



2013-2014 Board of Publication Meeting

Topic: Silhouette Board of Publication Meeting 13-01
Date & Time: Thursday, October 3, 2013
11:30 am
Place: Boardroom, Room 201/E, McMaster University Student Centre

Items:	1) Adopt Agenda	- All
	2) Website Update	- Wolfe
	3) Tech Situation	- Wolfe
	4) Promotional Strategy	- Wolfe
	5) Approval of Publication Schedule	- Wolfe
	6) Information & Question Period	- All
	7) New Business	
	8) Adjournment	- Doucet

Motions:

Moved by Wolfe, **seconded** by _____ that the publication schedule be approved as presented.

MINUTES of a meeting of members of *The Silhouette* Board of Publication, held on **October 3, 2013** at the hour of 11:35 am local time, Boardroom, Room 201/E, McMaster University Student Centre.

Present: Mr. Jeffrey Doucet (Chair)
Mr. Eric Gillis (SRA Member)
Mr. Sandro Giordano (Manager, Underground Media and Design)
Mr. Scott Hastie (Managing Editor)
Mr. John McGowan (General Manager)
Ms. Elise Milani (Executive Board Member)
Mr. Andrew Terefenko (Production Editor)
Ms. Jemma Wolfe (Silhouette Executive Editor)

Others Present: Ms. Jessica Bauman (Administrative Assistant)

1. AGENDA

Add: Distribution

Adopted by General Consent

2. WEBSITE UPDATE

- Wolfe reported that the final funding for the website redevelopment was approved this morning at Executive Board. The major changes are for the website to support online advertisement, more interactive features, and a mobile optimized version.
- Doucet asked Giordano if he had the opportunity to look into managing online ads.
- Giordano stated that every site seems to run online ads differently. A previous Executive Editor who is now working for both *The Spectator* and *The Star* advised that online ads for those papers are a mess. Giordano noted he is still working on it. Giordano thinks he can sell more local advertising than some other schools, and would like to focus on the local impact and the local market. Anything *The Silhouette* would receive from a national advertising agency would be extra. Giordano stated the most important thing is to come up with a formula where the paper version is not affected.
- Doucet stated they have asked the developer to create a top banner as well as side banners, depending on the article. In the mock ups, the developer provided an idea of where the advertisements could be placed. Doucet stated it makes sense for the large advertisements that are sold each week to be pushed to the online site.
- Giordano had been thinking about the idea of rotating ads, and how can the MSU maximize profit and usefulness. Giordano stated these are all things to consider when creating a formula.
- Milani asked why ads are required on the website when student fees are collected to fund *The Silhouette*.
- Wolfe explained that revenue from print ads is down dramatically, and a large portion of her budget is based on revenue from ad sales.
- Doucet added that he would like the site to be in line with industry standards.
- Wolfe noted that the site would not have pop up ads, nor would it be inundated with ads.
- Terefenko stated that paid advertisements make the site seem more legitimate and less like a blog.
- Gillis stated there are online ad programs that generate revenue based on viewings, such as Google Ads. Gillis ran a community forum of 100 people, and the ad revenue generated was enough to sustain the hosting fees. Gillis stated the user base for The Sil's website would be higher.

- Doucet suggested that if the site is live before an online ad strategy has been developed, that Google Ads be used to see what the traffic and click through numbers are like. This will help to determine if it is worth marketing to local companies or to stick with Google Ads.
- Wolfe added that she would like to make sure the ads are appropriate, and curate the ads to the student visitors.
- McGowan asked if there was a timeline from the developer for when the site will be live.
- Wolfe stated the estimated turnaround would be thirty days.
- McGowan asked when the launch date would be. He would like the messaging to be consistent.
- Wolfe stated that if the site is not ready for a mid-November launch, she would like to hold off on launching the new site. Wolfe wants to advertise and make the launch of the new website meaningful.
- Gillis asked if a specific mock up was chosen.
- Wolfe stated she was not provided with a variety. The developer submitted mock ups of a number of pages, all in the same stylistic vein. Wolfe stated there are things she would like to see altered, and will be working with the developer to make those changes.

3. TECH SITUATION

- Wolfe advised that The Sil moved to a new tech support company, WWWorks. The transition is almost complete, and should be wrapped up by the end of next week. Wolfe stated her experience with WWWorks so far has been great. The newsroom is fully functioning again, and WWWorks took care of a number of computer and server issues. The Sil is on a service contract now, as opposed to paying on a case-by-case basis, which is what the paper was on before. Wolfe stated she was able to use WWWorks' emergency services last night, and the problem was solved quickly.
- Terefenko added that the services are not intrusive and do not interfere with production.
- Wolfe stated WWWorks seems to care a lot more about the paper and the work that the staff are doing.

4. PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY

- Wolfe stated she is getting volunteer shirts that will be given away at the Homecoming Expo and the photo booth at the football game on Saturday. Wolfe stated this is one of the ways The Sil will be trying to push their brand this year.
- McGowan asked if there were any ways to acknowledge volunteer contributions.
- Wolfe thought about giving the volunteers the promotional shirts, or they could create a specific shirt for volunteers.
- Milani asked about other promotional goals for the year.
- Wolfe stated she would like to increase the awareness of The Sil on campus as a place to turn to for news. Wolfe also wants to see the paper become more collaborative. Students think that they have to apply to be a paid editor in order to write for The Sil, and she wants students to know that the paper is more accessible and that they are a part of its success.
- Milani stated she likes the idea of promoting the fact that students can write for The Sil.

5. DISTRIBUTION

- Giordano stated he would be interested in doing an audit of the racks. Giordano stated that a few years ago, a deal was negotiated for The Sil to receive 44 new racks. Giordano would like to see how many racks are still in place. Giordano added that Athletics & Recreation have commented that the

racks in athletics buildings are always empty. Giordano stated it is important that we know where all of the racks are so that they can be filled. Giordano would also like to see which racks are more popular and require filling more often. Two racks went to Fortinos, and Giordano has not seen them there, so he would like to know where they went. Giordano stated he would like to consider expanding downtown and to other areas where students are living.

- Hastie noted that a number of other schools have their papers in local bars and other places. Hastie thought that local establishments are an untapped market.
- Gillis asked if there were any downtown locations currently.
- Giordano noted that there used to be racks downtown, but was unsure if they were still there. There have been requests from McMaster Innovation Park for racks and hopes to have racks at the new downtown location. Giordano stated it is important to know if we will need to purchase new racks or if there are racks that can be reallocated to new locations. Most importantly, the paper needs to be visible and students need to have the chance to pick up a copy.
- Doucet stated that the number of papers being printed each week needed to be established. Currently, 10,000 copies are being printed each week, and Doucet is unsure where that number came from. Doucet added he is not a fan of the home delivery of The Sil.
- Milani thought that the home delivery was wasteful.
- Doucet stated it would be better to put those papers into a key location than on front steps where they are not being read.
- Gillis suggested looking into getting a rack at the Macnab bus terminal.
- Wolfe stated the survey needed to be re-launched to see those results, and then the costs could be shifted. Wolfe stated the Distribution Coordinator is currently taking notes about where papers are being picked up. She is aware of the athletic buildings, as someone reached out directly to Hastie.
- Giordano stated he would be happy to go around with the Distribution Coordinator, once she is comfortable, to help map the racks and see where changes are needed.
- McGowan noted it is great to see where The Sil is now.
- Wolfe agreed that completely reevaluating distribution this year would be a great project.
- Gillis asked if there was a rack at the Mulberry Cafe on James North.
- Doucet stated that there should still be a rack at Mulberry.
- Wolfe added that she does not have a complete list of community racks. Wolfe will follow up with the distribution people to see if they have a complete list.

6. COMPUTER REPLACEMENT

- Wolfe reported that four new purchased were purchased over the summer based on the computer replacement schedule. An additional two machines were upgraded to support newer programs. Wolfe stated there are discrepancies between the computers in the office and what the MSU has on record. Wolfe will be working on getting all of that information for the next meeting.

7. PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

- Wolfe reported that The Sil would be published every Thursday until November 28. The Fall Break is new this year, but production would continue. Term Two publications will run every Thursday from January 9 until April 3. Wolfe suggested reduced issues for the issue directly before Fall Break and the issue before reading week. Wolfe stressed that it would not be reduced in terms of dimensions but in content. Wolfe stated a full edition would be lost on the audience.
- Hastie added that the paper needed to save some content. The reporters will want to go home for the Fall Break, so some of the content created would be needed for the following week.

- Wolfe added she would also like to see a reduced issue for the first paper of the second term. Previously, putting out that paper has been a huge stress, or just no paper printed. Wolfe suggested either producing a summer edition sized paper or another reduced issue.
- Giordano recommended just reducing the page count. A number of advertising contracts that have been negotiated this year were for a broadsheet paper.
- McGowan stated he would really like to see a paper come out on January 9, as it would be a long time with no new content being produced and put on the stands.
- Terefenko noted the editorial board has discussed launching an online magazine in December for new content.
- Gillis asked if new content would be published online between November 28 and January 9.
- Wolfe stated she is the only paid staff member during that time, so it would be on a volunteer basis.
- Terefenko added that The Sil would continue to cover any breaking news stories during this time.
- Milani asked if the paper was being published on Issu.
- Wolfe stated the Issu version of the paper was not being imbedded on the site anymore. If the site moves towards having online advertisements, revenue would be generated by individual clicks. With Issu, there is no incentive for students to come back to the website to see that content is continually being published. Having Issu imbedded in the site was driving down traffic.
- Doucet added that it was not as conducive to sharing stories via social media.
- Gillis suggested keeping a copy on Issu as an archive.
- Wolfe stated the paper is still available on Issu, but it is not being advertised. It is shared with family and friends who are not on campus to physically pick up a copy, but would like to see what is being created each week.

Moved by Wolfe, **seconded** by Milani that the publication schedule be approved as presented.

Passes Unanimously

8. INFORMATION & QUESTION PERIOD

- Wolfe reported that there are two high school co-op students interning with the paper until January. Wolfe is in the midst of hiring staff reporters, which are a new volunteer position. Wolfe is also looking to hire a new Features Editor, and recently completed the hiring process for a Distribution Coordinator. Wolfe reported that The Sil absorbed MacTV, and video so far has been going well. The Sil is publishing around one video a week. The next steps with video are to make a few small purchases. Wolfe would like to have the floor in the kitchen redone to make it a video studio. Wolfe added that she would like to continue to livestream the SRA meetings, but would like The Sil to have its own equipment, so they are not dependent on Joey Coleman.
- Terefenko stated that the last SRA meeting saw 100-120 concurrent users.
- Hastie added that there were over 400 unique views from that meeting.
- Gillis suggested asking Coleman where he got his equipment. Gillis explained that Coleman operates on a donation budget, so it is likely not very expensive.
- Giordano reported that he is happy that the MSU did not opt for an exclusivity contract for national advertising, as he is receiving ads from both companies.
- McGowan advised the Board that the bankruptcy of Campus Plus is an ongoing issue, and the MSU is still trying to recoup our costs. McGowan added that there seem to be a lot of discussion nationally about CUP, and thinks it is worth having a discussion at this level to see if membership is worthwhile, once the editors have experiences with CUP.

- Wolfe noted that a number of other newspapers have already dropped their memberships with CUP.
- Hastie stated that from a content management perspective, it is a struggle to fill the pages. Hastie noted that The Sil is trying to use CUP more often to maximize the membership. By the end of this volume, the editorial board should have a recommendation whether to stay or leave CUP.
- Doucet suggested having CUP be a standing discussion item moving forward.
- McGowan thanked Wolfe for her work with the Campus Plus issue, and Giordano for ensuring there was not a gap in advertising. McGowan stated the amount of local advertising in the paper is outstanding, and much higher than what our peer groups have.

TIME OF NEXT MEETING: TBD

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned by General Consent

Adjourned at 12:17 pm

Jeffrey Doucet
Vice-President Finance

Jessica Bauman
Administrative Assistant

Date