (Student Senate, Co-Chair), Nathan Paulsen (Student Senator), John Pelegrino (Student Senate appointee), Megan Rush (Student Representative selected by Editors-in-Chief), Jennifer Glover-Konfrst (JMC), Bart Schmidt (A&S) and Sarah McCoy (A&S).

**Ex-Officio:** Meghan Baeza (Director of Student Leadership)

**Non-Voting Members for 2016-2017:** Jessica Lynk (Editor in Chief, *Times-Delphic*), Katie Bandurski (Editor in Chief, *Drake Magazine*), Megan Ellis (Editor in Chief, *DUI*), Jacob Leiberton (Editor in Chief, *Periphery*), Jennifer Krane (Editor in Chief, *The Annual*), Sarah LeBlanc (*Drake Political Review*), and Grace Rogers (President, Drake Broadcasting System).

**Elected Officers for 2016-2017:** Jessica Spangler (Editor in Chief, *Times-Delphic*), Megan Mowery (Editor in Chief, *Drake Magazine*), Lexi Schmidt (Editor in Chief, *DUI*), Jacob Leiberton (Editor in Chief, *Periphery*), Brandi Dye (Editor in Chief, *The Annual*), Andrea Beck (*Drake Political Review*), and Leah Thompson (President, Drake Broadcasting System). Procedures specified in the BSC Rules and Regulations were followed.

**Meetings:** September 23, October 28, December 2, February 10, March 3, March 24 and April 21.

### **Summary of Activities:**

#### **Fall 2016**

During the fall of 2016, the BSC had several issues to tackle. The first issue was to solidify the budget for the board as a whole, as well as for each individual publication, based on available student fees. It was originally believed that publications would have to reduce their budgets based on projected lower-the-predicted enrollment, though after the 10-day count was approved and the BSC's overall budget was solidified, final organization budgets were approved at their original levels.

Based on some activities over the summer regarding pay disputes at *Periphery*, a new BSC staff contract was introduced across all organizations. All paid staff members were required to fill out a contract stipulating their expected duties and expected pay, sign and date it, then turn in copies to Meghan Baeza and Co-Chair Prof. Inman. This was instituted so no student staff member could dispute what their pay.

The BSC also began looking for options to help Baeza monitor the budgets and payments required for the various organizations. New payment systems voted in

during the 2015-16 school year began in the fall of 2016, including the elimination of per-story payments for the *Times-Delphic*, *Drake Magazine*, *DUiN* and *The Annual*. All organizational staff members were instead paid per hour as required by law. To prevent publication budgets from being overburdened by salary costs, staff members were allotted a fixed number of hours paid each week—i.e. the *Drake Magazine* editor was paid for 10 hours of work per week regardless of whether the editor worked more or not (this was a solution to compensate for the traditional fixed semester fees that were deemed illegal under current compensation rules).

These changes helped eliminate a lot of the paperwork that had overwhelmed Baeza the previous year—particularly the per-story fees—but the situation was still precarious. Baeza’s responsibilities across student life, coupled with the work potential of new overtime regulations stipulated by the Obama administration that would have limited Baeza to exactly 40 hrs per week, made it impossible for her to always be available to students to answer payment issues or help with purchasing. A new BSC-funded position was created. A student accountant was hired to monitor all publication budgets and help prepare payments and purchases for Baeza’s signature.

Drake server accounts were established for all publications.

## **Spring 2016**

Spring of 2017 focused on three main issues, none of which are currently resolved:

1. Student Housing changed its rules on the distribution of publications in the lobbies of the dorms. Publications can no longer place copies of issues throughout the common areas, but instead have to give a limited number of copies to the front desk of each dorm. The BSC, in conjunction with Student Housing, considered several options, including racks large enough to hold multiple copies of each student publication. A suitable solution wasn’t found.

2. Payment and participation: As the end of the year approached the *Times-Delphic* reported a significant drop-off in participation from the previous year. Current *TD* editor Jessica Lynk believed this drop off was the result of multiple factors: 1. a continued overall decline in the number of journalism students; 2. a move by some journalism professors to post student work created in basic reporting classes like J54 on websites like Drake Digital News rather than funneling it towards the *TD* as has been the norm; and 3. the ending of per-story payments. To help combat the latter two co-chair Prof. Inman will be working with incoming *TD* editor Jessica Spangler on ways to increase participation, including coming up with new ways to pay writers and talking with J54 professors about encouraging students to publish their work in the newspaper. Both endeavors will need to be monitored in the fall.

3. Budgets were approved but in limbo again: Budget determinations for 2017-18 school year took place at the April 2016 meeting. All student budgets were approved as proposed, including increases to *DPR*, *DUiN* and *The Annual* to boost printing budgets to continuing using perfect binding. These increases, as well as several salary increases, eliminated the current travel funds pool for the 2017-18 school year (though there is still the reserve fund). All the students were aware of this choice. Students were also aware the budgets would need to be revisited in the fall once student enrollment was finalized.

Elections for 2016-2017 Editors in Chief and Presidents took place at the March 2017 meeting. A one-time funding request for a camera and a Creative Cloud subscription for *DPR* was approved as well.

#### Suggestions for 2017-18

- Monitor the impact of changes in the payment structure on participation
- The close monitoring of budgets due to decreased enrollment
- Use BSC meetings as a vehicle to foster increased cooperation among the BSC organizations
- Possibility of a unified sales force to increase ads across organizations
- Encourage DBS to look for new broadcasting options, particularly in the area
- The amendment of bylaws so the BSC may begin meeting before the Student Senate appoints its third representative to the board, which can often take until October
- The expansion of server space for each publication