

Service and Partnerships Committee

March 29, 2023

Present: Felicia Steele (chair); Elfi Gabriel; Kevin Stemmler; DeAndra Miller; Autumn Koors Foltz; Deane Reaves; Chris Lockwood; Kaitlynn Sass

Meeting Agenda:

1) Approve minutes (which I hope to find/reconstruct prior to our meeting)

Old Business

2) Report on numbers for awards cycle this year for internships as well as reflections on the procedure for evaluation

3) Extending service and creating a guide to chapter service. Discuss subcommittee for analyzing material drawn from yearly chapter reports and from the website.

New Business

4) Discuss potential new partners in light of the 100th anniversary convention. Discuss subcommittee for creating additional partnerships.

Minutes:

- Opened with introductions.
- We have four partnerships and internships that we support.
 - The largest of these is the Penguin internship.
 - The NCTE internship provides a technical writing opportunity; we collect the applications but their committee makes the final judgement.
 - An Imagination Library internship is being cultivated but is currently on hold for the moment.
 - We also have an internship stipend that allows us to assist students who would otherwise not be able to afford to do an internship.
 - At the fall board meeting, the committee worked to revise the language of this award.
 - Applications have been low for this; we typically get between three and ten; we received six this cycle.
 - These can be either in-person or virtual.
 - Autumn mentioned that one of the issues we discussed in the fall was that the quality of the applications were not always great or in line with the criteria we were looking for.
 - Now that the guidelines have been revised, Felicia and Elfi mentioned that this issue seems to be mostly fixed.
 - Felicia also made an increased effort to connect with the organizations people were applying to in order to help make sure the opportunities were legitimate and to clarify what the award is supposed to do.

- Kevin also mentioned they saw more diversity in the applications.
- Felicia reported that Penguin has moved to a partially remote model as a company.
 - Only half the employees are in the office two to three days; the rest are remote all the time.
 - This means that most of the internships will now also be remote.
 - That helps with the diversity of the applicants that we are able to recommend to the position.
 - This cycle, there were 139 applications. Felicia then goes through and does a first cut to help gauge who is really taking this opportunity seriously.
 - This got the 139 down to around 70 people. Those applications then went out to reviewers. Felicia noted that the time turnaround for reviewers is very short.
 - We ended up with four priority applicants from schools all around the country. The scores were very close or identical and Felicia re-read the applicants to help narrow it down further. This broke down to three undergraduate students and one graduate student.
 - Students now apply to us and to Penguin directly. Felicia has offered to do a mock interview with each of the candidates to help them prepare.
 - We did not place anyone in the fall, but we did place someone in the spring.
 - Interns are paid \$20 an hour by Penguin; summer interns get \$750 on top of what they are paid by the company.
 - The amount we pay them has gone down since they are remote and don't have the same expenses as if they were in person.
 - Elfi mentioned that Penguin does use their internship as a kind of feeder system for their new employees.
 - They want people that they bring on to be able to be potential hires.
 - Elfi said that our Penguin contact or a representative may come to the next Convention.
 - Kevin stressed that this would be great for both students to meet someone they may work with but also for Penguin to see the kind of excitement that we have for this opportunity within the Society.
 - Felicia said that we need to be very clear about who this internship is for.
 - She has seen an uptick in the number of career changers and students from distance learning programs applying; these have been being filtered out.
 - There are also a larger number of graduate students showing interest; Kevin mentioned it might be worthwhile to see about setting up a separate opportunity for this demographic.

- Elfi stressed that Penguin is mainly looking for undergraduate students.
 - Felicia mentioned that these applications take a lot of time, so we want to make sure people know that they are eligible and are not wasting their own time.
 - DeAndra asked about finding new kinds of opportunities for graduate students and alumni; this may also allow for the Penguin internship to just be for undergraduate students.
 - Felicia also said that we are trying to be better about finding out if any Sigma Tau Delta students apply directly to Penguin and are placed if we did not recommend them.
- Kevin asked if it has changed that they no longer automatically take one of our people.
 - Felicia said that has not been the case since 2007.
- Kevin also brought up the question of if we need to change the language of the advertisement to better hone the kind of applicants we are getting.
- Felicia said that Norton is interested in a partnership for a remote internship; ADE may also be interested.
- Kevin also said that he may have other contacts for smaller presses that may want to work with us, particularly in YA publishing.
 - Felicia and Kevin will work over the summer to gather new opportunities.
- Felicia wondered if it might be worthwhile for our committee to set up a kind of moral guideline that we would want to follow with any internship we enter into.
- We should also think about the ways these partnerships can benefit us and the companies beyond internships to encourage dual promotion.
- Felicia stressed that we also want to consider ways we can promote chapter service.
 - Elfi has created a spreadsheet with all of the chapter reports.
 - Reports of what people are doing can be found on the website.
 - Chris noted that NEHS has started a chapter spotlight program to feature what some people are doing.
 - He noted that the problem is that chapters are doing lots of stuff; they just don't tell people about it.
 - They offer chapters a \$50 prize for contributing to put toward their next project and then shout them out on social media and elsewhere.
 - Felicia said that we also have the chapter project grants that have not always gotten a lot of applications.
 - She wondered if we would be able to award less than what they asked for to help be able to spread the funding around more.
 - Sometimes the budgets are lacking.
 - Elfi asked if we could give people the opportunity to improve their application if we find them acceptable but they need just a little bit more work.

- Kevin suggested if they do not lay out their budget very clearly, we could always give a portion of the money they want to help jumpstart a project.
 - It could be clarified in their award letter that it would be good in the future to include a more itemized budget.
 - Felicia noted that them getting the money is contingent on them completing the project, which has made it hard to do partial awards.
 - Jeannine suggested creating a template for a budget that people could use.
 - Elfi wondered about using the chapter spotlight model as a starting point. People could start a project, submit what they are working on, and then show they have something to build on. The funding would be more of a second stage.
 - We could add a piece that explicitly states that recipients have to show evidence that they used the funds and/or have a strong record of chapter service.
 - This could work in two ways – as reimbursement for work that has already been done, or as incentive or starting money for new projects.
 - Elfi suggested adding the word ‘service’ to the project grant itself to help emphasize the importance of the word.
 - Felicia wrote to chapter advisors who have won this in the past to help gather more judges.
 - There was a discussion of replacing the need for the letter from the organization you are working for with a description of service.
 - Description of the role of service in your chapter. This description should address your chapter’s record of service in past years and your chapter’s intentions of service in the future.
 - We also need to think about if we want projects to be repeatable to show that this can be seed money.
 - Funds may be requested for projects in the planning stages.
 - Elfi suggested we may need to rewrite the whole description.
 - Kevin said we should share that with the SLs on the committee and maybe the larger group of student leaders to make sure it seems feasible and straightforward.
 - Elfi and Felicia will work together to start the work on that.
 - Felicia wants to move the link to past projects from the end of the page to the top.
- We are changing the title to chapter service project grants.
- We are also getting rid of Criterion 4 and changing it to a description or intent of service.