

**UPAA Board Monthly Meeting - Midyear  
Minutes  
Nov 8, 2025**

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**MEETING INFORMATION:**

Date: 11/8/25

Time: 10:35 a.m. EST

Call to Order: 10:37 a.m.

Adjourned: 4:08 p.m.

Duration: 5 hours and 31 minutes

Location: University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

Meeting Type: Hybrid (In-Person and Zoom)

Attendees:

Board Invitees: *Jason Halley, Mark Carriveau, Kristen Grace, Lyndsie Schlink, Chris Low, Cydney Scott, Nate Edwards (online), and Derek Eckenroth (online)*

Other Invitees: Katherine Seghers, Meredith Forrest Kulwicki

**QUICK RECAP**

The board meeting covered preparations for the upcoming symposium and addressed various member concerns. The group discussed content strategy for publications and membership initiatives, including some of the survey results and social media performance. Financial updates and officer roles were reviewed, along with plans for future symposiums and scholarship funding options.

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**CALL TO ORDER (10:37AM EST)**

The meeting was called to order at 10:37 a.m. by President Cydney Scott. Prior to official business, Cydney shared that she had toured potential locations for the corporate partners' thank you reception during the symposium. Cydney will proceed to find a proper location along with the help of the symposium planning committee.

**REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF UT ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES**

Mark made a motion to approve the UT annual meeting minutes, which was seconded by Cydney. The motion passed unanimously 8-0.

**MEMBER CONCERNS**

The board moved to discuss submitted member concerns:

*Updating web feature photos that are more reflective of the organization.*

The board discussed a member's concern about diversity on website photos selections.

The issue was addressed when the concern came in weeks prior. Cydney made changes to the feature photos on the website, noting that the competition page would feature the APC Best of Show, the awards section would highlight the Photographer of the Year's

work, the symposium attendee group shot would be added to the “About Us” page to best reflect the make up of the membership..

#### *Adding Video Triple Play At Future Symposiums*

A discussion explored the possibility of alternating between photo and video Triple Play sessions. Cydney will discuss the possibility of a Video Triple Play when the new Video Producer Co-Chairs are onboarded in the coming weeks. Additional time to review symposium offerings also discussed critiques. Nate suggested rebranding the session to emphasize feedback and learning rather than critique, focusing on member growth and success.

#### *Request to better highlight Job Opportunities*

Cydney noted that job postings on the website remain labor-intensive. The board discussed ways to improve this process, including exploring Indeed and HigherEdJobs.com for university-based listings. Lyndsie suggested inviting a career advisor to speak during a UPAA Live session so that members can have the best understanding possible of job hunt options, and Katherine offered to connect with a career developer to make this happen.

#### *Personal Vision Review*

A concern was reviewed regarding competition entries in the “Personal Vision” category and whether they should count toward points in the Photographer of the Year competition. According to early results on the competition survey, opinions were divided, with roughly half of early survey respondents supporting inclusion. Discussion followed on whether these entries should count toward one of the four allowable submissions or be considered separate. The matter was deferred for further review pending the competitions survey results.

#### *Survey and Transparency*

Nate reviewed early competitions survey results showing that approximately half of the 63 respondents were new members. Board members agreed to summarize rather than publish comments verbatim to preserve anonymity and tone. They agreed to write an article about the mid-year meeting and its outcomes. Future board meetings will include opportunities for open participation, and explore the idea of a “midyear” business meeting that could replace the January UPAA Live session.\* Cydney will coordinate with Eric Bronson on symposium planning in March, and a January 15 midyear business meeting will include organization and symposium updates.

\*Post Midyear meeting it was decided that the article for Depth in Field would provide members with all the information the board had to offer, and that a UPAA Live for a Q&A would be the best use of that time, rather than simply repeat what can be read in the midyear recap article (and in these meeting minutes).

#### *Competition Lightbox Improvements*

Derek will consult developers about adding category and caption visibility and exploring AI image labeling options. Also discussed was the resizing vertical images for consistency in competition viewing. Derek will work with web developers to test resolution options and request fixed aspect ratios for Lightbox viewing.

## **CHAIR REPORTS**

### **Communications**

Communications were reported as running smoothly, with no outstanding issues. Mailchimp does not make it easy to maintain current membership without extensive review.

### **Corporate Relations**

Kristen shared updates from her new role in Corporate Relations, including a meeting with ThinkTank. Concerns were raised regarding the number and value of prize points awarded to competition winners. ThinkTank expressed surprise at the overall credit totals and financial impact. Kristen will continue coordinating with them and suggested offering smaller door prizes and enhancing communication about available member benefits and affiliate programs. ThinkTank will cease the monthly monetary prize for Best in Show, but will offer door prizes at the symposium as well as a \$200 credit for the MIC winner moving forward.

Kristen also discussed opportunities for product reviews and vendor collaborations, including potential blog contributions and symposium loaner equipment partnerships with Lens Rentals and Viltrox.

The symposium survey questions covering corporate partners showed that 42% of members found equipment loaders helpful, and 54% valued the clean-and-check service, though some expressed concern about its future availability. Members showed interest in more partnerships with brands such as Panasonic, Sony, Leica, and Godox. Survey feedback also highlighted preferences for breakout sessions focused on workflow, leadership, DEI, and hands-on learning. Many members expressed confusion over session titles and wanted more time for keynote presentations and technical sessions.

## **LUNCH BREAK**

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 12:22 p.m. and reconvened at 12:52 p.m. Cydney made a motion to break for lunch, which was seconded by Mark. The motion passed unanimously 8-0.

## **CHAIR REPORTS (cont.)**

### **Website Report**

Derek reported on web updates, noting an update to the site regarding membership renewals. Members will now be able to renew their memberships a few weeks before the membership expiration date, award badge creation is tabled until the results of the competitions survey is complete and any further changes are made to competitions, and account labeling; Ethnicity fields will be added to member profiles. Derek will ask the

developers about improving the People tab's search functions and Lightbox viewing for MIC entries. Katherine suggested including Instagram handles on member profiles, and this will be considered to be revisited at the midyear business meeting. The team agreed that web developer time had been fully used, and additional hours will need to be purchased. Cydney asked that someone volunteer to review and edit the Annual Publication Competition rules and guidelines since some found the wording confusing last year. Kristen will edit those by April.

## **Magazine/Blog**

Meredith Forest Kulwicky joined via Zoom to present an update on *Depth in Field*, *The Contact Sheet*, and *Creative Partners*.

### *The Contact Sheet*

Meredith presented early designs for the contact sheet, which will be published (digitally) in December or January. She discussed the style guide and layout, and Mark suggested the publication style guide will feature the organization's official colors of red, black, and white. The group debated whether the publication should keep the printable format or embrace digital platforms, with Nate advocating for a purely digital format. Meredith raised questions about the content and format of the publication, including whether it should be a symposium recap or an annual report. The group agreed to aim for an end-of-year publication, potentially in January 2025, to ensure engagement from readers. The board will work in the coming weeks to share their thoughts about *The Contact Sheet*'s focus in this transition year, and share them with Meredith.

### *Depth of Field: UPAA Stories*

The *Depth of Field* blog was discussed as a potential space for board communication and thought leadership. Viewership numbers are modest, with 250–300 views for top stories. The board agreed that *Depth of Field* should serve as an outlet for board and member stories, complementing other communication channels. The board also discussed the purpose and audience of the *Depth of Field* publication, with Meredith suggesting it should focus on member contributions and "how-to" content rather than general news. The board reviewed analytics for the blog, noting that most popular posts were related to salary surveys and event recaps.

### *Creative Partners*

The Creative Partners program now includes 70 individuals and 12 groups, with active engagement in most. Vendor representatives such as John Scott and Sam Craft have expressed interest in participation.

## **Monthly Image Competition**

See addendum updates from Jay Ferchaud at the end of minutes.

## **Surveys**

Nate presented early findings from the competition survey with 63 responses, highlighting that 44% of respondents are new photographers, 68% focus solely on photography, and there's interest in receiving feedback and using AI tools. Nate shared survey results indicating that 80% of members have been with UPAA for 15 years or less and that most are satisfied with current programming. Members expressed interest to clarify features vs marketing and illustrations categories. It was shared about a strong interest in category POYs. Requests to submit digital only for publications competition.

### **Membership**

Lyndsie reported that UPAA has 446 total members, with 396 active paying members. Membership is composed of 276 photographers, 39 videographers, and several students, associates, retirees, and hybrid members. Demographic questions related to gender and race are being added to website membership profiles to support diversity tracking. The group discussed allowing hybrid members to update their membership type during renewals, with Derek emphasizing the need to ensure the system functions properly.

### **DEI**

Lyndsie presented DEI updates, noting that the board travel fund provided \$1,752 in grants this year. Membership fees were slightly increased to sustain the fund. Kristen emphasized the need to continue diversifying speakers and program content. The new Mentorship Program continues to grow, with 109 participants and 50 successful matches. The majority of mentors and mentees reported positive experiences. Scheduling was the primary challenge mentioned, but with the program being brand new, this is to be expected.

### **Social Media**

Katherine provided a social media update, reporting a total reach of over 212,000 views since September 1 and 583 new followers. LinkedIn growth is a priority for professional engagement and job sharing. Katherine proposed more vendor collaboration through short video reviews and rebranding "New Member Mondays" into "Member Spotlights."

## **OFFICER REPORTS**

### *President*

Cydney expresses growing into the role and checking in with the board. She shared that she feels well-supported and has learned from fellow board members, though she was encouraged to delegate more confidently. Lyndsie and Jason reiterated their support for her leadership. The group discussed the idea of Cydney emailing potential ideas and issue solutions with a timeframe for adjustments by the board. If that potential idea or issue solution was not countered by a certain timeline, the presented solution or idea would hold/be implemented.

### *Vice President*

No formal Vice President report was presented. Discussion suggested that relevant matters had already been communicated earlier in the meeting.

### *Treasurer*

Mark presented the treasurer's report, confirming that UPAA's finances remain strong. The organization earned \$12,000 from the symposium, which was allocated to future speaker funds. End of year competitions continue to generate surplus funds beyond the cost of the physical awards made for these competitions, though vendor reliability remains a concern. Mark suggested transitioning to a new award vendor which could possibly modestly increase award costs.

## **CHAIR REPORTS (cont.)**

### **Video Producer**

Cydney and Brett have identified the new chair co-individuals, Bri Lehan and Isaac Fowler. One of the video chairs will join the symposium planning committee. Kristen asked if one of them could assist with corporate partners. Isaac will edit two promotional videos—one promoting the symposium (delivery deadline january) and another promoting the organization (delivery TBD)

### **Review of Board Terms**

The board reviewed current term appointments as follows:

- 2023-2026

Mark Carriveau, Derek Eckenroth

- 2024-2027 Nate Edwards, Cydney Scott
- 2025-2028 Kristen Grace, Chris Low
- 2026-2029 Jason Halley, Katherine Seghers

### **Officer Elections and Appointments**

The board held elections for the upcoming term.

- Officers vote: (see addendum 3)
  - Cydney was re-elected as President. **(Mark motions, Chris seconds, all in favor)**
  - Kristen was elected Vice President. **(Mark motions, Derek seconds, all in favor)**
  - Mark will remain Treasurer. **(Cydney motions, Chris seconds, all in favor)**
  - Jason will remain Secretary. **(Cydney motion, Mark seconds, all in favor)**
- Chair appointments:
  - Chris Low was appointed Membership Chair starting in 2026.
  - Lyndsie will be DEI co-chair.
  - Derek will remain web chair.
  - Nate will remain survey chair.
- Jason expressed interest in future consideration for the Treasurer role.

### **Future Symposium Planning**

The 2027 Symposium will be hosted by {redacted}

### **Fundraising and Archives**

The board briefly discussed fundraising strategies for scholarships and donation logistics. It was noted that establishing a foundation may be too complex for future planning. For physical archives, Cydney and Mark agreed to send historical boxes to Chris Parent for potential digitizing. Kristen will contact MediaGraph for updates to archive materials.

### **Adjournment**

Jason made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Kristen. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting concluded at 4:08 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted by:  
Jason Halley, UPAA Secretary  
Mon, Nov 17th , 2025

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### **\*\*ADDENDUM: REPORTS\*\***

From Jay Ferchaud (via email Tue, Nov 11th):

#### **Monthly Image Competition**

Competition running smoothly with no technical issues that I know of except for a couple of membership vs. entering the MIC competition. Those were all fixed quickly. Every competition had 495+ entries which is great. Even better the Best of Show winners are those newer members and not those names from the past who you are used to seeing all the time.

\*Think Tank - I know this is an assigned Board Member/Sponsor Chair now. Since the competition began in 2004, I always dealt with Think Tank and got the gear and more recently credits for the Best of Show and MIC POY awards to the Individual who won the award each month. I completely understand Think Tank's decision to pull the monthly credits program for financial reasons, however. It is also great they will continue giving the MICPOY winner a \$200.00 prize!! would like for the Board to consider giving a Board Appreciation Award to Think Tank/Ted Mister. I wish I could have arranged getting one for the previous contacts, Brian and Matt, too but they have other jobs away from Think Tank now. Lastly, just curious on if Kristen ever had an online meeting with Ted at Think Tank and if so, how it went.

I really really appreciate the help each month going through the entries to make sure they are in the right spot and there is not certain information in the cutline. I think Lyndsie, Kristen and Derek are great and will continue to help each month. All in all, the numbers of those members who enter in the wrong category are extremely low.

I will continue to set up the competitions each month, tabulate and post results each month as well as remind the membership to enter and vote on FaceBook as needed. Sometimes I really

get busy at work around those reminder times for entering and voting so please feel free to jump in as well.

**Addendum 2:**

The January midyear business meeting which has now changed to be a board Q&A in January for UPAA Live.

**Addendum 3:**

Katherine Seghers will take the communications chair role.

Mark Carriveau will return to VP role (voted in during 12/9 board meeting)

Jason Halley will remain Secretary and take Treasurer. (Voted in 12/9 board meeting)