

SPJ Board Meeting Minutes

Date: February 15, 2025

Time: 11 a.m.

Location: via Zoom

Present: Laura Downey (President), Jatika Hudson (Vice President), Genelle Williams (Secretary), Rahul Bali (At-Large Member), Stella Payne (At-Large Member)

Absent: Stell Simonton (Treasurer), Allison Mawn (Student Representative)

Also Present: Katja Ridderbusch (Advocacy Committee Chair), Mark Woolsey (Member)

I. Approve February 2025 agenda (President Downey)

- A. Vice President Hudson shared the agenda prior to meeting. President Downey asked if members had any changes. No changes were brought up, she asked if the Board would like to approve the agenda.
- B. At-Large Member Payne moved to approve, seconded by Secretary Williams. President Downey asked for a vote to approve the agenda. The motion passed.

II. Approve January 2025 minutes (President Downey)

- A. President Downey asked if members had any changes to the January 2025 minutes. No changes were brought up. Secretary Williams moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Vice President Hudson. President Downey brought a vote to approve the minutes. The motion passed.

III. Treasury Report (Treasurer Simonton)

- A. Treasurer Simonton was absent but shared the treasury report information for January via email. The starting balance on January 1st was \$7,246.78. The balance on February 1st was \$6,856.12. Expenses included the Zoom fee, website hosting fee, and December holiday party expenses. The full report is available upon request.
- B. Treasurer Simonton sent out the proposed budget for 2025. She asked if SPJ Georgia will be getting finances from the Green Eyeshade Awards, if there will be a National Convention, and if the chapter will be sending delegates to the 2025 Convention. If so, the chapter will need to consider those factors into the budget as well. The Board will review and discuss before the next meeting.

IV. New business (President Downey)

A. Housekeeping

- 1. **Board Elections:** Nominations are open March 10th at 12 a.m. – March 24th at 11:59 p.m. You can nominate through March 24th at 11:59 p.m. Every position is up for election except for At-Large Member Payne's position. She has one more year left in her term. There are four At-Large slots available. The terms for each position will be listed as well. An email will be sent about nominations soon. Members can self-nominate if they'd like. Vice President Hudson reminded anyone interested in

running for a position to make sure their membership is up to date. If membership is not up to date, they are ineligible to run for a position.

2. **Upcoming Panel Update:** The chapter will host a Media Literacy Panel on Saturday, February 22nd. At-Large Member Bali will be moderating. The flyer is out and some members have already promoted it on social media and other platforms. Member Woolsey has been sharing the flyer with schools. All members are asked to continue sharing the flyer. President Downey said someone asked if SPJ GA will be taping the session. Bali said he will need to ask the panelists if they are OK with being recorded. President Downey thanked Tiffany Weaver for making the flyer.
3. **Mental Health Expert:** The Board previously discussed possibly working with the mental health expert Leslie Rangel for the Mental Health workshop the Board was looking at putting on last year. The Board opted not to go with Rangel due to her speaking fee of \$750. When looking at panelists for the Podcasting 101 panel, President Downey thought of Rangel again since she also does a podcast. She reached out to see if the chapter would be able to work with Rangel but let her know that the budget doesn't allow for \$750 for a one-hour session. She circled back and said she's willing to work with SPJ GA for \$150. If the chapter would like to host something in the future on mental health, President Downey will send her credentials for future planning.
4. **Green Eyeshade Awards:** President Downey emailed Michael Koretzky, Region 3 Coordinator, to see if he needed any help with the Green Eyeshade Awards this year. Last year he said he didn't need help, but this year he said he could use the chapter's help. He might need some judges in March. Members are asked to take a look at the award. If anyone is interested in being a judge, let President Downey know. Koretzky has been helpful with helping the chapter receive funding. Downey said he's a great partner to the chapter so we also want to be a great partner to him.

V. Old business

A. Media Literacy Panel Event Costs

1. The Board discussed giving a gift to the Media Literacy panelists in the amount of \$25 or \$50. The group decided on a \$25 gift card per person.
2. Vice President Hudson will pick up the food and other items needed on Friday. She will reach out to Treasurer Simonton for the payment arrangement. At-Large Member Bali said he will check back with the venue contact to see how they'd like to receive their payment.

VI. Committee reports

A. Freelance (Secretary Williams)

1. Secretary Williams moderated a panel on podcasting for journalists on January 23rd. There were 24 individuals on the Zoom call and overall had a positive turnout with great discussions from the panelists and attendees.
2. Secretary Williams also hosted a Coffee Club meetup for journalists and media professionals on January 25th. Two people showed up. One is a member and the other is not an SPJ member.

B. Advocacy (Committee Chair Ridderbusch)

1. Update on statement supporting the Associated Press reporters: Advocacy Committee Chair Ridderbusch drafted a press release for SPJ GA's support in calling on the White House to allow two Associated Press journalists to attend White House press meetings after they were barred when the AP Stylebook did not adjust its guidelines to reflect President Trump's executive order to rename the Gulf of Mexico into the Gulf of America. She mentioned the draft will have to be updated with more recent information but sought the Board's approval to send to the national SPJ office for approval to post on the chapter's website.
2. At-Large Member Bali asked when and how often would SPJ GA publish these types of statements. Would it only be for issues that are Georgia-related or DC-related? Members said these are good questions to keep in mind.
3. The Board will review the draft and get back to President Downey on their vote on whether or not to approve the statement.

VII. Student Affairs: (President Downey/At-Large Member Payne)

- A. Everything is set for the March 2025 student Interviewing Skills for Success session. The event will be held at Kennesaw State University. A flyer has been created and members are asked to promote it on social media. Members, KSU staff, and KSU SPJ students will be in position for their duties that night. Rachel Spooner, a SPJ GA student affairs member, will be moderating the event. Members will get the payment from Treasurer Simonton for event expenses.

VIII. Membership (At-Large Member Bali/President Downey)

- A. Batch No. 5 of sending inactive members an introductory email is complete.
- B. After sending this batch of emails, the approach after this is possibly looking at current members who are expiring in the near future. There are two people whose membership is ending in a month. At-Large Member Bali said the chapter could be proactive and get them to renew. He will send the list to President Downey so the Board can email them.
- C. Media Literacy Panel: Already discussed earlier in the meeting.

IX. Events

- A. Young Media Atlanta event: One of the individuals who attended the holiday party was Kim Reveil, president of Young Media Atlanta. They describe themselves at the city's premier networking event in Atlanta for young media professionals. She talked to President Downey about the possibility of hosting a joint networking event in April. It would be the same cost as when the chapter hosted an event with AABJ—about max \$300 split as \$150 for each group. The potential date for this networking event is Thursday, April 24, 2025 at Bridge Boutique.
- B. VOX Student Workshop: VOX is a student media program based in Atlanta. At the first coffee club meetup, members met India Rice. After keeping in contact, Vice President Hudson, At-Large Member Payne, and President Downey have agreed to speak to students about journalism in April, possibly April 19th.

President Downey asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Vice President Hudson moved to adjourn, seconded by At-Large Member Payne. President Downey brought forth a vote. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 12:08 p.m.

Meeting minutes recorded by Genelle Williams, secretary.