

Journal Advisory Board: Volume 151 Meeting Minutes
Sunday, July 9, 2023

Attendees:

- Manal Shah, Chair of Journal Advisory Board & Business Manager
- Cassidy McMackon, Editor in Chief
- Asbah Ahmad, Editor in Chief
- Sophia Coppolino, Editorial Representative
- Jeff Gray, Alumni (Editor in Chief 1994-95)
- Heather Evans, Faculty Advisor
- Lyn Parry, AMS General Manager
- Michelle Hudson, AMS Vice-President (Operations)
- Niki Boytchuck-Hale, AMS Board of Directors Representative
- Samia Khan, Graduate Student Representative
- Victoria Da Silva, Undergraduate Student Representative
- Tina Hashemi, Undergraduate Student Representative
- Monica Aida Lopez, Undergraduate Student Representative

Motion 1: Approval of the Agenda for the March 6, 2023 Journal Advisory Board

In favour: All

Opposed: None

Abstentions: None

Motions passes.

Motion 2: Approval of the Agenda for the July 9, 2023 Journal Advisory Board

In favour: All

Opposed: None

Abstentions: None

Motions passes.

JOURNAL REPORT: EDITOR(S) IN CHIEF — ASBAH AHMAD & CASSIDY MCMACKON

Cassidy: On the editorial side of things, press is proceeding well. We put out the first two issues of Vol. 151, and are primed for the July issue, set to be published on July 31. This will be *The Journal's* annual First Year in Focus issue.

New BST section is going well, we will be moving to hire the first editors for the section later in this meeting in the new business portion of the meeting

Coming into our role as editors, we faced several significant issues, with substantial threats to *The Journal's* editorial autonomy and position as an educational resource for Queen's students being of particular concern

Issues with Website

Cassidy: *The Journal* got a new website this year, which was supposed to go live on May 15, although it was published three weeks early.

There were several significant issues with the website, including stories not being properly migrated over, author pages disappearing, and stories being assigned to the wrong authors. These mistakes posed significant financial and legal risk to *The Journal*, given that these mistakes reduced the paper's professional appearance on the website and thus detracting potential advertisers, and attributed opinions to individuals who did not express these opinions.

The consultation process for acquiring the website was quite disappointing, particularly due to a lack of written contract with a signature of approval from any past *Journal* editor, which was something we learned after a meeting with the AMS on May 11. This poses significant threats to *The Journal's* editorial autonomy, given that both *Journal* policy and AMS bylaw 13 states that *Journal* editors have the right to control all content and platforms through which *The Journal* publishes. Given that *The Journal* is a digital first publication, full control over the website is an utmost necessity for the service.

To mitigate issues with the website, we have been in touch with Jumphost to fix technical issues with the website. We're largely happy with the assistance we've received on that front. We're also meeting with the Marketing Officer to make design changes to the website to ensure the site adheres to industry standards and are in the process of developing a new wireframe for the website's design. The AMS is footing the bill for any technical changes that are revenue generating, however all costs pertaining to aesthetic changes on the website are coming out of *The Journal's* budget. This is an unexpected cost we will be dealing with this year.

Whig Internship

Asbah: *The Journal* has had a longstanding relationship with *The Kingston Whig Standard*, with three *Journal* staffers participating in an internship over the summer. This internship has changed over time, and the current internship sends the Editor(s) in Chief and/or Managing Editor (when applicable) and Senior News Editor on a six-week reporting internship over the summer. In the event any of these folks decline the internship, the position goes to another member of *Journal* staff, with the staffer being selected through an internal hiring process handled by the Editors in Chief.

In April 2023, we reached out to the previous VPOPs to get settled for proceeding with the internship. We had reached out to Steve Service (the *Whig's* Editor in Chief) expressing our interest in continuing with the program. He was happy to continue the partnership on his end as well, and we were waiting to get in touch with the VPOPs to approve sending *Journal* staff to the *Whig*, since the AMS funds this internship for staffers.

After not hearing back from the AMS after our term began, we were contacted and asked to rewrite a contract for the *Journal/Whig* partnership to continue, with one of the terms of the contract being the *Whig* pay for 50 per cent of staffer's wages. We initially agreed to proceeding as outlined by the AMS.

Four weeks after sending the initial contract out and after several follow ups with Serviss, we learned *The Whig* couldn't fund *The Journal's* internships this summer due to budgetary realities and the closure of their fiscal year.

To save the internship, we developed a new contract with the help of the VPOPs that stated the AMS would fund the internships.

Editors will be working with *Whig* Editor in Chief Steve Serviss to find grant money to better finance the relationship between *The Journal* and *The Whig*. We're very grateful to be continuing the internship this year, and we will work very hard to ensure this partnership continues in the future.

It is worth emphasizing that the ongoing relationship with *The Whig* is the reason why so many Queen's grads enter into the journalism industry after graduating from Queen's. *The Whig* internship is one of the biggest benefits for working at *The Journal*. While *The Journal* does exceptionally well at teaching students the necessary skills for working in journalism and communications—whether or not folks at the AMS or students at Queen's believe that's the case—the internship with *The Whig* is the reason why Queen's grads get jobs at major publications right after graduation since it gives *Journal* staffers the opportunity to work for a daily publication, which otherwise wouldn't be available to them. *Journal* alumni are currently employed by the *Toronto Star*, *Globe and Mail*, Postmedia, CBC, Reuters, and several other major publications. As such, it's ultimately in the AMS's best interest to sustain this ongoing relationship from both an education perspective and the perspective of maintaining good alumni relations.

JDUC Move

Cassidy: *The Journal* is set to move out of 190 University Avenue after the JDUC redevelopment wraps. We initially believed we would be moving into a space in the new JDUC building, however recently learned that the *Journal* will be relegated to a room A620 in the Queen's Centre.

We recently took a tour of this space in June. On this tour, we learned room A620 is a club room that has an occupancy rate of 19 people, which is problematic for *The Journal*. For context, *The Journal* currently employs 35 staffers who all use the space on press days, and quorum for editorial board is 19 people. In our term thus far, we've come to realize that several AMS staffers don't recognize how heavily the house is utilized because much of *The Journal's* working hours fall outside of the regular AMS 9 to 5 working hours, and it's fundamentally important to note that the *Journal* offices are heavily used by all staff throughout the year.

In conversations with the VPOPs, we've realized the space is not adequate for housing *The Journal* in years to come.

The AMS also conducted a housing audit in 2013-14, which specifically states the size of any space given to *The Journal* should remain the same or be larger, so long as the house sufficiently

supports *The Journal's* operations. This is given that the current house is smaller than the previous Earl St. location.

While we don't expect to be kicked out of 190 University soon, we spend roughly \$2,200 monthly on rent, and would like to be allocating these expenses elsewhere. We also have reason to believe the University will be issuing eviction notices to occupants of community housing in the future, as the University has been doing so to create more office space.

The current contract for 190 University Avenue does provide protection for the space given the historical context.

We are actively looking for solutions to ensure *The Journal* moves into a space that can adequately support *The Journal's* operations. We hope to move forward by working with the AMS executive to advocate for better student spaces in the JDUC, as the redevelopment project was funded with student dollars and student services deserve to be in this space.

ORT and First Year in Focus issue

Cassidy: This year, we are working with the AMS and ORT to distribute copies of the First Year in Focus issue in residence rather through the first-year kits that are distributed by ORT.

This is in part due to strict rules and pressure from the University on the contents of the first-year kit, and we don't want to be spending money as sponsors if there is a chance the paper will be turned away.

There was some tension between ORT and *The Journal* due to the contracts drafted by ORT. Most notably, ORT wished to pre-screen content and wished to be involved with the grievances process, which is not possible under *Journal* policy and the AMS bylaws.

We learned recently that last year's team allowed ORT to review the paper prior to publication. This is gross misconduct, and we are appalled to learn about this.

We're concerned that the AMS hasn't been properly adhering to the AMS bylaws. It is imperative moving forward that the AMS recognizes its obligations to *The Journal*.

We're happy to be moving forward with ORT and ResSoc in this new arrangement yet remain concerned about the AMS and its respect of *The Journal's* editorial autonomy.

Current Initiatives/Operations Updates

Cassidy: The budget is underway. Numbers will reflect last year's actual revenue, but we are obviously looking to surpass last year's total revenue. We believe this should be feasible.

Asbah: We're working with Queen's advancement for fundraising. We've set a \$6,000 fundraising goal; we will be asking *Journal* alumni to donate \$15 for 150 years of *The Journal*.

If everyone donates, this will allow us to reach our fundraising goal. We're also working with Queen's advancement on a fundraising plan, which we expect to present later in the month.

New printer (Web News); returning to biweekly print! This printer is quite cost effective when compared with Metroland (our previous printer). We are working with our BM to ensure we're breaking even for all print issues, and are looking to include two full page ads in each print issue to do so. When budgeting for print, we are budgeting for the cost of a full colour, 16 page issue, which will reflect the maximum of what we will be spending. The cost of printing goes down if we reduce issues to 12 pages, or if half the issue appears in black and white. This will be noted in the budget.

In terms of web analytics, until May 22nd the website didn't properly register web analytics, and so numbers are following that.

We have some smaller updates as well. We're looking to purchase cameras to improve the working experience for staffers and reduce barriers to equipment access.

The Journal house recently got AC and is a safer workplace for staffers, since the house gets quite hot in the summer months.

We have also worked to upgrade the *Journal's* computers, which will significantly improve the workflow at the service.

Cassidy:

Social media engagement is very high right now. We have an overhaul of our social media channels planned. We are both pleased with the engagement on Instagram. The Pride issue got a lot of really good press from folks in the community. We've increased our Instagram follower count by 30 in the last week alone. For context, last year saw an average of 5 new followers each month. Also, the May issue had an article tweeted by Jonathan Kay, which increased engagement with *The Journal*. The same story was also picked up by *The National Post* and *The Whig*

We will be revisiting *The Journal's* TikTok account this year. Last month, the Senior News Editor posted a reel on Instagram and TikTok where she went over the most recent issue's headlines. This was enormously successful and is something we hope to continue.

The EICs oversaw managing the social media accounts until the first week of July, which was when our social media manager was onboarded. She's doing a good job so far after taking over Facebook and Twitter, and we will continue to monitor her progress as she gets onboarded to managing *The Journal's* Instagram account.

We have continued the Campus Catch Up newsletter this volume, and are excited for this initiative to grow during the academic year.

It's also worth noting we are monitoring the situation with Bill C18. We have yet to see how this new legislation will impact student media and if *The Journal* faces any risks from this, and we

will continue to monitor the situation closely.

Asbah: The Business, Science, & Technology Editor position passed at J-board in March, and the position was passed.

JOURNAL REPORT: BUSINESS MANAGER— MANAL SHAH

- Discrepancy in website advertising due transition to new website
- Updates to media kit (new packages and pricing)
- Current focus on selling print ads in July issue
- Two sales representatives hired and onboarded
- Talks with Juniper Café to include printed copies of *The Journal* at their location
 - Move good for selling ads for clients

AMS REPORT: AMS VICE-PRESIDENT (OPERATIONS)— MICHELLE HUDSON

- Shoutout to *The Journal* staff for building relationships with new AMS staff
- *Journal's* marketing plans have been approved.
- The budget is being presented to the AMS Board of Directors on July 23
- Excited for the opportunity for AMS staff to write op-eds for *The Journal*
- The AMS is promoting *The Journal* at SOAR and directing attendees to *The Journal* house.
- Exploring potential ad spaces for AMS in *Journal* print issue and on website.
- Moving forward, the AMS is ensuring there is written documentation for *The Journal's* website planning and changes to prevent miscommunications

AMS BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT: BOARD MEMBER— NIKI BOYTCHUCK-HALE

- Board approved terms of *The Journal's* financial probation for the fiscal year
- Board if aware it has been 5 years since the last update to *Journal* policy
 - Board wants J-Board to update *Journal* policy this upcoming year

Complaint

The Journal received a complaint regarding the news story *Commerce student arrested for trespassing in Goodes Hall* published to *The Journal's* website on June 26, 2023. Complainants, Jan and Janet Russel, requested *The Journal* issue a retraction for the story and remove it from the website because the article contained information they believed to be damaging to their daughter Jaclyn Russel's emotional wellbeing. J-Board heard the complaint and moved into a closed session to deliberate. J-Board voted not to retract the story.

Complaint Motion: That *The Journal* Advisory Board deny the complaint to retract the article 'Commerce student arrested for trespassing in Goodes Hall.'

Motioned by: Asbah Ahmad

Seconded by: Heather Evans

In favour: 8

Opposed: None

Abstentions: 1

Motions passes.

*Chair Manal Shah was absent during voting due to a conflicting commitment

Motion 3: That *The Journal* Advisory Board authorize the splitting of the Business, Science, and Technology editor position into two co-equal editorships, to be held by two separate individuals with an equal maximum honorarium remuneration of \$500

- Asbah: Passed by AMS Board of Directors in April
 - 2 exceptional candidates (one student commerce, one student in a science program)
 - Section with follow model similar to Features section with two co-editors
 - Splitting time commitment and honorarium
- Niki: Do the individuals know about the role being restructured?
 - Cassidy: Both candidates were contacted and are willing to work alongside each other.
 - Lyn: The proposal will have to be passed by AMS of Directors in July.
- Michelle: How will the candidates split the commitment?
 - Asbah: One candidate will focus on contributor outreach in the fall semester because she will be working remote while the other will focus on reporting

In favour: 8

Opposed: None

Abstentions: 1

Motions passes.

Discussion Period and Questions

- Niki: How will we be scheduling J-Board meetings moving forward?
 - Lyn: Summer by differ from academic year. We should hold meetings during the week, not the weekend, and have consistent time.
 - Sophia: We should schedule one meeting time for the fall and one meeting time for the winter to accommodate student schedules.
 - Asbah: We will give advance on meeting times moving forward.
- Lyn: Requested for greater discussion back-and-forth about the reports. Believed *The Journal's* report left the AMS looking poorly.
 - Cassidy: Any questions and concerns regarding the reports can be brought up during this time period.
- Sophia: *The Journal* will be following up on accommodation complaints and is improving the news training process to be more extensive.
- Niki: Will *The Journal* be returning to the language 'Frosh in Focus' for the July issue?
 - Asbah: No—the issue will be called First-year in Focus.

Adjournment of the Journal Board Advisory Board.