

**NC State Student Media Board of Directors  
February 2023 meeting minutes**

**Tuesday, February 7, 2023 • 7 p.m.**  
*Witherspoon 356 (African American  
Cultural Center Conference Room.)*

Members present: Christa Gala (remote), Dean Phillips, Jake Seaton, Nate Shorter, Julianna Lopez, Robbie Williams, Tyler Dukes, Bran Poster, Maddie Jennette (remote), Shilpa Giri, Krishna Patel, Ryley Fallon, Jaz Bryant, Tim Werner, Patrick Neal

Absent: McKenzy Heavlin

Others present: Jamie Lynn Gilbert, Martha Collins, Zanna Swann, Ben McNeely, Ray Black, Nada Elraddaf

**CALL TO ORDER & APPOINTMENT OF RECORDING SECRETARY**

Board chair Nate Shorter called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. After introductions, Jaz Bryant volunteered to serve as recording secretary for the meeting.

**APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 2022 MEETING MINUTES**

Dean Phillips moved that the minutes from the board's Nov. 8, 2022 meeting be approved, with Tyler Dukes providing a second; the board voted unanimously to approve them. Those minutes were included in the meeting package and are made part of these minutes by reference.

**WELCOME BEN McNEELY!**

Ben McNeely said he was "proud, happy and thrilled" to be the new editorial adviser for Nubian Message and Technician. A Technician alum, Ben started out as a newspaper reporter before moving into the broadcast field as a producer for Spectrum News. Ben said he got his start at Technician and described himself as "just like [the newspaper staff members] except 20 years older." He said he'd reported and produced in hurricanes, covered two presidential inaugurations and been tear-gassed at protests in downtown Raleigh, among other highlights.

Jamie thanked everyone who had served on the student search committee, as well as everyone who came to help interview Ben during his visit to campus.

**BOARD VACANCY/ELECTION OF NEW VICE CHAIR**

Patrick Neal said board vice chair McKenna Edgerton had to resign from the board after taking a job as an RA with Housing, as her weekly meetings for that position are held at the same time as board meetings. Julianna Lopez volunteered to serve; Tyler moved that she be appointed vice chair, and Dean seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **JANUARY AND FEBRUARY BUDGET UPDATE**

Jamie Lynn Gilbert reviewed the January and February 2023 budget updates, which were included with the meeting package and made part of these minutes by reference. She noted the following:

- Nubian Message deposited more than \$3,600 in December, with a big chunk of that coming from ad sales from the 30th-anniversary issue. Payroll is now at 62% and we are 58% through the year - not a problem, but something worth noting. Nubian current services are at 77% due to higher-than-budgeted printing costs and the 30th-anniversary issue costing about \$2,100 - more than four times than budgeted for a regular issue. The ad sales more than covered the cost of printing, but with the remaining issues of the semester, we will go over budget for current services.
- Roundabout's non-fee income is now at 93% of its goal.
- Technician's non-fee income is now at 79% of its goal. Current services are now at 64%. As with Nubian, Technician printing will be over budget for the year due to larger-than-expected increases.
- About \$24,000 in kiosk revenue was deposited, which has been split between General Administration, Technician and Nubian, and will be reflected in the next monthly budget.
- WKNC's non-fee income is at 54%, but does not include any Double Barrel Benefit or Learfield Sports revenue.
- The Student Media Enhancement Fund is at \$6,700 after it received a \$1,000 "bonus" contribution from DASA after a friend of the program won a social media contest during the 2022 Day of Giving.
- The Technician Century Fund is at \$47,400, which does not reflect a transfer of about \$3,000 to cover Technician's additional fall CMA conference attendees.

## **2023-2024 EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AND GENERAL MANAGER CANDIDATES**

Patrick reported that the deadline for all but one organization had passed for Editor-In-Chief and General Manager candidates, and that every organization had at least one candidate vying for those positions. They are:

- Agromeck – Jermaine Hudson
- Nubian Message – Milan Hall
- Roundabout – Bran Poster
- Technician – Ethan Bakogiannis and Jameson Wolf (applying as co-EICs)
- Windhover – Ryley Fallon
- WKNC – Erie Mitchell

Patrick then briefly reviewed the process wherein the applicants would be interviewed by their organization's respective advisory boards over the next month, and that the full board would hear the advisory boards' recommendations at its March meeting. Patrick asked the senior leaders to remind their staffs that they were welcome to attend and ask questions of the candidates.

Patrick said he extended the deadline one week for the Student Business Office GM candidates, as one person who was planning to apply had a death in the family and had to return home the

week applications were due. Patrick said he extended the deadline for all applicants to keep the process fair, and that those applications were due on Thursday, Feb. 9.

## **COMMUNITY ISSUES UPDATE**

Jamie updated the board with regard to Student Media's progress in reporting on the community issues the groups identified at their day-long all-organizations training session on Oct. 1, 2022. A list of those issues, along with a breakdown of the amount of coverage each had received thus far this year, was included in the meeting package and is included as part of these minutes by reference. These are part of Student Media's stated DASA assessment goals.

## **MENTAL HEALTH REPORTING TRAINING FEB. 10**

Ben reminded everyone of the mental health reporting training set for Friday, Feb. 10 at the Butler Communications Building beginning at 2 p.m. Ben said Rose Hoban and Taylor Knopf from NC Health News would lead the training, and would also return to campus for a workshop to work one-on-one with writers after a month. Ben noted that representatives from University Communications and the Counseling Center were also invited so they could see firsthand the kind of training our students receive around mental health and student suicide reporting. Ben said about 20 people had signed up for the training, but added that there was still time for additional people to sign up.

## **PHILLIPS AWARD NOMINATIONS CLOSE MARCH 7**

Patrick reminded everyone that one month remained before nominations would close for the 2022-2023 Dean Phillips Award for General Excellence. He said any student could nominate any other student (including themselves) except for the top leaders at each organization, since they will be voting on the eventual winner.

## **WKNC STUDENT INVOLVEMENT**

Maddie Jennette and Jamie proposed that non-student DJs no longer be eligible to host shows on WKNC. This move would affect the hosts of three long-running specialty shows, Geet Bazaar, Both Kinds Radio and Friday Night Chainsaw Rock. Maddie said she and Jamie brought the matter to the board to ask for their support of the decision. The request prompted an extended discussion about both the proposal and what role, if any, the board should play in the decision.

Notable points discussed included the following:

- In response from an inquiry from Dean, Maddie said the DJ schedule was quite crowded and that the hosts' airtime should be reclaimed for student DJs.
- Robbie Williams asked if discontinuing the shows would have a negative effect on revenue. Jamie said that the amount of revenue those specific shows generated was negligible, and that even when the shows were generating revenue, the underwriters of those shows had been difficult to work with.
- Christa Gala noted that the shows in question had established audiences and were part of "station lore," and she asked how the station planned to answer those who might be unhappy with the discontinuation of the shows. Maddie clarified that the shows themselves would not necessarily be discontinued, saying that if current student DJs

wanted to continue the shows, they could. As for audience dissatisfaction, she recalled another very popular show that had been discontinued under her tenure as GM after the host graduated, saying that people should understand that the DJs are students, and that when they graduate, their time as DJs are over. In that light, she said, it was unfair to kick off one nonstudent DJ while letting another stay just because of longevity.

- Tyler said he was hesitant as a board member to weigh in on a decision that rightly belonged to the General Manager alone. Jamie said they sought the board's backing to give the decision permanence so that it could not be instantly reversed by a future GM. Other board and staff members noted that no other Student Media organization allowed nonstudent staff members; WKNC was the lone exception.
- Ben (who served as the fill-in DJ for Both Kinds Radio show prior to joining the full-time staff) noted that there were other local outlets – most notably Little Raleigh Radio – available to any of the nonstudent DJs if they wished to continue broadcasting.
- Tyler maintained that the role of the board was to stand behind and support the student leaders' decisions, and not to reach down into operational details like the personnel matter under discussion. Patrick said that when Jamie and Maddie came to him with the proposal, he had suggested they bring it before the board not to seek their permission, but because the DJs in question had been on the air a very long time, they would likely be upset by the decision, and that the board may hear from those DJs or some of their listeners in the future, so he wanted the board to be aware of and prepared for that possibility. In that light, Patrick said official board action might not be appropriate.
- When asked about the station's specific proposal/request, Jamie said the station wanted to give the current nonstudent DJs until the final day of spring semester, May 8, to continue their shows. Thereafter, she said, nonstudent DJs would be strictly prohibited at WKNC. This, she noted, would also affect newly-graduated DJs, who had formerly been allowed to continue their shows into the summer semester immediately following their graduation if the summer student DJ schedule allowed.

In the end, the board took no action on the question, saying the ultimate decision should reside with the General Manager.

## **REPORT ADDENDA**

Written organization reports for both January and February were included with the meeting package and are made part of these minutes by reference. Addenda to those reports are as follows:

- Tim Werner noted that sales were going well for Roundabout's spring issue, with some \$9,000 sold before discounts. He said the sales team was on track to meet or surpass last year's revenue total for the piece.
- Jaz said the faulty computer noted in the Nubian's board report had been replaced, so that was no longer an issue. Otherwise, she said she planned to move forward with filling a dedicated photo editor for the Nubian.
- Bran again thanked the sales staff for their efforts on behalf of Roundabout. He also thanked Ben for putting together the Feb. 10 mental health training and inviting all of the organizations to it. Finally, he noted that Roundabout planned to move up the time it submitted its files to the printer for both the spring and Orientation issues. He said those changes should not affect the time the issues were on the stands.
- Maddie said Double Barrel Benefit 19, which was held the previous weekend, was

very successful, with great performances by the artists and a packed house both nights.

- Tyler asked Shilpa Giri about the canceled United Poultry Concerns ad she mentioned in her board report. Shilpa said the organization had sought to run an ad concerning experiments the Vet School had done on chickens. She said the ad was formatted to resemble an article, and that the ad made several claims she and her staff had no time to verify before publication, as they hadn't known about the ad until production night for the Dec. 1 issue. Zanna added that the ad amounted to sponsored content, which Technician does not accept. Tim said the episode was a good reminder of the importance of communication between the sales team and our publications, and that procedures had been implemented to prevent last-minute cancellations moving forward. Patrick said that in the days after Shilpa spiked the ad, the Business Office received a handful of calls from people presumably aligned with UPC who wished to express their displeasure with the decision. He said the calls were still coming, noting that Martha had fielded such a call earlier that day, and that the group had also inundated the Chancellor's Office with calls and emails in the days after Technician spiked the ad. Patrick said he believed the group was under the misapprehension that the Chancellor or some representative of the poultry industry had forced Technician to spike the ad, but he confirmed that the decision had been Shilpa's alone.

## **ADJOURN**

There being no need for an executive session, Dean moved to adjourn with Robbie seconding. The meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.