

**UPAA Board Meeting - Annual Meeting
Minutes
July 14, 2025**

MEETING INFORMATION:

Date: 7/14/25

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 3:06 p.m. EST

Duration: 90 minutes

Location: University of Tennessee, Knoxville – Student Union Room 260

Meeting Type: In-person

Board Members Present:

Cydney Scott (President), Mark Carriveau (Vice President), Lyndsie Schlink, Jason Halley (Secretary), Derek Eckenroth, Nate Edwards, Kristen Grace (Treasurer), and Jeff Fitlow.

Additional Attendees (joined at 12:00 noon):

Amanda Pitts, Jay Ferchaud, Jesse Jones (via submitted report), Glenn Carpenter, Meredith Forrest Kulwicki, Katherine Seghers, and Brett Szczepanski.

UPAA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

President Cydney Scott called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

The board reviewed the minutes from the 2024 Mid-Year Meeting held at the University of Tennessee. Jason Halley made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mark Carriveau. The motion passed unanimously with an 8–0 vote, and the minutes were approved as presented.

President’s Report

Cydney Scott began by emphasizing the importance of identifying clear action items for the board and ensuring that members have sufficient information to make informed decisions. She expressed a desire to implement a comprehensive “big survey” to gather feedback from the membership and better understand the association’s evolving needs.

Vice President’s Report

Vice President Mark Carriveau reported on recent updates related to the awards program. He noted that the transition from framed certificates to plaques had gone smoothly and was well received by members. The new plaques, he said, add a sense of significance to the awards and are also easier to transport. Mark also introduced the idea of implementing stock ribbons for name tags, which can be ordered in bulk at a reasonable cost of \$14 per set.

All awards had arrived on schedule, and he expressed appreciation for the smooth logistics. Mark also announced that 2026 would be his final year serving on the board. He is looking to see who wants to work with him to take over the awards program.

Treasurer's Report

Cydney Scott presented the Treasurer's Report. She explained that Kristen Grace had temporarily managed treasury duties alongside her corporate relations role, but those responsibilities have since transitioned back to the President's oversight. Nate Edwards volunteered to assist with treasury management going forward.

Cydney stated that QuickBooks Online would no longer be used, as the board agreed that a shared spreadsheet provides adequate financial tracking. Checks will continue to be sent to Cydney's address for deposit, and Nate will manually record account details in the financial spreadsheet. Membership payments will be deposited as they arrive, with updates communicated to Membership Chair Lyndsie Schlink.

Financially, the organization remains in a strong position. The PNC Bank account currently holds a significant amount and a new Chase Bank account has been opened to receive incoming funds. The PNC account will remain open temporarily to preserve access to historical records. Cydney also noted that the board's financial surplus allows for capital investments, particularly in the ongoing website development project. A brief discussion followed regarding filing, tax responsibilities, and financial reporting requirements.

Secretary's Report

Secretary Jason Halley provided an overview of the meeting agenda and reviewed the proposed schedule for the upcoming Annual Business Meeting. He outlined procedural items and discussed key topics to be included in the general membership session.

Communications Report

Jason Halley continued with the Communications Report, noting that the board finalized its review of the Annual Business Meeting agenda.

Member Concerns

Jason Halley led a discussion on member engagement and communication tools. The group acknowledged the challenges of maintaining a consistent online community. The current forum feature on the website is not mobile-friendly and presents storage limitations. Alternatives such as Discord and Slack were considered, but both were found to have drawbacks—Discord poses identity management challenges, while Slack is cost-prohibitive and lacks long-term message retention.

The board agreed to develop a short survey to better understand which communication platforms members prefer. In addition, a broader membership "big survey" will be implemented to gather feedback about overall member engagement, and a separate symposium survey will be distributed after the event to evaluate programming and logistics.

The discussion turned to potential voting biases in competitions, specifically whether members were voting for their own institutions. Cydney shared results from her review of voting data and confirmed that self-voting was not a significant issue.

The board also discussed category clarity in competitions and agreed that some descriptions were ambiguous. Following discussion, **Mark Carriveau made a motion to add a new “General Features” category to address newsworthy and feature-style submissions that do not fit existing classifications. The motion was seconded by Kristen Grace and passed unanimously with an 8–0 vote.** The description for the new category will be finalized later.

Nate Edwards provided an update on survey tools, explaining that survey data can be filtered by question type and that results can be segmented for specific reporting needs. Lyndsie Schlink recommended including demographic questions in the next salary survey to improve data insights.

Constitution and By-Laws

Cydney Scott briefly updated the board on current voting procedures and confirmed that no immediate constitutional changes were required at this time.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Lyndsie Schlink and Cydney Scott reported on progress within DEI initiatives. They announced the development of a one-on-one mentorship program designed to pair newer members with experienced professionals. The program’s goal is to offer guidance, encouragement, and practical advice to strengthen the UPAA community.

Glenn Carpenter added that funding is available to support several mentorship pairings and encouraged members to contribute to these efforts through donations.

Membership Report

Lyndsie Schlink presented the membership data for the year. As of July 2025, UPAA’s total membership stands at 483, consisting of 35 associate members, 330 full members, 9 retired members, 61 student members, and 48 video producers. She noted that outreach efforts continue to Historically Black Colleges and Universities as well as women’s colleges to encourage broader participation.

Lyndsie also described plans to expand the Bill and Amy Fellowship Fund to include support not only for membership dues but also for Symposium registration fees for members who lack institutional funding.

Working Lunch and Chair Updates

During the noon working lunch, the board heard reports from several committee chairs and coordinators.

Meredith Forrest Kulwicky presented the **Content and Publications Report**, noting the success of the inaugural year of the Creative Partners program, which drew participation from 70

members. She expressed a desire to continue the program with stronger communication and structure. Meredith also discussed the transition of leadership for *Depth in Field* and reaffirmed the goal of maintaining consistent publication despite declining viewership.

Jay Ferchaud, reporting on behalf of Jesse Jones, provided updates from the **Annual Competitions Committee**. Participation remains strong, with 78 publication entries, 406 APC submissions, and 55 narrative series entries. The goal of \$4,000 in revenue was exceeded, generating approximately \$8,000.

Brett Szczepanski reported on the **Video Committee**, sharing that the University of Tennessee's Symposium programming had been well received. He expressed appreciation for the board's openness to new ideas and noted the importance of improving vendor relations. Brett suggested establishing two co-chair positions for the video committee to strengthen leadership and engagement and encouraged continued recruitment efforts through "bring a friend" outreach.

Katherine Seghers presented the **Social Media Report**, highlighting an increase of 850 followers on Instagram and new memberships attributed to social media visibility. She is developing a strategic social media plan with a greater emphasis on LinkedIn engagement and consistency in content scheduling.

Amanda Pitts discussed **Corporate Relations**, emphasizing the need for a dedicated assistant or "runner" for corporate coordination during Symposium events. She reported that several new prizes had been donated by guest speakers and that efforts are underway to attract more video-related corporate partners.

Glenn Carpenter delivered the **Fundraising Report**, summarizing his research into establishing a 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity for UPAA. While the potential benefits include tax-deductible donations and increased eligibility for sponsorships, Glenn explained that the costs and administrative burden would outweigh the advantages. He recommended that the board not pursue nonprofit status and instead continue to track donations as dedicated line items within UPAA's financial system. He also confirmed that Bill and Amy continue to contribute directly to the fellowship fund.

Symposium Updates

Amanda Pitts and Glenn Carpenter provided updates on the 2025 Symposium, hosted by the University of Tennessee, and discussed logistics, vendor coordination, and programming plans. Eric Bronson provided a preview of the 2026 Symposium, which will be hosted by the University of Michigan. Tentative dates are June 22–26, 2026, chosen to avoid Juneteenth. Eric reported that \$20,000 in departmental support has been secured. Planned programming includes a drone workshop, a video storytelling session with Brian Storm, a sports action workshop with Carmen Mandato, and a shootout at Greenfield Village.

Possible sponsorship opportunities with MediaStorm are also being explored. Additional venue options, such as the Michigan Theatre and the Michigan Art Museum, are under consideration.

for evening events. The symposium will also include a community service project involving donations to local students.

Website Report

Derek Eckenroth presented updates on the website redevelopment project. He reviewed the list of requested features and the cost estimates provided by NorthStudio. Recent improvements include the implementation of a “download all” feature, and future updates will add embedded video functionality, integration of digital badges, and competition card enhancements such as time zone and date displays. Derek noted that while each feature adds value, it also increases cost and complexity within the Drupal upgrade framework.

Additional Discussions

The board reviewed the status of digital badges and discussed the timeline for appointing a new treasurer to begin following the Symposium. There was also discussion of potential Member Image Competition rule changes, specifically whether to prohibit members from voting for entries from their own institutions. The board also discussed timekeeping procedures for breakout sessions to improve schedule consistency during the Symposium.

Adjournment

At 3:06 p.m., Mark Carriveau made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Kristen Grace. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes prepared by:

Jason Halley, Secretary