Board Minutes
Jan. 15, 2021
Video Meeting

IRE Board President Cheryl W. Thompson presiding, called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

The following board members were present: Bethany Barnes, Jodie Fleischer, Jennifer Forsyth, Cindy Galli, Marisa Kwiatkowski, Jennifer LaFleur, Steven Rich, Mark Rochester (joined at 9:09), Brian Rosenthal, Kat Stafford, Cheryl W. Thompson, Jodi Upton and Mark Walker

Staff present: Denise Malan, Stephanie Klimstra and Heather Feldmann Henry

Thompson yielded the time from the President's report to Malan.

Staff Report (Malan) (see report)

Malan noted that this will be the first virtual NICAR conference. They will be doing over 80 hands on videos, so you can learn all of the same types of skills, spreadsheets, SQL, Python, and others. But they will be recorded so that you can do them at your own pace and at your own time. And we will provide all of the data and instructions on how to set up your computer. To complement that, we're doing these office hours where people can get help with all of those different skills from other members who are experts in those skills.

IRE will be offering 140 fellowships, using the money that would have been used for staff travel. Normally NICAR in person has fewer than 10 fellowships.

IRE also is doing a series of virtual Master classes, separate from the conference.

Upton asked whether IRE was charging for the Master classes. Malan said it was.

LaFleur asked what feedback has been on the new websites. Malan said feedback has been positive.

Motion from Kwiatkowski to move into executive session. Walker seconded.

Motion from Walker to leave executive session. Rich seconded.

Upton noted that though the December meeting minutes say we would have a treasurer's report in this meeting we will not to make time for more pressing issues.

Committee Reports

Conference Committee, Galli (report)
Galli briefed the board on committee discussion about the IRE 21 keynote speaker, which was followed by discussion.

Galli also said that the committee would like to be involved the featured speaker or "Ask me Anything" sessions.

Member Services Committee, Stafford (report)

Stafford said the committee is finalizing the membership survey. It also will be working with staff on it.

Stafford noted that the committee is proposing partnering with [Journalism Mentors](#) to create a more robust mentoring opportunity for IRE. She noted that it would not replace the conference mentorship program. The cost would be $2,500 total for five years.

Fleischer said that the revenue committee raised $25,000 from the campus campaign and some of that money could be used to cover the costs.

Discussion about the logistics of setting an up an IRE tab on Journalism Mentors.

Forsyth noted that she does not supervise Caitlin Ostroff, one of the founders of Journalism Mentors, even though they both work at The Wall Street Journal.

Malan said she supports the initiative but was not sure what the staff commitment would be.

Motion from Stafford to approve a partnership with Journalism Mentors, to work with staff on this and for our costs not to exceed $2,500 total for five years. Barnes seconded.

Vote: Approved unanimously

Governance Committee, Walker and Rich (report)

Walker said the committee proposes changing the executive committee selection process. Walker noted that the last time, it was a quick turnaround process that caused confusion.

Our proposal is to select the executive committee at the annual meeting of the board (this refers to the initial June meeting, not membership).

That meeting will be scheduled promptly, but go no longer than 30 days after the election. The current board will remain in place, but won't be able to make big decisions. Sort of like a lame duck board until we have that meeting scheduled. It provides a window for people to announce their intentions to run for the executive committee and better understand the process.

LaFleur asked if it required a bylaws change.

Walker said that it did not because the annual meeting already is in the bylaws and says it must take place after the election, but does not specify a time. It currently says "promptly." He also noted that several former board members are on the committee.

Discussion about timing of the board meeting.

Rosenthal asked whether that would separate the board meeting from the conference and the membership meeting. He also asked whether there was a concern of not having executive committee elections at the conferences.

Discussion followed.

Thompson clarified that we always met in June at the conference and then in the fall, we had our retreat. And then we would have a meeting like maybe after the first of the year and maybe one more.

Forsyth asked whether separating the meetings would add a (travel) cost for board members in the future. She also asked whether extending board members term after the election would require a bylaws change.

Walker said that the board could meet by video. It would be a lame duck board. This is just giving us some extra breathing room. So if there's new members like there were this past year, it gives them some time to understand what a board member does. If there's people who want to run for the executive committee, they can understand the roles and make declarations.

Forsyth said she supports the proposal, but wanted to make sure the board is allowed to create a lame duck situation.

Upton said she supports the proposal, but said it would be worth running by our attorney. She asked why 30 days was chosen.

Walker said it was to create an operating window.

LaFleur suggested checking with our attorney to make sure it would not require a bylaws change.

Walker said that committee members and former board members Sarah Cohen and Ziva Branstetter said it would fit within our current bylaws.

Rosenthal suggested shortening the lame duck period to 15 or 10 days.

Upton asked whether we could run it by the attorney.

Walker said he was concerned that it might take too much time to do wait for the attorney.

Thompson asked for a motion to conditionally approve the change, pending a conversation with the attorney.

Motion from Walker to conditionally approve changing the executive committee election, pending approval by attorney, with a period of 10 days. Rich seconded.

Upton asked for a friendly amendment to clarify that it is the June board meeting that would be moved, not the annual membership meeting.

Vote: Approved unanimously

Rich said the committee also proposes defining the role of the at-large member of the executive committee (currently held by Rich) Currently the bylaws don't define the position. The committee proposed that the at-large member be guaranteed chairmanship of a board committee to help better define the role of the position. He also said the position could be an opportunity for someone to learn more about the executive committee and develop for future positions.

Discussion of role of at-large member.

Rosenthal noted that the position has been held by many experienced members, including past presidents. He suggested removing the language making the at-large position a "learning" position be removed from the description.

Discussion about the value of keeping the language of the at-large position being a "learning" position.

Rich noted that the committee is working on onboarding for new board members.

Kwiatkowski said it would be helpful to have documents that provide information about board positions and procedures.

Motion from Rich to guarantee the chairmanship of a committee of the president's choosing to the at-large member of the executive committee. The committee will come back to the board to define the at-large position. Rosenthal seconded.

Vote: Approved 10 to 3
Yes: Barnes, Fleischer, Galli, Kwiatkowski, Rich, Rochester, Rosenthal, Stafford, Thompson and Walker

No: Forsyth, LaFleur and Upton

LaFleur left at 11:00. Rosenthal took over as secretary.

Walker introduced the third proposal put forth by the Governance Committee – that IRE encourage all board candidates to post a two-minute video explaining their candidacy. He said this would give candidates a chance to speak to members before the in-person speeches at the conference, which typically take place after most voters have already voted.

Rich clarified that the video would not be required, and it would not replace the speeches at the conference.

Motion from Walker that the board approve the following: "Ahead of the polls opening, each candidate is encouraged to submit a two-minute candidate statement video."

Upton suggested a friendly amendment – the inclusion of the phrase "up to two minutes."

Walker accepted the amendment, making the motion the following: "Ahead of the polls opening, each candidate is encouraged to submit a candidate statement video of up to two minutes." Fleischer seconded.

Vote: Approved unanimously

Rich introduced the fourth proposal put forth by the Governance Committee – that IRE require board candidates to answer two additional questions in their candidate statements, regarding how they would work to improve diversity, equity and inclusion within IRE; and how they would address a specific challenge that IRE faces. He said this change would make the candidate statements more relevant to members and would make it less likely that the statements discuss only the journalism awards won by the candidate and other such material.

Walker added that this committee's proposal would also include the creation of a pre-election webinar for board candidates to learn about the board and member responsibilities.

Motion from Rich to approve the following: "Add these questions to the website and include language saying the candidacy statement should include answers to these questions:

**How would you work to improve diversity, equity and inclusion within IRE? If you are an incumbent, please also address your work on this as an existing board member.

** Please describe a specific challenge you believe IRE faces and how you would address it if elected."

Ahead of declaring candidacy, interested candidates will participate in an onboarding webinar to better understand the responsibilities of a board member, the dos and don'ts of being a board member, and have an opportunity to participate in a Q&A. The live webinar will feature past board members.

Walker seconded.

Upton asked a clarifying question, wondering who would be responsible for putting together the webinar.

Rich answered that it would be up to the Member Services Committee.

Vote: Approved unanimously

Rich raised the final item from the Governance Committee, an informational item that he said the committee was putting before the board so members could consider it before taking action in the future:

"The full board voted 10-3 for the governance committee to create a formal proposal to extend terms for IRE board members from two to three years and how to implement that change. The committee has developed language to make this a smooth transition. Please review and let us know your feelings at a future meeting. Here is the proposed language:

PROPOSAL: Terms for IRE board members will be extended from two to three years. The change would be only for future elections and would not apply retroactively. In 2022 and 2023, when the change is being phased in, each candidate must choose whether to run for a two- or a three-year term.

Prior to publicly posting candidates before voting begins, the Executive Director will inform all candidates how many members have decided to run in each category, at which time candidates who have submitted to run in one category will have the option to switch to the other. In 2022, the three candidates who won the most votes among the three-year terms win election to the board and the top four running for two-year terms win election to the board. In 2023, the top four running for three-year terms win election to the board and the top two running for two-year terms win election to the board. In 2024 and thereafter, all candidates will be running for three- year terms."

Barnes left at 11:08 a.m.

Revenue Committee, Fleischer (report)

Fleischer said that one of the action items on the report, regarding a proposed collaboration with the Media Mentors online platform, had already been addressed and approved. She moved on to the next item, regarding the Campus Campaign. She proposed that the board create a working group to finalize proposed details of the campaign in the future.

Rosenthal asked why there was a need for the working group. He suggested that the committee propose the details itself.

Fleischer said that the board usually creates working groups to deal with major initiatives with monetary implications. But in this case, she said if it was okay with the rest of the board, the Revenue Committee would work on the details itself and return to the board with a proposal.

Fleischer raised the final action item from the Revenue Committee, a query about whether the committee should be involved in generating conference sponsorships.

Thompson said the committee should discuss that issue with the executive director.

Malan said she would be happy to discuss that issue with the committee.

Awards Committee, Thompson for LaFleur and Barnes (report)

Thompson introduced the report of the Awards Committee, which only included informational items: IRE announced the winners of the Philip Meyer Award on Jan. 19. IRE Award screening opened the week of Jan. 11 with a deadline of mid-February. There were 455 entries this year, slightly down from 470 last year.

Motion from Galli to adjourn. Second from Forsyth.

Vote: Approved unanimously

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Note: These minutes were approved via email. 1/30/21 - Motion by Rosental, second by Stafford

IRE Executive Director's Report
January 2021

NICAR21:

Registration is open for our first ever virtual NICAR Conference. The conference will feature many of the same NICAR traditions such as Lightning Talks, T-shirt contest, panels, demos and hands-on classes. It will look different this year, of course. The hands-on classes will be pre-recorded videos so that people can come in at their skill level and learn at their own pace. To compliment those, we are setting up one-on-one "Office Hours" in all the various skills so that attendees can get help learning those skills or with projects.

We are doing the Campus Campaign again this year and also are able to offer more fellowships with the online conference. We will have roughly 140 fellowships (depending on how many are students and professionals), when usually we have less than 10 for an in-person conference.

MASTER CLASSES:

Last week we launched a new kind of training event, Online Master Classes. These are modeled after the classes started a few years ago at our conferences. Our first two master classes are Digital Investigations on Feb. 19 and Becoming a Public Records Sleuth on March 17. These were the two classes with the largest waiting lists after IRE21.

IRE ON CAMPUS PROGRAM:

In early January, we completed our second-ever data bootcamp for educators, thanks to help from Jodi Upton and Alex Richards, with another sell-out crowd. We will have a third bootcamp online with sponsorship from Syracuse University and hope to pursue additional funding to continue these highly successful bootcamps. The other component of the program is custom training for HSIs and HBCUs. We originally had funding for two in-person campus visits this year, and we were able to convert travel money from this grant into training money to add four more. In the virtual world, these "campus visits" will be a combination of guest speaking in journalism classes, brainstorming sessions with student media, training workshops and hands-on data classes. Schools we are training under the program:

- San Diego State University
- Florida A&M University
- University of Arizona

- University of Texas-El Paso
- Morgan State University
- North Carolina Central University

ONLINE BOOTCAMPS:

Our online bootcamps continue to do well. In addition to our traditional, 4.5-day data journalism bootcamps, we have been offering two-day mini-bootcamps during the pandemic. Many of these are selling out, including spreadsheets and SQL. We expect to continue to offer those for the foreseeable future, even as events come back online, because they help fill a demand for training for those who cannot afford to travel.

ONLINE TV WORKSHOPS:

We've also launched our online TV Watchdog Workshops. There will be four this spring, which wraps up our workshops under the Knight Foundation grant focused on training local TV news reporters. The first two, Upping your Game and Legal Workshop with RCFP, were in January.
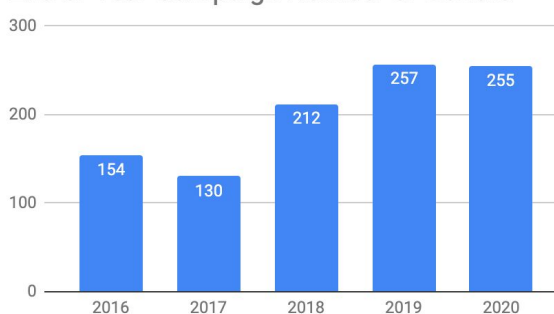
YEAR-END GIVING:

We ended the year with a very strong end-of-year giving campaign.

Here's how we've done the last few years on end-of-year giving (Nov/Dec donations):

End of Year Campaign Dollars Raised

2016: $24,872
2017: $21,395
2018: $32,780
2019: $32,538
2020: $35,306

End of Year Campaign Number of Donors

2016: 154
2017: 130
2018: 212
2019: 257
2020: 255

STAFF UPDATES:

Cody Winchester, a training director with IRE since 2017, has been promoted to senior training director, overseeing the training and data services staff.

Conference Committee Report – January 2021

Members:
Cindy Galli (Chair) – ABC News
Matt Dempsey – Houston Chronicle
Kyle Jones – NBC Connecticut
John Kelly – ABC Owned Stations
Marisa Kwiatkowski – USA TODAY
Steven Rich – Washington Post
Mark Rochester – Type Investigations
Brian Rosenthal – The New York Times

The Conference Committee met in early January to discuss NICAR and IRE 2021.

KEY DISCUSSIONS:

1) **NICAR 2021 Preparation.** Feedback from staff is that virtual NICAR 2021 is in good shape and that panels are nearly set. Denise Malan has requested that we assist with the "Office Hours" sessions, which are hands-on hours with data journalists who can assist one-on-one with specific skills. I've asked Malan for guidance on what is needed (including who our NICAR speakers are so there is not overlap) and she advises we will have more details in the weeks to come. All Committee members are eager to assist.

2) **IRE Keynote Speaker.** The committee has a list of four potential keynote speakers to present to the board.

   Action Item: We will present the list to the board the list of four potential keynote speakers for approval in order to immediately begin reach out for June availability.

3) **IRE Keynote and AMA Speakers.** Reupping this discussion from October 2020 as plans for IRE21 now get underway. Should we decide to once again have the "Ask Me Anything" or other spotlight panels, the Conference Committee would nominate speakers and moderators for these, much like it does for the keynote speakers. As noted previously, this is intended to not only take burden off staff, who largely brainstorm and book these sessions while putting together the entire conference, but also to give the Conference Committee visibility on those chosen to speak at IRE.

Member Services Committee Report:

Responsible for member recruitment, reviewing training efforts and member resources.

- Kat Stafford, The Associated Press – Chair
- Bethany Barnes, Tampa Bay Times
- Kiran Chawla, freelance broadcaster, Baton Rouge
- Jodie Fleischer, NBC4 Washington
- Ana Ley, The Virginian Pilot
- Emmanuel Martinez, The Markup
- Topher Sanders, ProPublica
- Mark Walker, The New York Times

The Member Services Committee met 12/8 to discuss potential mentorship program

<mark>Discussion/Action:</mark>

Partnership with Journalism Mentors to create a year-round IRE mentorship offering: The committee has recommended the board consider creating a partnership with Journalism Mentors to offer our members access to year-round mentoring through IRE-selected mentors. https://journalismmentors.com/mentors

Journalism Mentors is a virtual mentoring program and volunteer effort that was created by journalists Ariana Lacey and Caitlin Ostroff to help foster the next generation of journalists. The program currently offers mentorship through categories such as audio, radio, audience engagement, broadcast, sports, data, investigative journalism and more. IRE would be able to assume responsibility and control of the investigative specific tab, as well as its branding. We would have the ability to vet mentors using the same standards and code of conduct we apply to our mentoring offerings during our conferences. We would have the ability to dictate that all mentors must also be IRE members, should we choose to. Board Members Steven Rich and Marisa Kwiatkowski are already mentors for the program, as are other IRE members.

---Cost and time commitment: Aside from the initial effort to determine how we'd like to brand the page and select mentors, it should not be a drain on staff resources. The platform is self-matching – meaning potential mentees match themselves with mentors and the mentors have the ability to set the times they are available. (See site for example of how it's set up). We estimate it could cost between $2,500 to $5,000 to fund a full, five-year partnership with this platform, depending on the page features and how involved IRE wants to be with the site. However, we'd like to have staff weigh in with their expertise.

IRE could fund this outright or Membership Services Committee can partner with the Revenue Committee to identify outside funding opportunities.

Note: This would not replace the mentoring offered through our conferences. This would be supplemental. Some journalists, particularly our younger members, have expressed interest for mentorship opportunities outside of the conference. Mentors are able to volunteer and offer free, half-hour or longer, one-on-one sessions for advice, guidance or general questions.

Program metrics:

- 2019: 54K page views
- 2020: 53K page views
- Average monthly visitors: 4K
- Top traffic source: Direct
- Number of mentors: 113

*See attached Journalism Mentors Information document for more metrics and info on the program.

Informational item:
1. **Membership survey:** The committee has narrowed down the questions after receiving board feeding. Working with staff to discuss next steps and execution.

Founders:
- Adriana Lacy (Axios, USC)
- Caitlin Ostroff (Wall Street Journal)

Social Media
- Twitter: @jourmentors (3K followers)
- Instagram: @journalismmentors (150 followers)
- Facebook: facebook.com/journalismmentors (Facebook group: 500 people)

Newsletter
- 1,200 subscribers
- Average open rate: 59%
- Click through rate: 11%

Website
- **Pageviews**
  - 2019: 54K
  - 2020: 53K
  - Average Monthly Visitors: 4K
  - Top traffic source: Direct
  - Top pageviews viewed: Mentorship landing page and Internships/fellowships page

Media Mentors Program
- **Number of Mentors:** 113
- **Mentor Categories:** Reporting, Data, Editing, Marketing, Investigative, Broadcast, Design, Photo, Audio, Product, Engineering, Audience Engagement
- **How It Works:** Students, those young in their careers and those wanting to learn about a different segment of media can book a 30-minute session with any of the mentors listed to ask questions and learn about what they do and their pathway. Sessions are organized through Calendly so mentors are in control of their availability and emails and other personal information are not exposed.
- **Mentor Selection:** Mentors volunteer their time and apply through an online form. Mentors are vetted by an online search for clips, broadcast/audio segments or other examples demonstrating the experience they submit to us. Those listed provide a headshot, a bit of their background, what they feel comfortable mentoring on and sometimes what languages they mentor in.
- **Who It Draws:** In addition to students/professionals from the U.S. finding Media Mentors, we've also had sessions with people in India, the Philippines, the U.K. and other nations. In the future, we hope to do more targeted outreach to HBCUs and community colleges.

Facebook Group

- The Journalism Mentors Facebook Group (College Media) is a space for student journalists all over the country to discuss best practices in their newsrooms and provide peer-to-peer advice. Currently, the group has over 500 members.

Newsletter
- The Journalism Mentors newsletter (The Latest) is a weekly rundown of the latest resources for student journalists. The newsletter features excerpts from the Journalism Mentors blog, a mentorship spotlight along with various reading items. Currently, the newsletter has over 1,200 subscribers, a 59% open rate and an 11% clickthrough rate.

Blog
- The Journalism Mentors blog highlights students working in the journalism industry and tips for success.

IRE Governance Committee action items

ITEM 1: The Governance Committee proposed moving the election of board officers to a few days after the election to allow the elected board to learn about the board members, duties, responsibilities and positions they could hold on the board. This would need a bylaws change. See appendix for bylaws change requirements. Discussion about whether board members should make statements about their intent and what they would do in an officer position. We need to discuss and refine with concrete language.

PROPOSAL: The selection of the executive committee will take place at the annual meeting of the board which will schedule promptly and within 30 days of the election. The current board will remain in place as a lame-duck board until this meeting the place. All board members who intend to run for the executive committee must declare their candidacy ahead of the meeting.

ITEM 2: The Governance Committee proposed defining the responsibilities of the executive committee's at-large position. Discussion about whether it could be a liaison to the rest of the board. The duties are not defined in the bylaws. Thompson suggested that that position could be assigned to chair the Governance Committee. Let's discuss and decide what we need to do.

PROPOSAL: The at-large member of the board of directors will chair one of the organization's committees. The position will remain a learning position for anyone seeking to a higher position on the executive committee and will also help them gain valuable experience while making a contribution to the organization.

ITEM 3: The Governance Committee proposed moving the board candidate forum to earlier in the conference to give members a chance to hear from the candidates before voting. With online voting, it makes sense to let members hear from candidates earlier in the process. Rich shared suggestions from the committee such as doing videos earlier or doing a candidate forum. The board discussed the format of a video component for candidate statements. Mark Rochester suggested we add an orientation for those interested in running for the board. Rich clarified that the forum would still exist at the conference and that the proposal is to add 2-minute videos to the candidate statements. Discussion about content and format of video.

PROPOSAL: Ahead of the polls opening, each candidate is encouraged to submit a two-minute candidate statement video.

ITEM 4: Replace the existing open-ended candidate statements with a statement that should include responses to a list of updated questions that will be on the website.

PROPOSAL: Add these questions to the website and include language saying the candidacy statement should include answers to these questions.

** How would you work to improve diversity, equity and inclusion within IRE? If you are an incumbent, please also address your work on this as an existing board member.

** Please describe a specific challenge you believe IRE faces and how you would address it if elected.

Ahead of declaring candidacy, interested candidates will participate in an onboarding webinar to better understand the responsibilities of a board member, the do's and dont's of being a board member, and have an opportunity to participate in a Q&A. The live webinar will feature past board members.

INFORMATIONAL ITEM:

The full board voted 10-3 to extend terms for IRE board members from two to three years. The committee has developed language to make this a smooth transition. Please review and let us know your feelings at a future meeting. Here is the proposed language:

PROPOSAL: Terms for IRE board members will be extended from two to three years. The change would be only for future elections and would not apply retroactively. In 2022 and 2023, when the change is being phased in, each candidate must choose whether to run for a two- or a three-year term.

Prior to publicly posting candidates before voting begins, the Executive Director will inform all candidates how many members have decided to run in each category, at which time candidates who have submitted to run in one category will have the option to switch to the other. In 2022, the three candidates who won the most votes among the three-year terms win election to the board and the top four running for two-year terms win election to the board. In 2023, the top four running for three-year terms win election to the board and the top two running for two-year terms win election to the board. In 2024 and thereafter, all candidates will be running for three-year terms.

Revenue Committee Report – January 2021

Committee Members: Jodie Fleischer (co-chair)**,** David Boardman (co-chair)**,** Jennifer Forsyth**,** Brian Rosenthal**,** Dana Chinn**,** Mc Nelly Torres, Manny Garcia

The Revenue Committee met in October in a joint session with the Endowment Committee to discuss development of an IRE Legacy program to solicit planned gifts and estate gifts from aging members and how that money should be allocated internally. Staff has proceeded with adding a special solicitation page to the new website: https://www.ire.org/donate/ire-legacy-society/
The board should provide further guidance on whether the money should become part of the general operating fund or the endowment in the future.

The committee discussed the potential for future member-oriented fundraisers to generate additional internal revenue. This might include branded merchandise, an auction, etc. Jennifer Forsyth agreed to spearhead further research into the logistics and feasibility of this concept.

Campus Campaign

Following the combined meeting, the Revenue Committee discussed the IRE Conference Campus Campaign and Fleischer commended Dana Chinn for thinking of the idea.

The committee discussed expansion of the program for the 2021 conferences and the desire to increase the revenue opportunity by restructuring the details once the 2021 conference rates are set. The Committee initially proposed a tiered fee structure for IRE 2020 to incentivize universities to send additional students. Due to IRE data-entry and website limitations, along with staff time constraints, Doug Haddix requested a simpler "buy 10 students, get one educator free" program.

Student memberships and conference rates were offered at full price and for every 10 students, the university was afforded one educator registration for free. The educator had to already be an active IRE member or pay for new membership.

The program generated $26,610 and brought 342 students to the conference; many were first-time IRE members and attendees.

The Committee recommends the Board expand the program and revisit the fee structure or create a working group to determine how to maximize revenue for this program in the future. (Action Item 1)

Note, staff has already sent out the program flyer advertising the same rates for NICAR 2021, so any change to the tier structure would take effect for the IRE Conference 2021.

Denise Malan has assumed the staff liaison role for the Revenue Committee and has assured that staff is proceeding with outreach for the program to include emails to all existing academic members and each of the 14 schools that previously participated in this program. Staff will also initiate a targeted outreach to contacts at HBCU and HSI campuses to coincide with our efforts to increase JOC membership.

The redesigned website should have the capability for program participants to register themselves for the conference using a special code, thus alleviating the staff data-entry time burden.

Media Mentors Program
The committee also discussed a potential collaboration with the Media Mentors Program to expand their online platform and brand their investigative page, as outlined in the September Revenue Committee report. Since the action item regarding that program was removed from the prior Board agenda, the details are provided again below. (Action Item 2)

-Media Mentors is start-up web platform that allows mentees to select and self-match with a mentor who has self-enrolled on the site. The platform currently includes an investigative page, which IRE could manage and brand as its own.
https://journalismmentors.com/mentors/investigative
-Note: Board Members Steven Rich and Marisa Kwiatkowski are already mentors within this program, as are several other IRE members.

-The site averages roughly 4,000 page-views per month, with 54,000 page-views in 2019 and 53,000 in 2020.

-They are working on expanding to allow mentors to provide training sessions online and to create a database of HBCUs, HSIs and community colleges for additional outreach.

The Committee members felt confident they could find a sponsor to fund the $2500-$5000 commitment needed to fund this program if the board requires it. However, there were concerns about tying such an important function as mentorship to a sponsor, especially if it includes the sponsor's branding on the web page. At such a low cost, the Board should consider whether to fund this program internally, perhaps using revenue from the Campus Campaign, since students would likely be a significant beneficiary of both programs. (Action Item 2)

Conference Sponsorships
Fleischer informed the committee of a recommendation by Doug Haddix during the last board meeting to have the Revenue Committee seek to secure conference sponsorships in the future. The group expressed a unified concern that this was not the understood intent of the committee and not necessarily within their skill set. A concern was also raised regarding potential overlap with staff outreach, given that this has primarily been a staff function. The group determined that the committee should await additional direction on this from the Board. (Action Item 3)

Recommendations / Action Items for the Board:

1) The Board should consider expanding the tiered fee structure for the Campus Campaign for IRE 2021 to increase revenue.

2) The Board should consider approval of a multi-year collaboration with the Media Mentors online platform to coordinate year-round IRE mentoring.
    (in conjunction with Member Services action item)
    Recommendation to authorize $2500 initially, not to exceed $5000, of IRE funds raised from the Campus Campaign to fund expenses associated with upgrade and buildout of the IRE page on the Media Mentors platform.

3) Board discussion is needed to determine whether the Revenue Committee should be engaged in generating conference sponsorships. The committee members expressed concern that this is not their area of expertise, also that this could a duplication of requests, given that this has traditionally been a staff function.

Awards Committee Report
Jan. 25, 2021

Awards Committee: Jennifer LaFleur, Bethany Barnes, Cindy Galli, Cheryl W. Thompson and Jodi Upton

Contest Judges: Jennifer LaFleur, Bethany Barnes, Fernando Diaz, Jessica Huseman, Zaneta Lowe, Eric Sagara and Kameel Stanley

The judges for the **Philip Meyer Award** wrapped up the selection process. The winners were announced Jan. 19.

The Meyer judges were: Sarah Cohen, Brant Houston, Jodi Upton, David McKie, Talia Buford and Cheryl Phillips

IRE Award screening opened the week of Jan. 11 with a deadline of mid-February. We had 455 entries this year. Last year, there were 470 entries.

The contest judges will meet virtually March 26-28.

Update to 1/25/21 minutes

4/28/2021

Motion from Walker to conditionally approve changing the executive committee election, ==pending approval by attorney, within a period of 10 days. Rich seconded.==

Upton asked for a friendly amendment to clarify that it is the June board meeting that would be moved, not the annual membership meeting.

Vote: Approved unanimously

==**Update:**==

==Thompson and Rochester spoke with IRE's attorney who said that changing the period to within 10 days would not require a change in IRE's bylaws.==