

UNM Student Publications Board Meeting
Friday, June 19, 2015
Marron Hall, Room 131

Present: Leslie Donovan, Robert Trapp, Ilia Rodriguez, Kristin Gentry, Jenna Hagengruber

Ex-officio: Jim Fisher, Jillian Roach

Also Present: Carolyn Souther, Daven Quelle, Joseph Rabourn, Craig Dubyk

Absent: David Ishmael, Robert Salas, Gabriela Eldredge, Sophie Martin

Leslie Donovan called the meeting to order at 3:09 p.m.

Donovan asked for a review of the May 1, 2015 meeting minutes. Bob Trapp made a motion to approve the minutes. Jenna Hagengruber seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Donovan asked Jim Fisher to report on the *Daily Lobo* financials. Fisher said the report covered the fall 2014 and spring 2015 semesters. He said that usually May is a good month for revenue but that was not the case this year. He said there were only three publishing days this May compared to 9 publishing days last year. Fisher said this is the worst financial year for the *Daily Lobo* that he had experienced. He said the *Daily Lobo* Freshman Orientation Issue, which typically is a good moneymaker, did not do well this year. He said the issue made about \$20,000 less than the previous year. Fisher said the current *Daily Lobo* economic situation is not sustainable and that is why the Board is meeting today to discuss options. Donovan explained the advertising trend across the newspaper industry shows substantially reduced advertising income from what it was 10 or 15 years ago. She said people today are not getting news as much from print newspapers and therefore advertising revenue is suffering across the spectrum including college newspapers. Donovan said the reserve fund that the Lobo enjoyed over many years has been pretty much depleted.

Fisher reported on a meeting with a representative from the UNM Foundation. Fisher said he and Dr. Donovan and Student Publications Advertising Coordinator, Daven Quelle, met with a development officer for Arts & Sciences. He said they discussed options such as a committee of foundation staff to look at grants, donor and other short-term ideas. Fisher said the Foundation would be coming back with a list of donors and identifying alumni that may have money to donate. Donovan said she and Fisher also met with the VP for Student Affairs, Cheo Torres, and the Student Affairs CFO, Kim Kloeppe. He said they were made aware of our financial situation and the suggested there would be a print frequency change with the *Daily Lobo* once the Board voted on the measure. Fisher said he would now be attending Student Affairs department meetings on a regular basis. Donovan said increased involvement with Student Affairs is useful, but noted there is always a concern about the independence of the *Daily Lobo*. She said that independence needed to be guarded and protected.

Donovan said it is not advisable for the Lobo to rely on administrative funding, at least not in the long term. Fisher said the only revenue other than advertising and reserves is funding from ASUNM collected student fees. He said that 8.5 percent of that student fee is allocated to the Student Publications. He said \$12,800 of that fee is split between *Conceptions Southwest* and *Best Student Essays* with the remaining funding going to the *Daily Lobo*, this year budgeted to be \$44,000. He said that 95 percent of the budgeted income for the *Daily Lobo* is self-generated by advertising sales. Fisher said reserves have, in part, been funding the *Daily Lobo* for the last 18 months. Joseph Raboutn asked if GPSA contributed funding for the *Daily Lobo*. Fisher said it did not but added that GPSA funds both *Conceptions Southwest* and *Best Student Essays*. Fisher said both magazines are in good financial shape.

Donovan addressed *Daily Lobo* print frequency. Donovan discussed the changes in the newspaper market increasingly going to more technology driven tools. She said the current financial situation presents an opportunity to train students with more emphasis on digital reporting and delivery and for the department to produce additional smaller publications, such as booklets and other revenue generating publications. She said that it appears publishing a newspaper five days a week is no longer sustainable. She said that a committee consisting of some Board members and the *Daily Lobo* photo and writing coaches and the Student Publications Advertising Coordinator met last week to discuss options. Fisher said the committee proposed two options for the Board to consider; publish two days a week, preferably Monday and Thursday, or publish once a week, most likely on Wednesdays. Fisher said the Lobo would publish new content on its digital platforms daily, regardless of what option is selected for print. Donovan said these options offer an opportunity to free up time devoted to print product and concentrate on the way news will be produced in the future. Fisher said that the character of the print product might be changing but noted that will be up to the Lobo editor. He asked Ilia Rodriguez to discuss the focus group results from her classes for the *Daily Lobo*.

Rodriguez said it was not a formal study, but a class project. She said she thought the insights might be useful for the Lobo moving forward. She said a total of 41 students participated in the project, 29 women 12 men. She said 25 participants said they were news seekers. She said most had opinions about the *Daily Lobo* including many who said they were not frequent readers. She said the primary social media platforms they use for news are Facebook and Twitter. She said they are most interested in sports, arts and culture, film and gaming. She said local events and calendars are also of interest. She said campus news interest scored low. Rodriguez said some wanted to see more opinions and columns in the Lobo. She said they access the news primarily with their smart phones, laptop, tablet and print in that order with the vast majority using smart phones. She said many did not know of the current *Daily Lobo* smart phone application. She said many liked coupons and the *Daily Lobo* coupon books. Rodriguez said that they like the advertising and special editions and like it when their friends appear in the Lobo. Donovan said it looks like there is a lot of good information in this report that the *Daily Lobo* could use.

Hagenruber asked how expensive is it to publish digitally versus print. Jyllian Roach said generally it is cheaper to publish digitally. Fisher said Student Publications is looking at ways to produce more revenue but there have to be measures to reduce costs as well. He said there would be savings reducing down to one or two days in print.

Donovan addressed the issue of print frequency. She said the best options from the group that met are one or two days per week. Rodriguez said she would like to hear the rationale for one day a week versus two days a week. Fisher said there is an advertising and an editorial component for either option. Daven

Quelle said there are two primary groups of advertising for the Lobo. She referred to the Daily Lobo summer issues that are published on Monday. She said that issue used to be published on Thursday and when the publication day was switched to Monday, the Lobo lost out on much of the entertainment advertising targeted to events for the weekend. She said she felt that by publishing on Monday and Thursday the Lobo could take advantage of the coupon advertising that typically occurs on Monday and have much of the entertainment advertising ruined on Thursday. She also said a transition from five days a week to one would be quite abrupt for advertisers. Roach said from the editorial point of view a shift from five days a week to one would be a big change. She said she felt it would be easier to increase digital output if the staff were engaged by publishing in print two days a week. Roach said she felt the news staff would be more engaged with the newsroom by having to produce a print edition two days a week.

Donovan asked Trapp to talk about the advantages of publishing one day a week. Trapp said he based the argument for one day a week on the estimates that Fisher had produced and he felt the numbers come together at publishing one day a week because that is where the revenues and expenses appear to come the closest together. But he said it is all educated guessing. He said at twice a week we are still losing money. He said he felt the newsroom will have difficulty making the changes necessary and doing that weekly will be easier. He said that putting more resources into digital publishing may be good for an educational basis but it will not generate much revenue. Fisher said all the proposed budgets are predicated on the advertising staff making \$60,000 in revenue from special projects. He said the newsroom may or may not be involved in producing those products. He said that all the proposed budgets are in the red without this extra revenue from special projects. Fisher said he favors the two day a week schedule because he feels there may be more opportunities to increase revenue with two days a week advertising deals and publishing classifieds in print twice a week. He said no matter what option the Board decides it will be a huge shift in the way the advertising department operates.

Trapp asked Quelle and Roach if they agreed that two days a week, Monday and Thursday is their preferred option. They both responded yes. Trapp made a motion to reduce print publication of the *Daily Lobo* to two days a week, Mondays and Thursdays. Seconded by Hagengruber. Donovan asked voting Board members for a show of hands on the motion. The Board voted three for, one against and one abstained. The motion passed

The meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.