

Minutes from Communication Committee, September 16, 2016

Present: Co-chairs Ericka Hoagland & Gloria Hochstein, Timothy Helwig, AmiJo Comeford, Jessica Heller, Kaitlynn Sass, Mercedes James, with short visit from Kevin Brown.

Charge: To review and evaluate policies and procedures pertaining to all Society publications in both print and electronic forms. To oversee the website and to explore options for coordinating communications both in hardcopy and online. To review policies and procedures pertaining to *The Sigma Tau Delta Rectangle* and *The Sigma Tau Delta Review* writing awards.

Foci for Summer 2016 into Fall 2016:

*By September 1, review strategic plan to identify and discuss relevant goals and objectives at the Fall board meeting.

*By December 15, analyze the implications of the organization's analytics on communication publications/decisions, and then discuss & make recommendations for website and blog (and possible migration to a new platform) with goal of improving communicating with all constituents.

Foci for Spring 2017 into Summer 2017:

*Using the usual award/scholarship timeline, accept applications for and recommend winners of the annual awards.

*By April 15, review and discuss short report from Collaborative Journal Task Force and make recommendations to the Board.

1. **First Fall Focus:** Review of Strategic Plan (Draft 3) to identify and discuss relevant goals and objectives:
 - a. The committee requests of the Strategic Planning Committee that under Goal 6A, the first objective (By Spring 2017, publish special issues once a year. . . .) be modified to read as follows: "By Spring 2017, EXPLORE THE PUBLISHING OF special issues"
 - b. This discussion of social issues needs to involve Managing Editor Dan Colson.
 - c. The committee sees numerous possibilities for these special issues:
 - Having guest writers of some fame to write on a specials theme.
 - Have a famous guest editor of an online issue.
 - Have an online issue dedicated to the "best of convention" works
 - Have Past Presidents serve as guest editor
 - Have "best of" fiction, or drama, or poetry
 - Have issues devoted to graphic fiction, of speculative fiction, or another genre
 - Publish a hybrid edition of "best of" *The Rectangle* and *The Review*
 - d. The committee recommends to Strategic Planning Committee that under Goal 6A the second objective about professional development opportunities for faculty sponsors to be created and offered by Spring 2017 be moved to a more appropriate committee or task force (Convention? Regents?)

- e. The committee notes that Strategic Plan 6A, the 4th bullet point (create and launch a journal dedicated to collaborative research between faculty, students, alumni) is not currently being discussed in the Communications Committee because a separate task force has been created to accomplish this objective. However, after January 15, 2017, this committee will review the report from the task force for discussion at or before the Spring 2017 Board meeting.
2. **Second Fall Focus:** Analyze the implications of the organization's analytics on communication publications/decisions, and discuss & make recommendations for website and blog (and possible migration to a new platform) with goal of improving communicating with all constituents.
 - a. The committee notes that much of this analysis falls also under the review of the Strategic Plan, Goal 6B.
 - b. The social mediums currently in use by the Society include the following: Linked In, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, Snap Chat, Wordy by Nature blog, Sigma Tau Delta website (English.org), e-mail with eNews, SEO.
 - c. Over the summer, the Society website became web responsive, a move prompted by the data showing that 1/3 of Society members view the website on their phones.
 - d. Elfi reported that the Society is moving towards systems to allow students to enroll online. We are looking at invitation based systems in which students will have their own account for life and will be responsible for updating contact information. The change is anticipated within the next year.
 - e. Elfi reported on the analyses done on the various communication mediums, including the journals (see details of the analytics in Elfi's report to the Board). At this meeting, the committee declines to make any additional recommendations based on these analytics other than to support the conclusions drawn by Elfi and others in the Central Office.
 - f. NEHS website has not been updated since 2009. Elfi will work with Dave to update the NEHS website by December.
 3. The committee discussed the **Society journals**.
 - a. A common misperception is that the graduate student submissions pose unfair and/or excessive competition for the work of undergraduate students.
 - b. The data shows that graduate student submissions and acceptances constitute a small percentage of the works submitted and accepted. One out of 39 accepted works for the current *Rectangle* was written by a graduate student. In the current *Review*, two of thirteen works are by graduate students.
 4. The committee discussed the **Literary Arts Journal Awards** and the low number of applicants and that applications seem to be coming from the same schools. The committee decided to survey the 404 schools that submitted a recent Chapter Annual Report. Of those schools, 96 stated that they have some connection to a literary arts journal. The survey will ask questions similar to those on the Literary Arts Journal Award application. By asking questions to learn the extent of involvement of Sigma Tau Delta members in these schools' journals, we will simultaneously encourage more submissions from more schools. The survey will invite schools to apply for the Literary Arts Journal Award by the November 7 deadline.