

Minutes of the Spring 2015 Board Meeting of the Communications Committee (“the Committee”)

Ongoing 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; to accept applications for and recommend winners of the annual Outstanding Literary Arts Journal awards; to accept applications for and recommend winners of Chapter Blog or Website awards.

Board/Staff Members Present: Chair, Andrea Ivanov-Craig (Far Western Regent); Carrie Fitzpatrick (Vice-President); Katherine Williams (Student Advisor); Robert Durborow (Student Advisor); Crystal Stone (Northeastern SR); Stephanie Laszik (Southwestern SR); Matthew Drollette (Far Western SR); Hannah Clark (High Plains SR); Deb Seyler (CO Staff); Bil Johnston (Executive Director); Karlyn Crowley (outgoing Managing Editor of *The Review* and *The Rectangle*); Dan Colson (incoming Managing Editor of *The Review* and *The Rectangle*);

Committee Minutes

1. New Business

- Karlyn Crowley was thanked for her work as the Managing Editor of *The Review* and *The Rectangle*. Her parting words included the suggestion that the Society develop a guiding philosophy for all communicative output of the Society. Such a philosophy should determine public statements, what is published when and by whom.
- In connection with the need for a communications philosophy, Deb Seyler brought up the opportunity of the venue of online education, citing the 350 inductees of Southern New Hampshire University, the newest and largest online chapter. Seyler also mentioned that the University has a campus chapter, which is now facing challenges and opportunities presented by the online component.
- Dan Colson, from Emporia State University in Kansas was introduced as the newly hired new Managing Editor of *The Review* and *The Rectangle*. After speaking about his current research interests and a little more about himself, he thanked the committee and the Society and expressed his interest to apply his efforts to learning the job and keeping the same quality of output. He was directed to ask Shannon Schroeder- and Bil Johnson for any questions relating to the budget of the two journals.
- Next, the Committee discussed the Society Blog output and participation. Stephanie Laszik was positive about the blog output, and echoing her remarks Katherine Williams added that we need to streamline the editing process. Robert Duborow mentioned that there exists no real plan for how many blogs need to be published per month or year. Katherine Williams stated that some of that information will be contained in the student orientation manual. Still, we need a plan. Carrie Fitzpatrick expressed the need for a regular presence online, which would suggest a minimum of a one blog per week. It is estimated that only five had been published so far this year.
- The discussion turned to the possibility of hiring an editor for the blog. Karlyn suggested that such duties could be part of a more comprehensive position of a director or an assistant director to the current Director of Communications; or rather, that such decisions about how many blogs are posted would be part of an overall communications philosophy. Carrie Fitzpatrick mentioned that a proposal was forthcoming from the

Executive Committee to create a half-time position to give Social Media assistance. The following recommendation was drafted and later emailed to the Board:

- RECOMMENDATION to the Board: The Communications Committee recommends that a manager of social media be hired to work in collaboration with the current Director of Communications to plan, develop and oversee communications within the Society, especially Social Media. Such a position would include devising and creating an overall communications philosophy that expresses the mission of the Society and from which all plans and management of communications within the Society might be shaped. Job duties would include working with student leadership to ensure regular and coordinated blog submissions, style guidelines and submission procedures, Facebook coordination and administration delegation, and membership targeting, all in order to recruit members and accommodate the diverse audiences and needs of the Society.
- Further discussion about the frequency and nature of the blog posts ensued. Tim Leonard shared his region's experience, and members agreed that student leaders still need to do a blog as part of their responsibilities. Matthew Drollette brought up that blogs should follow a true and recognizable blog format, and Tim Leonard reiterated the need for regions to post blogs regularly. Crystal Stone recommended that blogs be drawn from diverse sources (already published) as well as contain diverse content, such as cartoons and advice on getting jobs. Robert Duborow stated that such diverse content could be supported and yet still retain the traditional blog format, including links. It was suggested at this point that the website needs a clearer and more visible and accessible announcement about who can submit blogs. To sum up, the need for an overall communications philosophy and related position was reiterated. It is hoped that the position recommendation coming out of the Executive Committee will approach or simulate a half-time position equivalent to a Social Media director, but more importantly, that such a position will also stimulate progress on the articulation of an overall Communications philosophy.
- The Committee briefly discussed the Society blog style sheet guidelines. The sheet still hasn't been officially approved by the Board. The Chair of the Committee at first recommended a subcommittee draft a motion to insert language regarding the CO's concern regarding editing done beforehand and that posts be submitted a minimum of four working days before publication deadlines. However, in light of the anticipated new position coming out of the Executive Committee, the Chair of the Communications Committee decided to cancel the need for a subcommittee or motion to revise the blog style guidelines until the new position was recommended, approved and eventually filled.
- The Literary Arts Journal Awards were announced for this year: \$350 went to *The Lyre* from Greensboro College, and \$100 went to *Lines From the Middle of Nowhere* from Fort Hays State University. The Chair of the Committee explained that these were the only journals submitted and the judging committee felt that neither met the past quality standards of a first-place \$500 award. It was mentioned that the low number of submissions is a serious concern. It was recommended that past winners of the contest might be invited to participate in future Convention workshops on how to enter and submit current literary arts journals in this contest. This topic could also be addressed by

student leadership. As always, the need for better advertising through Social Media was agreed upon. Some discussion regarding the problem of not just with number of submissions but also of the quality of the submissions occurred. While student run journals are usually not as good as professional journals, there are still some that achieve considerable overall quality and that fact should be rewarded and recognized.

- The meeting time allotted having expired, the Committee adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted on April 3, 2015: Andrea Ivanov-Craig