

THE QUEEN'S JOURNAL ADVISORY BOARD

Monday, November 23, 2020

Motion #1 – Sonya Patel for Chair of the Board

Christine Mao withdrew her name from consideration for Chair of the Board.

Official Motion: That Sonya Patel, *The Journal's* Fundraising Representative, become Chair of The Journal Advisory Board for the 2020-21 year

All present voting members voted in favour. Motion is passed.

Journal Reports

Scace: I'll start off with the podcasts. The podcasts are both doing well, they've dipped off a bit in terms of listenership. Last week, we sold our first podcast advertisement to the AMS, promoting their 12 days of exam de-stressing event, a really exciting development. Raechel submitted the application to have Podcast Manager implemented as a position for next year. We are sensing the workload is a pretty significant load for our Videos team, and so this is going to be a huge boost for our team to be able to separate videos from podcasts, to have someone overseeing the content and the production.

Videos have been doing extremely well, we started posting them on Instagram and on Instagram TV, which is bumping up our overall views. Our Halloween walk video got 5300 views, our highest of the year by far. Our videos editor told us that on Facebook, the way they count views now is much more strict than it used to be. So if you look back on older *Journal* videos, you'll see a bunch of videos that have a whack load of views, but it doesn't mean we're doing worse this year, just that we're likely getting quality views.

Website analytics: when I checked today, we're pretty much at 836,000 for the year. That's 55.3% better than this time last year. We expect to hit a million page views in mid-January, with AMS election season coming up. Last year, they hit that mark in early to mid-March. I explained this last J-Board, November has been a bit of a slower month comparatively, we had 156,000 and 172,000 hits over September and October respectively, and we're at 91,000 with a week to go in November. We're still 22% better than this time last year for November, so we're still really happy with that.

In terms of the distribution of the paper, the actual physical copy, it's the same as last update; the campus is still quite quiet. Juniper Cafe and more high traffic areas are still proving to be really strong for us. They're always empty of the newspapers. I'll be interested to see what happens in the winter; I don't really know what to expect. I have a sense some people might be hankering to get out of the house and study somewhere like Stauffer or CoGro in the ARC, so as long as things stay under control in Kingston COVID-wise, I think we'll see similar pickup rates. In terms of the number of copies we've been distributing, 1500 is our base, so we can't really go below that. I think we've been at a comfortable position with that number of copies.

The last thing is social media strategy. We've been doing Instagram takeovers with staff,

which I think have been really good for engagement. We've been seeing clicks on the website from Instagram, which is obviously a new thing, because in the past we've been pretty sporadic with Instagram posting. Our schedule is sort of served up by our production schedule, so we have our Production Manager posting postscripts and features on the weekend mornings. On Saturday we'll have a postscript, and Sunday a feature. Based on the number of likes and feedback we've gotten on those stories, they've been doing really well. We also had a post with original photos from the Anthony Aust vigil, which was also well-received. Linktree has been strong for us, and Facebook and Twitter also doing well. That's from me. Raechel?

Huizinga: I'll start with the newsletter, Campus Catch-Up. We're currently at 724 subscribers, this is an increase of 43 since our last meeting on October 19th. Pretty much right after we had that meeting we were able to set up a pop-up form on the site. When a user goes to our site, a box pops up asking them to subscribe to the newsletter, which is pretty much the main reason we've seen so many subscribers since our last meeting. For context, 36, out of the 43 new subscribers signed up through the pop-up form, and that works both on desktop and mobile. So that's been really good, and had no financial implications. We're on track to exceed our target of 800 subscribers by May 1. Just a side note, since we have a print circulation of 1500 copies, the long term goal is to get the newsletter to 1500 subscribers. Once we hit 2000, we'll have to start paying a monthly fee, but that's just going to be around \$10 a month, something that future Editors will have to budget for.

On to the website. We had a meeting with our website person, Stewart, on November 9, to talk about some goals for our website, especially our mobile version of the site. These are the upgrades we talked about: we want a slider for our featured stories at the top of the homepage, which is the way it looks like on the desktop, but we also want it on mobile as opposed to having them stacked, which is what they are now; we want to drop headline font, kind of inspired by the look of *The Harvard Crimson*, which is the student newspaper at Harvard University. Stuart is currently figuring out whether there is going to be any financial costs associated with these upgrades, and then he's going to give us a quote if there are any. If it's not something that's feasible for this year, then we'll just make sure when we transition next year's Editors they're aware of these goals *The Journal* should be working towards, because people are going to be looking at the news on their phones for probably the rest of time.

In terms of structural updates, today, as Matt said, I submitted a proposal for a Podcast Coordinator for next year, Volume 149. I also submitted a proposal for a Social Media Manager for next year, I think those are two really important positions in building our digital presence. As we transition away from print, we really need to build up that strong digital foundation, and these are positions that are going to help us do that. We've opened applications for our QTBIPOC Advisory Board over the past few weeks, and we have selected three students for that Board. We will be having our first meeting sometime before the end of this semester. I'm also writing a proposal for those to be honorarium positions for next year, and I will have that submitted before the deadline next Monday. Matt and I are going to take the winter break to write up some internal policy documents to have them ready for the AMS Board of Directors for the January meeting. If you were at the last meeting, you'll remember Jordan [Nensi] was discussing with us making some changes so *The Journal* has more autonomy in some of the things it does. We have met with him since then and figured out how we can do that, we just have to hunker down and

write up some documents that we haven't had time to do yet. We are going to do this over the break so it'll be ready for next semester.

We'll be having our virtual Alumni day this upcoming Saturday, and this is our last week of publication for the term, we will put out our last paper this week, and then we'll be back in January. That's all for me.

Mao: On the business side of things, it's really been slowing down. I see a 50% decrease in our target goal right now. We've made roughly \$9,000 in revenue. However, clients are picking up and taking interest in the winter term. So on the bright side of things, hopefully the winter term is going to be more positive. Continuing with what Matt mentioned about the podcast, I see that as another source of revenue. Hopefully, we'll add that to our website in the upcoming winter term and see how we can make that another strategic goal in bringing in business for *The Journal*. That's it on my side of things. Thank you.

Perry: Just a question, Christine. When you're calling the customers and you know, cold calling, and just checking on whether they're interested in putting some advertising in, what generally are you hearing?

Mao: They're very hesitant. Knowing that there are not many students around and businesses are slowing down, not a lot of people are coming out, especially with the cold weather coming up, and they're just very, very, scared of advertising and especially taking interest in our print. Print has really been slowing down. A lot of our clients have shifted to our web advertising. But we don't make as much from web as we do from print. It's really difficult to get clients to stick to print; they'll just switch last minute. It's been really hard with print right now.

Perry: I'm sure. Thank you.

Scace: We'll move on to Sonia.

Patel: The last couple weeks, I've been really working on changing my ways of reaching out to people, because in COVID, we're sending out emails and messages as usual, but I've found that because people are so overwhelmed with the number of emails and Zooms they're going through, you're not getting a lot of responses that I did see in September. With the whole issue that we had with AMS Advancement, it became a little bit of a struggle, because I kind of dropped off the map and there wasn't able to reach out to them. So I started really tailoring the way how I talked to certain people, depending on whether they're alumni or they've been donors in the past, I've created a structured email for each kind of different individual so that if they do decide to reach out, we have quick responses ready for them. I've reached out to alumni from QJ, and as well as people from Queens University that have reached out. I've tried getting them interested in Campus Catch-up, and as well, the newsletter that Rachel and I will be working on going forward that will be more directed to external members of the community. And I've been working with Christine, anything that she needs help with in terms of business administration work, I'm hoping to work with her on that going forward.

Now that we've restarted on donations, I'm going to start working more with AMS Advancement to see if there are any connections there that we can build. Other than that, I have talked to Rachel and Matt a little bit about changes to the website that we're hoping to make to

have the donation recruitment on the website a little bit more prominent, just because you have to go from page to page to find it right now. And since we direct everyone to that specific button or through AMS Advancement, it's a little bit harder to understand where it is. The goal is getting either direct link on the front page of the mobile and desktop versions of the website, either making that more prominent, or finding a direct link that we can use when we're reaching out to people, it may be a little bit more accessible and make people more willing to donate. The last thing that I'm going to be looking into the second semester is the fundraiser QJ usually does in the spring term. As you know, Toronto is currently on full lockdown, which makes things very, very difficult. We talked about an online workshop. Rachel and I had talked a little bit about doing almost like a workshop events where we have bigger alumni and bigger donors come in, so it's more like a meet and greet kind of situation. Obviously, it will be virtual. But in the past, this type of event has worked, so we're hoping that will bring in some donations to *The Journal*. That's all from me.

Perry: I apologize if you said this, but has the University Advancement team now got themselves going? And you're working with them? Do they have a program where they're reaching out to alumni?

Patel: I haven't heard. I've heard from *The Journal* Editors that I'm allowed to go ahead and continue the work we were doing before, but I haven't heard anything directly. Have you, Raechel and Matt?

Huizinga: Not exactly. We've reached out about the changes we want for the About Us page that they have on the Gift to Queens website. We submitted the application after everything was sorted out and we signed stuff, but haven't really heard from them since then.

Samoyloff

AMS Reports

Samoyloff: Not a lot of major applicable J-Board updates for you, but I'm glad to see everyone here today. Currently, we're revisiting all of the AMs student activity fees for the winter rebate period. I know we chatted about that last month, but more likely than not QJ will not be participating in this rebate period, as they're on track with their budget and we're not really projecting a huge surplus for the service. We're not really worried about that element of QJ.

We're also working on a few things internally within the Human Rights Office to improve services across the board, including the Queen's journal, but nothing super concrete to report on that at the moment, as things really finalized early. That's incredibly vague, and I apologize, but all that is to say that I'll be updating you on the changes in the near future, and I'm just kind of putting on everyone's radar that it's happening.

And finally, to keep it very short, just a small thank you and congratulations to the QJ team. I think it's been an incredible semester so far for the papers and online engagement; I think it's been pretty incredible to see how much growth has happened in such a short time and all the new amazing things that have kind of been coming from it, like the podcasts, amazing to see. Good luck on the last issue of the term, which is very exciting. Thank you for listening, I'm happy to take questions.

Statements by Members

No statements.

Discussion Period

Scace: We're gonna bring some stuff up in January when it makes more sense to get things rolling, but I think right now is a good time: does anybody have any thoughts on fundraising ideas, given the environment we're in?

Samoyloff: One question: what were the kinds of activities that took place last year? I know that's pretty difficult because it probably won't apply, but I'm curious to see what the scope on fundraising looked like.

Huizinga: Yeah, so I guess I can talk a little bit about that. Some of you might be aware that we had to raise a lot of money last year because of the Student Choice Initiative and the huge deficit. That was something Meredith really went after last year, because it was a much bigger issue last year than it is this year. From my memory, in terms of like events, they had that thing in Toronto, and a couple of movie nights in Toronto, like journalism movies, and that didn't make a ton of money, but the fundraising gala was a big success.

Brainstorming for this year, Sonya and I were kind of going off this idea that Golden Words had last year where they had writers from *The Beaverton* come in and give a presentation workshop event and they sold tickets. Hopefully, we'll make some money from something like that, as well as just soliciting some of the more notable alumni, and the alumni newsletter, which hopefully will start going out December or January. We'll have options like donating \$10, \$20. I think that would be the types of fundraising we have on the table right now, but we're open to more ideas for things to do in a virtual setting.

Question Period

No questions.

Adjournment of Journal Board

Scace: Okay, we will close it off there. I thank you, everyone, for coming. Again, as always, really appreciate it and enjoy the rest of your week.

Meeting adjourned.