

UNM Student Publications Board Meeting
Friday, April 15, 2005
Communications and Journalism Conference Room

Present: Bob Gassaway (Chair), Leslie Donovan, Felicia Fonseca, Miguel Gandert, Valerie Garcia, Justin Stewart, Shelly Ratner

Ex-Officio: Jim Fisher, Marisa Demarco

Also Present: Justin Crosby, Brittany Jaeger

Absent: Jeff Kellywood, Stephanie Martin, Pam Herrington, Marcia Pineda

Bob Gassaway called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. He asked the Board for permission to modify the agenda by inserting, ASUNM Subpoenas Daily Lobo Editor, after the financial report by Jim Fisher. Justin Stewart made a motion to change the agenda. Leslie Donovan seconded the motion. The motion passed

Justin Stewart made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 23 meeting. Leslie Donovan seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Gassaway said the traditional process for selecting the Daily Lobo Editor is for the Board to move into executive session to interview each applicant, then for the Board to return to public session and call the roll of Board members present to record their preference. All Board members agreed to the process Gassaway suggested. Donovan made a motion for the Board to go into closed session for the purpose of interviewing Daily Lobo editor candidates. Gandert seconded the motion. The motion passed. The Board went into closed session at 3:10 p.m.

Felicia Fonesca made a motion for the Board to return to open session. Miguel Gandert seconded the motion. The motion passed. The Board returned to open session at 3:55 p.m.

Gassaway then praised Marisa Demarco for her efforts as editor-in-chief over the past year. Jim Fisher called the roll of Board members present to record their preference for editor 2005-06 Daily Lobo editor. The Board members and their responses were: Felicia Fonesca, Rivkela Brodsky; Valerie Garcia, Rivkela Brodsky; Justin Stewart abstained; Miguel Gandert, Rivkela Brodsky; Leslie Donovan, Rivkela Brodsky; Shelly Ratner, Katy Knapp; and Bob Gassaway, Rivkela Brodsky. Gassaway congratulated Brodsky and thanked both applicants for applying.

Gassaway asked Fisher for the Daily Lobo March financial report. Fisher said he had been optimistic that March revenues would be up, but unfortunately this was not the case. He said that expenses held steady and the Lobo is currently still in the black but expects to be in the red for next month. Shelly Ratner said newspaper revenue is down across the nation. Fisher stated he is optimistic for the upcoming year because there are promising

new additions to the advertising staff. Ratner also said the New Mexico Press Association needs interns in its advertising program. Gandert suggested Ratner speak with Olaf Werder, the advertising professor in the Communication & Journalism Department.

Gassaway then asked Marisa Demarco her thoughts about ASUNM subpoenaing the Daily Lobo editor. She stated that from her point of view the issue was over. Demarco stated that ASUNM had subpoenaed her to come answer questions from ASUNM senators about content decisions and operational management of the Lobo. Gassaway asked for reactions from the ASUNM representatives present. Justin Crosby, ASUNM vice president, introduced himself as the one who proposed the subpoena to the ASUNM senate on April 8. Crosby said he felt the meaning of the subpoena was misconstrued. He said the issue was never about censorship. He said the issue is regarding how advertising costs are determined. He said that ASUNM cannot afford the cost of advertising for student groups. Crosby said there are now more than 300 student groups on campus and the Lobo is the best method of advertising student group events. Gassaway says 95 percent to 96 percent of students read the paper daily. Demarco said that requesting the editor-in-chief to stand before the senate to answer questions regarding story placement is an attempt at censorship. Gassaway said we are not adverse to talking with the ASUNM senate. He voiced concern about the forum that was proposed. He said the conversation needs to be done in an open, friendly fashion. Gandert voiced his concern on the seriousness of the subpoena. He said he questioned the method of using a subpoena with the possibility of real lawyers becoming involved.

Stewart agreed the method was bad. Gandert suggested mediation with the publications board and ASUNM. Demarco said she should have just been called by telephone. Crosby said he had called, but Demarco said she did not receive the call. He also said that there is no accountability with public newspapers but they do have competition and accountability to their readership. He said he feels the coverage by the Lobo is not working in the best interest of the students. He said the subpoena was supposed to generate an informational session and it was never meant as an attack. Demarco asked why subpoena her three days before her term ends rather than ask questions of the incoming editor-in-chief. She then asked if the session was for her to be informed about readers' concerns or if it was to have her to inform ASUNM about the Daily Lobo. Crosby said that it was for Demarco to inform ASUNM about the paper and as a reflection of the past year. Fonesca stated that before reporters write a story they do a lot of research and make many attempts to contact people such as ASUNM senators. She said in her two years at the Daily Lobo she never had anyone from ASUNM ask how the Lobo works. She said the Lobo published a mail-out issue which had information about how a story is chosen and how the Lobo works. She said one of the ASUNM senators stated that the reason they cut money from student organizations for advertising in the Lobo is because ASUNM already gives money to the Lobo. She said if senators knew how the Lobo worked they would know that advertising has nothing to do with editorial content. Crosby said the concern stemmed from advertising costs, but then became an examination of entire paper.

Gassaway then stated that the total budget for the Lobo for the year is approximately \$700,000 and about \$660,000.00 of that is generated from advertising. Gassaway said that money allotted to the Lobo from ASUNM student fees is provided for in the ASUNM constitution and is about \$1.50 per student per semester to provide students with a free paper every day. He said the provision in the ASUNM constitution provides a sense of belonging that ensures the Lobo remains a student newspaper, free from interference from the faculty or administration. He said the cost of advertising in the Lobo reflects the Lobo's costs. Gassaway stated that there are only three full-time staff members and the rest are students. He also said student publications maintains a savings account of approximately \$240,000, which is less than one-third of our operating budget for a year. He said the Lobo adjusts ad rates as printing and other costs go up. Stewart suggested raising rates for outside groups and lowering them for on-campus groups.

Ratner said that Jim Fisher, student publications business manager, would be best to field these questions. She said if advertising is the issue then that's where the discussion needs to focus. She said the subpoena was an extreme measure. Gassaway said if ASUNM wanted the Board's attention, it got it by issuing the subpoena. Gassaway asked what sort of time frame and what sort of communication setting could be imitated with ASUNM. Crosby said he thought a forum setting would be best. Crosby said there had been a build up of frustration and senators did not know what avenue to take. He said the thing ASUNM is missing from the Lobo is accountability. He said that ASUNM is accountable as a government and has many ways to be held accountable. He said the one person accountable at the Lobo is the editor. Fisher asked if Crosby is talking about advertising or editorial content. Demarco stated that the Lobo's phone number and e-mail address are at the top of Page one. She said the Lobo is accountable to its readers but not to student government. Fisher said he has not read or heard anything concerning advertising in the past weeks, only issues about the editor and the editorial content. Crosby said that the frustration began with advertising, and said he had stated that to Lobo reporters. Crosby said it started with advertising issues but as ASUNM explored the issue other operations came in to question with the paper such as editorial copy. Gandert said ASUNM has no right to address those issues. Gandert said ASUNM's position is undermined by starting to talk about advertising concerns and then connecting displeasure with editorial content.

Demarco said that any misquotes should be pointed out to the editor. She said it was, however, inappropriate to summon the editor to appear before the Senate. Gassaway said one appropriate response would be to write a letter to the Lobo for publication. He said the Lobo has a very good record of publishing those letters. Crosby said that there should be an open forum to address concerns with the Daily Lobo because the newspaper does receive \$40,000 in student fees. Gandert said that he feels the majority of students do not share those concerns. Crosby said there are at least 50 students coming to him with concerns but the students are not being heard. Demarco said that ASUNM did have a bi-weekly column that the ASUNM president quit writing at some point in the semester. Stewart stated he thought the reporters covering ASUNM are not educated about ASUNM. Demarco said she disagreed. Stewart said he also felt Lobo reporters had free reign to inject emotional content into the articles and call the senators childish although they put in many hours representing students on this campus. Demarco said if Stewart has

concerns he should speak with her. Stewart said he felt Demarco was unapproachable and comes across in a hostile manner. Demarco asked Stewart if he voted to issue the subpoena. He said he was told that senate members had been trying to contact Demarco all semester, which is why he voted for the subpoena. Demarco said she was contacted only hours before being subpoenaed.

Crosby said he was not fully prepared to discuss this issue today and said he originally attended this meeting to introduce the president-elect, Brittany Jaeger, to the editor. Jaeger said she wants open communication between ASUNM and the Daily Lobo. Crosby said it was not his intention to bring up hostile feelings but only to gain information. Gassaway said that if ASUNM is having problems communicating with the Lobo to call him. Ratner asked Jaeger how she plans to deal with these unresolved issues. Jaeger said has just been elected, but she plans on attending any meetings pertaining to the issue. Donovan said she felt it is clear that both ASUNM and the Daily Lobo have the best interests of the students at heart, but are coming from different perspectives and each wants to have their voices heard. She said she hopes that both the Lobo and ASUNM can find appropriate ways to communicate in the future.

Gassaway asked for a motion for Jim Fisher to review the on-campus ad rates for next Friday's meeting. Justin Stewart made a motion for Fisher to compile a report for the next meeting on campus advertising rates and include projections for inflation including printing. Donovan seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.