

February 2004

As part of our ongoing effort to reach the goals set forth in our long-range planning, the Office of Student Media makes periodic assessments of our progress. We monitor program growth, advertising/underwriting revenue, and our students' and staff's awards, service, and professional development.

An important guide to our Student Media program has been an external site review conducted in early 2002.

We have recorded here recommendations of the site review team and the resulting changes in the Student Media program. We have also included assessments of program growth.

Site review recommendations and resulting actions

- *Consider increasing the number of Media Board members to nine or eleven.*
- *Consider adding a journalist or media professional or two to the Media Board. The Board should represent many constituencies on campus and in the community.*
- *Increase the number of students on the Media Board, ensuring they come from diverse areas.*

Action: Makeup of the Media Board has been revised. The number of board members has been increased from seven to 11. A media professional has been added, and the number of students has increased from two to four. The students now represent the Student Government president, the speaker of the Student Senate, and Student Life and Academic Services. Faculty and staff participation has been broadened and now includes an at-large staff appointee, a Student Life and Academic Services staff appointee, an at-large faculty appointee, two appointees from the Manship School of Mass Communication, and the director of Student Media.

- *Consider rethinking the wisdom of having the Media Board name both the Editor and Managing Editor of some media. In a professional medium, usually the chief manager hires his or her assistants.*

Action: The Media Board names only the editor of The Reveille. The Reveille was the only medium for which the Board had been naming both the editor and managing editor.

- *The Director and Business Manager should develop a long-range financial plan.*

The director and business manager are finalizing a plan to restructure Student Media to better serve students and the campus community in a fiscally responsible manner.

- *All units in Student Media would benefit from leadership training and staff development. More effective leadership is possible if those responsible develop needed skills in managing human and fiscal resources.*

Action: A management seminar was instituted for all newly hired editors and managers. The seminar covers personnel policies and practices, ethics, leadership, and time management.

Action: A weekend retreat focusing on leadership, featuring Jill Geisler, a management and

leadership expert from The Poynter Institute, was held in the fall of 2003 for all outgoing and incoming editors and managers.

Action: Staff development workshops were held featuring experts from various fields of the media business. These included:

- Mark Grant, a director for CBS Sports, and Charles Zewe, former CNN anchor and reporter, for Tiger TV;
- Rob Walker, writer and editor for the New York Times and major magazines, for Legacy;
- Reid Ashe, CEO of Media General, for The Reveille;
- Gil Thelen, publisher and president, Tampa Tribune; Gerry Barker, Belo Interactive/Dallasnews.com manager; and Bruce Tomaso, a Dallas Morning News editor; for all media.

• *Student leaders and future student leaders of all media and professional advisers need to attend, participate and network at national and state student media and professional media conferences and workshops.*

Student staff members attended the following conferences and workshops:

- College Newspaper Business and Advertising Managers
- Associated Collegiate Press/College Media Advisers
- Southeast Journalism Conference
- Southwestern Journalism Congress
- Southern University Newspapers sales training with Atlanta Journal Constitution.
- National Yearbook Workshop
- Investigative Reporters and Editors
- Society for News Design
- Society for Professional Journalists
- National Association of Black Journalists

• *Professional advisers and the Director need to become more visible and take leadership roles in appropriate professional organizations.*

Action: Staff members served in these professional organizations:

- The broadcast adviser serves on the board of Collegiate Broadcasters Inc.
- The Reveille adviser serves on the board of Criminal Justice Journalists.
- The director served on panels and wrote for the Radio-Television News Directors Association and served on panels at Broadcast Education Association.
- The associate director serves on the advisory board and is journal editor for College Media Advisers, was faculty for the Traveling Campus of the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association, and served as president of Southwestern Journalism Congress.
- The assistant director served on panels for College Media Advisers and Southern University Newspapers, and is on the Collegiate Outreach Committee of Louisiana Press Association.

• *Recommended: A full-time broadcast adviser to work with KLSU and Tiger TV.*

Action: A full-time broadcast adviser was hired in the fall of 2002.

- *Recommended: A full-time Reveille adviser.*

Action: A full-time Reveille adviser was hired in early 2003.

- *Recommended: An assistant director who would advise all aspects of Gumbo and Legacy.*

Action: The assistant (now associate) director now advises both Gumbo and Legacy.

- *Recommended: A production/computer specialist.*

Action: A full-time production/computer specialist was hired in August 2002.

- *Student leaders need to be brought into the department's decision-making and be allowed to impact policies. Involving them as department heads or establishing an operations team that meets regularly are two ideas that seem appropriate here.*

Action: An Advisory Board composed of the student managers of each medium was established in the fall of 2002. The board meets with the director weekly when school is in session. Members of this board now provide input into department policies and establish policy for each medium.

- *The Reveille should return to a five-day publishing cycle as soon as feasible.*

Action: The Reveille added a Monday edition in the fall of 2002.

- *Give student leaders more authority in budgetary matters.*

Action: Student editors and managers, with input from the adviser, have authority to juggle student staffing and salaries along with other areas of the budget such as travel and supplies, while staying within the overall unit budget.

- *The yearbook adviser and director should develop organizational, business and financial management of the yearbook staff.*

Action: The yearbook staff has developed a detailed policy manual, a mission statement, and job descriptions. The editor makes budget allocations in cooperation with the adviser and is fully involved with establishing provisions of the printing and portrait contracts.

- *Increase The Reveille's off-campus distribution.*

Action: The Reveille has responded to requests for off-campus distribution at seven sites and is receiving requests from additional businesses that want to provide papers in areas with high student traffic. This is being implemented with a focus on providing access to The Reveille for LSU students who live off-campus.

- *Increase student staffing in the sales department.*

Action: In the past three years, the number of sales reps has increased from eight to 15, and marketing staff members have increased from zero to four.

- *Develop a long-range, three- to five-year sales plan with a method to assess progress.*

Action: The assistant director developed a three-year sales plan with biannual reports to assess progress.

- *The existing rate card should be redesigned. Other promotional materials to assist in the selling process must also be developed.*

Action: The rate card was redesigned in the summer of 2003 to streamline the sales process. In Spring 2004 a combined broadcast and print rate card is being developed to encourage sales packages integrating radio, television, and print media.

- *The sales department should establish recruiting protocols to bring in business, accounting, and marketing majors.*

Action: The sales department initiated a joint effort with the MBA program and Marketing Department to actively recruit students for sales positions. Some of the students receive three hours of credit through a supervised internship. During the past year, the sales office has employed four marketing and two MBA students.

- *Customers should be encouraged to use credit cards for classified and display advertising.*

Action: Student Media now accepts both Mastercard and Visa credit cards.

- *Consider upselling classified ads to The Reveille's website. Local banner ads and directories should be explored and the website more thoroughly promoted in the print edition.*

Action: All classified ads are now posted on the website for a small fee. We have begun selling local banner ads and two online directories are planned for Spring 2004. The Reveille's website is now promoted daily with multiple ads in the print edition.

- *Consider reinstating remote broadcasting for KLSU.*

Action: KLSU now averages about one remote per month. The KLSU sports staff also does frequent preview shows for sporting events from remote locations like restaurants and the Sugar Bowl.

Other significant accomplishments over the past three years:

Growth in size of student staff:

- We now employ approximately 250 students each semester, an increase of 42 percent over staffing levels three years ago.

Growth in programs:

- The Reveille has established a busy, interactive website that is updated during breaks as news develops.
- KLSU and Tiger TV have established a convergent newsroom.
- A marketing department has been added, to coordinate Student Media's outreach to the campus and promote Student Media brand names.
- An organization for future Student Media employees, Student Media Xtras, was launched in Spring 2004.

Growth in advertising revenue:

- Total advertising revenues topped \$650,000 for the first time in fiscal year 2003, aided by a 22.8 percent jump in local advertising.
- Gumbo yearbook added display advertising. In fiscal year 2003, one-third of Gumbo sales revenue was from display advertising.
- A KLSU Alcohol Awareness Campaign is offered annually. It generated nearly \$4,000 in sponsorships in fiscal year 2003.

Staff professional development:

- The Reveille adviser and assistant director are pursuing master's degrees, and the bookkeeper and receptionist are taking courses toward bachelor's degrees.

Policies and manuals

- The student managers who compose the Student Media Advisory Board reviewed and revised policies for all of the media.
- The Student Media business manual has been reviewed and extensively revised.

Business office

- New accounting software was implemented in early 2004. The new software is designed for media use and provides timely information that can forestall billing problems. It will build an accurate financial history for Student Media.
- The business office has set up processes to aggressively pursue collection of overdue accounts.