

SCC Meeting 10/03/07

Attending: SCC Committee – Rob, Kate, Dylan, Xiaona
Other – Eileen Chanza, Emily Chuoilla, Andrei

Rob calls meeting to order 10am.

Rob – Last meeting was productive in letting off steam and discussing the issue. The next step is writing the mission statement, wants input on what it should entail.

Eileen – Mission statement GSO has is powerful, and has a purpose, maybe have something similar to it, but have a statement saying Mag is separate from GSO is its own independent entity, and is not the mouthpiece of the GSO

Rob – There is a disclaimer going through RCC stating the contents of the Mag does not represent SBU and GSO and students

Kate – there are some inappropriate comments on the site which should be removed, and this should be fixed to prevent further inappropriate comments.

Eileen – She is working with Rich on security restrictions. Site is working on a lot of construction, communication with Rich is entirely by e-mail, but he is responding

Rob – In comments, what is the difference between verified and non-verified?

Eileen – Verified = authors that have published in the magazine. Asked Rich to remove that distinction

Rob – Mission statement – clarifies that Eileen would like to be an autonomous unit from the GSO?

Eileen – Sort of – obviously if really inappropriate stuff goes up (eg pictures of kids) GSO should be able to say something about it.

Rob – As far as the definition of the Mag as a blog vs. newspaper vs. magazine...

Eileen – Was not told that Mag was supposed to be more like a newspaper, she's treating it like a magazine, with at least 6 articles, and they are supposed to reflect the lives of the grad students. If people want news articles, someone could submit an article and she'd certainly accept it. It's a magazine, not a journal, about graduate student life, which should get more people to submit articles. Newspaper definition to her is a daily thing, and also doesn't think she'll get people to submit 'newspaper' stuff.

Rob – Mentions that there are other venues eg The Statesman, which are newsier.

Emily – asked question about organization of various things like news, or Events, or blogs.

Eileen - Columbia has an event calendar that is amazing, blogs are supposed to be separate

Rob – Our goal is to have a mission statement drafted by the 16th to present to the GSO, need to send it to RCC, and asks Andre how long RCC needs to review it

Andrei – RCC only needs 10 days for review, don't need a month, and get it voted on immediately

Rob – He wants mission statement as open as possible to get people to look at it and give feedback before it's fully drafted and sent for review and approval. He asks if there are any other questions.

Eileen – Is concerned about hiring.

Rob – Exec committee wants mission statement before hiring more people so that appropriate people are hired

Eileen – Was told verbally by Ryan that she could hire people, and is concerned about not only getting people but also paying them. The 2 people she has are under the impression that they are hired, and she feels that she'd be in an odd position. Wants to know if something can be done to move forward in getting authors to get their work done

Rob – At the next exec meeting Oct 9, will see if he can get a retroactive hire done

Andrei – Official call went out last week for hire

Emily – Thinks that any qualified writer will be able to write within the strictures of the mission statement

Rob – Thinks that the issue is that after hiring someone, will have to go around and change contract, so he'd like to wait a week

Eileen – Mentions that she has not been paid. Wants something in the mission statement that the contributing authors should be under the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief eg if she wants something covered, she can send an author to do it

Rob – Mission statement is more abstract, such a statement should be in the writer's contract

Rob – Mission statement will be drafted by SCC, sent to RCC, and then approved by GSO. Then Eileen's contract would be modified.

Andrei – It is almost impossible to modify Eileen's contract at this point, but the new writers will have mission statement incorporated into contracts. If mission statement were written into by-law status, then everyone should obey bylaws. He recommends that mission statement is instead incorporated into by-laws.

Emily – Is concerned that Eileen’s contract is very nebulous. Since SCC is going to draft mission statement, how will Eileen have input into this?

Rob - Originally, Mag was created to put up appointments and dictate business, and now the Mag has grown. SCC invites her input now.

Andrei – Esp. when the mission statement is on the floor, Eileen can express her opinions on the statement, and the Senate can hear her view.

Emily – Does the Senate have editorial rights in the mission statement?

Andrei – Yes, Senate has the right to motion for amendments in language

Emily – Isn’t necessarily concerned, but wanted to know how the process works.

Eileen – Can something be placed in the bylaws that the Editor-in-Chief is involved in the hiring process?

Rob – Thinks that this requires amendment of the constitution

Andrei- Will check, if it’s in the Constitution, needs to go to Campus-wide referendum, but if it’s a bylaw, then it can be more easily amended.

Dylan – Thinks that we should draft the bare bones of the mission statement today, so long as everyone is here. Wants to raise awareness and get people talking, but is unsure if there should be something in the statement that says that the Mag is opinion-based as opposed to news.

Eileen – Thinks that the direction of the Mag should be left to the discretion of the Editor. She doesn’t want what she specifically wants should be mandated for future editors. This kind of thing is very highly debated, so she wants this to apply to the future, and not just to her, since a future editor may not want the Mag to be a magazine, but more of a journal, for example. She would like to see something that defines this yet keeps it open.

Eileen – Thinks the perfect mission statement is similar to the GSO statement; she wants more control as an editor

Dylan – He thinks that Eileen wants an opinion magazine, not something with fact-finding or reporting

Eileen – Thinks that this is always the case, even if someone is writing a news piece. She cites the reporting of the Jena case as an example. Thinks that semantics are all opinions.

Rob – The basis is that journalism strives to be objective, but isn’t, so the issue is whether or not the Mag should strive for objectivity or not. Rob wants both objectivity and opinion, where the

front page is pretty objective, even if there are 10 times more opinions. Rob opines that he'd like to see some articles where the writer goes and gets several different viewpoints

Eileen – you don't always get several different opinions. Cites the Bronx girl rape case and how the rapist was not interviewed, but that this is still a journalistic piece. 1) How much news is there really going to be from the University? 2) What is defined as news? Thinks that the issue of subjectivity won't be solved and should be left up to the University students, and that the Mag is a forum. Trying to change that is trying to change what US stands for.

Dylan – Got the impression from what Eileen described that her intention is that the Mag is going in the direction of an opinion mag.

Eileen – thinks everything contains opinion, and wants to leave this open for the future. So, there is opinion based on news, eg. and is nervous on defining whether opinion is news.

Emily – By leaving this news open, can interview people who come to campus and talk to people in the audience as well as the speaker, and that this is news. Since people can comment on articles, it gives a more inclusive view of the University. Can't define each piece as news or opinion or whatever, and trying to define that removes the personal experience.

Rob – Would like to close this part of the meeting, will try and get the hiring figured out soon

Andrei – The GSO constitution states that Exec committee has the control of hiring administrative personnel. This is open to interpretation whether or not the Editor is involved.

Rob closes this part of the meeting at 10:45 am.

10:55 am – Disclaimer has been put through RCC, and there's been enough debate on it to send it to Senate

Rob – Would like to spend 15-20 minutes establishing content of mission statement.

Dylan – Since he got the impression that Eileen wants an opinion magazine, and she's resistant to this definition, what should we do?

Rob – He is fine with the Mag being mostly opinion, but has a problem with opinion pieces being front-page

Kate – is there some way to impress upon Eileen that the format/language of the articles may not be of interest to the rest of the grad student population?

Rob – Wonder if there's a way to link graduate student readership with ratings

Andrei – Reiterates that Eileen's contract cannot be modified.

Rob – Instead of a mission statement, is SCC really making bylaws for Mag?

Andrei – Mission statement is kind of strange, abstract, and not binding. RCC is putting together Internal Control Program (ICP), formerly known as Financial Bylaws, that outlines all GSO policies and practices. This is binding, and includes a section on the GradMag. The reference to the mission statement can be put into the appendix of the internal control program, thus will become a binding bylaw. RCC will also draft all contracts instead of Exec committee, and recommend these to be adopted by Committee.

Rob – Our mission is to write a mission statement that will be binding. So, what points should go into the statement?

Rob – He would like to see the GradMag in two ways 1) Attempt objectivity, list dates, events, local interest pieces, news, important pieces of the GSO 2) Opinion pieces, whatever the purview of the Editor is.

Dylan – Eileen describes soliciting opinions of the graduate students, but Emily tried to describe doing a more news-oriented piece.

Xiaona – Thinks Mag should have both information for grad students (objective) as well as opinions, just as Rob said

Kate – Even in magazines, articles that are more based on fact are before more fluffy pieces in terms of order. Thinks that the women's health article was completely an opinion piece, and should not have been front page news.

Rob – The editorial staff needs to know that it has a lot of power, and opinions should not be front-page news. What editor allows to be published reflects on the GSO, so there should be a disclaimer for the entire magazine. Wants people to know that the Mag is not necessarily the voice of the graduate students. Basically, we don't want to get sued

Dylan – NEED to have separate sections

Rob – Exec board met with Dean Lawrence, and he suggested that SCC meet with Dean Stein (Assistant dean of students) and Howie Schneider (Dean of school of journalism)

Andrei – These guys will help tweak mission statement and get any ethical/moral implications resolved and figure out what the limits of the right of free speech in regard of the Mag are.

Rob – Recommends that SCC looks at the Independent, the undergraduate-run magazine

Andrei – Events should be more visible and covered journalistically

Rob – In terms of mission statement, SCC wants opinion pieces after news/events. Or, maybe have the front page with only a sentence or two about the articles

Andrei – shows SCC The Independent website.

Kate – Thinks that GradMag should be more like The Independent in terms of format

Dylan – Why was Eileen hired without all this discussion before?

Andrei – She was hired in the summer. She was highly recommended by Lila, the previous editor

Rob – He will write a very rough draft of the mission statement, and send to the rest of the SCC members to fill in their own ideas.

Dylan – Suggests that the news section is the mouthpiece of the GSO, and that the opinion section could have the disclaimer

Rob – Asks Dylan if he's still having parking issues

Dylan – YES! Should draft a resolution to University Senate regarding the parking issue.

Rob – Got an e-mail requesting a representative for the bus route committee

Andre – Ask the GSO or Senate.

Rob – Motions to adjourn committee meeting at 11:40am. It's unanimous.