UPAA Board Meeting - Annual Meeting
Minutes
June 22, 2026

MEETING INFORMATION:

Date: 6/22/26
Time: 9am-3pm EST
Duration: all day
Meeting Invite: In-Person; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

Attendees:

Board Invitees: *Cydney Scott, Mark Carriveau, Jason Halley, Derek Eckenroth, Nate Edwards, Kristen Grace, Chris Low, Katherine Seghers*

Other Invitees : *Bri Lehan, Meredith Forrest Kulwicki, Jesse Jones*

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1. Call to Order

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

Cydney reviewed the revised meeting agenda and explained that the board would address immediate symposium responsibilities, prepare the agenda and reports for the annual business meeting, review committee and officer reports, discuss member concerns and competition issues, and receive updates regarding the 2027 symposium and possible future host sites.

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2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The board reviewed the minutes from the 2026 midyear meeting.

Motion: Mark Carriveau moved to approve the previous meeting minutes.
Second: Kristen Grace seconded the motion.
Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

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3. 2026 Symposium Operations and Board Responsibilities

B&H Photo Shootout
The board discussed the announcement and presentation of the B&H Video shootout. Kristen Grace agreed to contact B&H representatives regarding who should be recognized or invited to participate in the presentation. James, and Casey were mentioned as possible B&H contacts or representatives.

Symposium Image Slideshow
The board discussed assembling a slideshow of photographs from throughout the symposium for presentation during the banquet. Chris Low indicated that he could access the image system and assist with retrieving photographs. Board members and other photographers would be encouraged to contribute images throughout the week. The board also recommended including a link to symposium photographs in the post-symposium survey.

Breakout Session Coverage
Board members reviewed breakout-session responsibilities. Board members, along with Eric and Bri, were asked to sign up to welcome presenters, provide introductions, help speakers remain on schedule, and present speaker gifts. Speaker gifts were expected to arrive the following day and were to be stored in the Blue Room.

New Attendee Orientation
The board reviewed the structure and messaging for the new attendee orientation.

Cydney would introduce the board and encourage new attendees to:

- Approach and include anyone who appears to be alone.
- Eat with someone new at each meal.
- Stay up late, participate in informal conversations, and build relationships.
- Become involved in UPAA leadership, committees, and future board service.

Eric would provide an official welcome.

Individual board members were assigned or encouraged to address the following topics:

- **Mark Carriveau:** Explain the hospitality suite and encourage attendance at the annual business meeting.
- **Chris Low:** Encourage attendees to observe and remember their symposium experiences so they can contribute ideas and material to Meredith Forrest Kulwicki's publications work.
- **Katherine Seghers:** Encourage attendees to photograph the symposium and share properly captioned images through PhotoShelter.
- **Nate Edwards:** Encourage attendees to move beyond their comfort zones and participate fully.
- **Kristen Grace:** Introduce attendees to UPAA's corporate partners and explain the value of those relationships.
- **Cydney Scott:** Encourage members to consider running for the board.
- **Jason Halley:** Explain opportunities to serve through committee chair positions, volunteer roles, and board service.

The board also reviewed transportation information, including bus departures at approximately 30-minute intervals and the final departure time.

The board worked to create a clear outline so that the orientation remained structured and concise.

Banquet, Awards, Trophies, and Sponsor Recognition
The board reviewed the banquet schedule, reception, awards presentation, and dinner logistics. The working schedule called for a reception before dinner, followed by awards and the evening program. Eric would welcome attendees and introduce keynote speaker Simon during dinner. Kristen was awaiting confirmation regarding whether a Canon representative would provide an introduction. Cydney would provide the overall welcome.

Awards and Trophies
Mark reported that the awards were prepared and stored in the Blue Room.

He confirmed that:

- There were no ties in the publications awards.

- Extra awards and plates were available if corrections or additions were required.
- He could arrange for an additional engraved plate if needed.
- He would use a luggage cart to transport the awards to the banquet space.

Mark agreed to remain involved with the awards process and continue assisting the awards chair after stepping down from the board for next year only. Mark would like for someone else to step up and work with him this next year so that person could take over awards in 2028.

Symposium Swag and Prizes
Kristen agreed to organize symposium swag and prizes in the Blue Room. The board noted that there were fewer individual prizes than in some previous years, but the prizes were of greater value. Additional assistance was needed to verify prize values and organize the distribution of door prizes and giveaways. The board discussed using a quiz completion as an entry mechanism for a camera door-prize drawing. The proposed deadline for participation was Thursday at 11:15 a.m., after which eligible names would be entered into a random-selection tool.

Photographer POY, Video POY, and Student POY Awards Calculations
The board discussed calculating Photographer of the Year, Videographer of the Year, and related student awards. The Photographer of the Year calculation was not completed during the meeting because of concerns that scoring or unpublished competition information might appear on dashboards accessible to members. The board also discussed confirmation of the calculation for the Videographer of the Year formula. Derek confirmed using the same general calculation method as Photographer of the Year. Cydney requested a second person review the calculation and asked Mark to assist Derek. The board emphasized the need to ensure that all applicable categories, including Sports Action, were properly included in the final calculations. No final award calculations were formally approved during this portion of the meeting.

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4. Annual Business Meeting Agenda Preparation

The board reviewed the agenda and messaging for the annual UPAA business meeting.

4.1 Purpose and Structure
Cydney planned to begin the business meeting by explaining to membership:
- The purpose of the annual business meeting.
- How UPAA's elected leadership operates.
- The role of committee chairs and volunteers.
- How the board conducts its work between annual meetings, including the fall and midyear board meetings.
- How members can become more involved in the organization.

4.2 State of UPAA Report
The president's report was expected to include major organizational developments from the preceding year, including:
- Completion of previous board and committee initiatives.
- Launch of a comprehensive UPAA competitions survey.
- Exploration of digital badges or other member recognition tools.
- Appointment of new video co-chairs.
- Launch of UPAA's first formal mentorship program.
- Establishment or clarification of full video membership.

- Addition of the General Features category to the Monthly Image Competition.
- Changes in officer responsibilities intended to strengthen transparency, continuity, and financial oversight.
- Continued efforts to make the board more accessible, transparent, and responsive to members.

4.3 Committee Reports

4.3.1 Mentorship Program Report
Cydney reviewed the first year of the mentorship program and the feedback survey distributed to mentors and mentees.

Board members shared varying levels of participation and engagement:
- Katherine reported communicating with her mentee but having difficulty arranging consistent meetings.
- Chris reported a positive experience with his mentee, Andrew, although Andrew was not attending the symposium.
- Nate observed that prescribed monthly prompts could help as natural conversation starters.

The board discussed replacing or supplementing monthly prompts with a flexible list of suggested topics. This would allow mentors and mentees to choose subjects relevant to their needs and encourage more open-ended conversations.

The board generally supported maintaining the program while improving the structure, expectations, and support resources for participants. Mentorship Program chair Lyndsie Schlink would lead this structuring

The board took a short break. During the break, thank you cards were signed by the board for symposium volunteers and workers. After the break, committee reports continued.

4.3.2 Finance Report
Jason Halley presented the FY2026 financial report and budget overview. The board discussed the organization’s overall financial health and the increasing costs associated with operating the annual symposium, administering competitions, maintaining awards programs, and supporting member services.

Key points included:
- Symposium registration fees may need to increase if venue, lodging, food, transportation, speaker, and production costs continue to rise.
- Changes to competition platforms, judging systems, award structures, or website functionality may require additional spending.
- Outstanding symposium payments via check should be submitted promptly.
- Earlier and more accurate symposium cost estimates are needed to establish registration pricing.
- Fiscal planning should clearly distinguish UPAA’s fiscal year from the calendar year when reporting financial information.

The board also discussed communicating UPAA’s financial health more clearly to members. A future *Contact Sheet* report should explain how membership dues are used and why the organization remains financially stable.

4.3.3 Membership Report
Chris Low presented the membership report.

Reported membership figures were:
- **Total members:** 609
- **Full photo members:** 371
- **Full video members:** 65
- **Hybrid members:** 25
- **Associate members:** 38
- **Student members:** 89
- **Retired members:** 10
- **Life members:** 11

Additional figures presented included:
- **2026 symposium registrations:** 255
- **2024–25 academic-year new members:** 240
- **2025–26 academic-year new members:** 231
- **New members since January 2026:** 141

The board discussed the need to correct inaccurate membership classifications manually when necessary. Accurate classifications are important for understanding the composition of the membership, planning symposium programming, measuring video and hybrid-member participation, and evaluating representation across UPAA programs.

Kristen emphasized that reliable membership data also assists with corporate partner planning and symposium strategy.

The board recognized a continuing need to strengthen representation and engagement among video and hybrid members.

4.3.4 Website Report
Derek Eckenroth presented the website report.

Recent website work included:
- Adding captions to competition images.
- Updating membership-renewal information.
- Revising the About page to better address prospective members.
- Adding a more visible “Join” button.
- Reviewing an issue affecting narrative results.

The board also discussed website improvements related to competition instructions, category definitions, voting controls, and instructional video content. Derek agreed that an instructional video could be posted on the video shootout contest page.

Corporate Relations Report
Kristen Grace reported that UPAA had **14 corporate partners**.

She planned to use the annual business meeting to:
- Thank corporate partners for their support.
- Explain the value of corporate partnerships to UPAA members.

- Invite ideas and recommendations for future partnerships.
- Review corporate showcases and partner visibility.
- Encourage members to engage professionally with participating vendors.

The board reviewed an informal corporate-partner gathering scheduled at Relish on Tuesday evening from approximately 7:00–9:30 p.m. Dinner and drinks would be purchased individually.

Cydney shifted the conversation to assist with bus logistics and tipping procedures.

The board also discussed the need to review door-prize procedures and the value of donated prizes.

4.3.5 Communications and Social Media Report
Katherine Seghers presented the communications report and planned to include social media within the same annual business meeting presentation.

Topics included:
- Social-media messaging during the symposium.
- Short video introductions and social video content.
- Increased reliance on direct email communication as Facebook engagement declines.
- Monthly reminders to participate in competition voting.
- Greater coordination between communications, publications, competitions, and symposium programming.

Cydney asked Katherine to send monthly voting reminders to members.

4.3.6 Survey Reports
Nate Edwards presented updates on member surveys.

> **Salary Survey**
> The board discussed a question concerning the fiscal-year period used by respondents. The current salary survey would close, with a revised survey planned for the fall.
>
> **Symposium Survey**
> The post-symposium survey was prepared and ready for distribution. The board recommended including a link to symposium photographs and using the survey to collect feedback on programming, publications, competitions, video services, and member experiences.
>
> **Competition Survey**
> A total of **134 completed responses** had been received.
> Major themes included:
> - Interest in adding a Photo Essay category, whether quarterly or monthly, not just within the annual competition.
> - Questions about the relative weight of the Annual Photo Competition in determining POY.
> - Support for maintaining member judging.

- Concerns about category compliance and the movement of entries between categories.
- Interest in making competition voting easier.
- Discussion of whether students should pay Annual Photo Competition entry fees.
- Discussion of recognizing first through third place without honorable mentions.
- Interest in student-specific and associate-member opportunities.
- Interest in publishing top-10 standings for Photographer of the Year, the Annual Photo Competition, and the Monthly Image Competition.
- Concern about the value, quality, and administration of written judging comments.
- Support for educational critique sessions, including possible UPAA Live critique programs.
- Concern that Personal Vision does not count toward Photographer of the Year while still using one of a member's limited monthly entries.

The board supported forming a committee to review the survey results, investigate technical limitations and workarounds, and develop specific recommendations.

The board expressed that Jay Ferchaud should be involved in communications regarding participating in the competition review.

4.3.7 Member Concerns

The board reviewed concerns submitted by two (2) members.

Concerns #1:

1. Add numeric keystroke controls to make Monthly Image Competition voting faster.
   a. Nate and Derek would address the numeric-voting concern in the business meeting discussion.
2. Display category definitions more clearly during the submission process.
   a. The board noted that category definitions were available on a preceding webpage but agreed the placement may not be sufficiently visible. A board or committee representative would follow up directly with the member.

Concerns #2:

1. Having three sports categories may create disadvantages in entry distribution and year-end placement.
2. Personal Vision does not count toward Photographer of the Year but still counts against the four-entry monthly limit.
3. UPAA should consider offering a recurring Photo Essay category.

These concerns were incorporated into the broader competition discussion and were referred for further review by the proposed competition committee.

4.3.8 Vice President and Awards Report

Mark reported that UPAA was working with a new awards vendor.

Awards expenses had increased by approximately **$2,500**. The board discussed the cost of producing more than 10 Annual Photo Competition awards, with estimated production costs of approximately $7,500 and related fee revenue of approximately $8,500.

The board discussed possible changes to control costs, including:

- Reducing the number of physical awards by removing honorable-mention awards.
- Reviewing which awards require physical presentation pieces.
- Increasing competition fees, potentially by approximately $20, if necessary to cover rising production expenses.
- Reviewing the balance between award revenue, member value, and actual award costs.

No formal fee increase was approved during the meeting.

4.4 Chair Reports

4.4.1 Video Report

Bri Lehan presented the video report. The video leadership team planned to survey members about interest in serving as a video co-chair or otherwise assisting with video programming.

The board discussed:

- Recruiting more video members.
- Identifying potential video volunteers and committee leaders.
- Asking symposium speakers and experienced members to assist.
- Involving student members in outreach and production.
- Using email promotion if initial recruitment efforts did not receive sufficient response.
- Adding questions about video programming and support needs to future surveys.
- Posting instructional content on the video shootout webpage.

Potential participants or contacts mentioned included Matt Grotto, Chris Nagel, Darren Van Dyke, and Adam Sanders. Meredith agreed to explore whether members involved with the Society of Creative Partners could provide additional video support.

4.4.2 Content Report

Meredith Forrest Kulwicki reported on the Society of Creative Partners, Depth in Field, and Contact Sheet.

Society of Creative Partners

The groups had largely been allowed to operate independently, but there had been limited reporting about participation, results, or member satisfaction.

The board discussed the distinction between:

- **Mentorship:** An individual, one-to-one relationship.
- **Society of Creative Partners:** A collaborative group relationship.

Kristen shared that one group had initially formed but did not continue after its first meeting. Chris reported that his group had continued meeting monthly and had carried forward successfully.

The board discussed:
- Collecting names for new groups in August.
- Organizing groups for monthly meetings from September through June.
- Inviting vendors or corporate partners to share specialized knowledge.
- Conducting an August promotional campaign.
- Coordinating language and recruitment with Mentorship Program committee chairs.

Meredith would work with Mentorship Program committee chairs to prepare program language and recruitment materials.

***Depth in Field* Report**

Meredith reported challenges with regularity and timing of *Depth in Field* for approximately one year to maintain its desired production schedule. Dakota and Mitch were producing approximately two articles per month. The publication's intended role is to highlight UPAA members, technical practices, professional knowledge, and creative work—not only award-winning or Best in Show photographs. The board discussed shortening some long-form stories to make the content more accessible and sustainable.

***Contact Sheet* Report**

Meredith reported that the first revised *Contact Sheet* had been published. The annual-report-style format was generally viewed as a positive direction, though the PDF format was not equally accessible or convenient for all readers.

The board discussed gathering feedback through questions such as:
- Did members read the publication?
- Did they experience technical problems?
- Did they find the publication useful?
- Which demographic or membership factors affected readership?

Glenn suggested collecting demographic information to better evaluate readership. Jason recommended reviewing responses from the previous *Contact Sheet* survey before creating a new one.

Meredith requested the following content for the next issue:
- A treasurer's statement on UPAA's financial health and how membership dues support the organization.
- A board update summarizing the midyear meeting.
- Material that could also be adapted for the UPAA blog.
- Content related to UPAA's 60th anniversary.
- A feature highlighting the role of students in the organization.

The deadline for submitting material was identified as **November 1**.
The board agreed that *Contact Sheet* should serve as an important vehicle for organizational messaging, transparency, and member recognition.

PhotoShelter uploads intended for publication should include complete metadata and captions.

4.4.3 Monthly Image Competition Report

Jay Ferchaud presented Monthly Image Competition participation figures covering approximately September 2025 through May 2026.

Reported category totals included:

- **Sports Action:** 326 entries
- **Sports Features:** 254 entries
- **Sports Marketing:** 114 entries
- **Portraits:** 426 entries
- **Campus Environment:** 400 entries
- **News and College Life:** 579 entries
- **General Marketing:** 193 entries
- **General Features:** 262 entries
- **Science and Research:** 184 entries
- **Personal Vision:** 180 entries
- **Student entries across categories:** 710

The board discussed sending competition reminders near entry deadlines.

Additional discussion addressed:

- Inaccuracies in category placement.
- Whether administrators should move photographs between categories.
- Monthly judging practices.
- Narrative-scoring technical problems.
- The four-entry monthly limit.
- The relationship between Personal Vision and Photographer of the Year.
- Providing clearer instructions to judges and entrants.

Cydney expressed concern about moving photographs into categories other than those selected by the entrant. The group decided that members could vote accordingly.

5. Symposium Updates

5.1 Budget and Planning Practices

Glenn provided an update on the 2026 symposium budget. He reported that revenue and expenses were balanced and that an error in a planning spreadsheet had been corrected.

The board discussed improvements for future symposium planning:

- Preliminary cost estimates must be available by the midyear board meeting.
- Registration prices should be based on realistic projected attendance and expenses.
- Major speakers should be confirmed by approximately December 1 so registration can open on schedule.
- The symposium schedule should be completed earlier.

- A dinner-on-your-own evening can reduce costs, particularly because many members receive institutional per diem.
- An open evening could also allow corporate partners to host optional dinners or gatherings.

Glenn recognized Katherine for her work on food planning and Bri for her video support.

5.2. Symposium 2027 at the University of Illinois Chicago
Nathan and Adam joined the meeting to present plans for the 2027 symposium at the University of Illinois Chicago.

Facilities and Lodging
The host team reported that contracts, facilities, and catering arrangements were progressing.
Options included:
- University dormitory lodging at approximately $100.
- Hotel lodging at approximately $269 per night.
- A hotel approximately a 15-minute walk or five-minute bus ride from campus.
- Parking at approximately $15 per day.

The board reviewed event spaces on Adam’s computer. Available spaces included:
- A large ballroom with substantial capacity.
- A primary ballroom capable of accommodating dining, corporate partners, and general programming.
- Six breakout rooms.
- Flexible configurations for dining, presentations, exhibits, and partner activities.

Activities and Programming
Potential activities included:
- A river or architecture tour.
- A beach volleyball photo opportunity.
- A possible service project.
- A transportation-safety or welcome seminar involving UIC campus police.

Quotes had been obtained or were being developed for several activities.

Host-School Registration and Staffing
The board discussed the number of complimentary registrations available to the host institution and the size of the local planning team.

Adam reported having approximately nine staff members. The board discussed using a core committee structure of approximately three lead planners plus one additional board coordinator, while allowing broader participation when appropriate.

Cydney expressed a preference for capping attendance at approximately 250 to preserve the quality of the member experience.

Budget planning assumptions were also discussed using an attendance figure of approximately 200.

Food, Beverage, and Pricing
The board reviewed estimated breakfast costs, hotel and dormitory rates, parking expenses, and alcohol-service limitations. Beer and wine service was expected to be limited to the closing event. The board acknowledged that higher lodging and venue costs could require increased symposium registration prices.

Speakers and Corporate Sponsorship
The host team discussed creating a ranked list of preferred speakers. Kristen would approach corporate partners regarding possible speaker sponsorships.

The board distinguished between:

- Speakers already affiliated with a brand, who might be sponsored by that company.
- Independent speakers, who would likely require direct payment from UPAA.

A former or current White House photographer was mentioned as a possible speaker. The board encouraged the host institution to involve its central marketing team, photographers, videographers, and communications staff in planning and programming. The board also discussed whether a separate public-event ticket or charge would be needed for a sponsor-supported speaker, particularly if dinner was included.

5.3. Future Symposium Sites
The board reviewed possible future host institutions.

- (redacted)

The dates and host sequence remained under discussion and were not formally approved.

6. Board Election Cycle Review
The board reviewed the election rotation and terms for current board members.
The working election schedule discussed was:

- **2026:** Mark Carriveau and Derek Eckenroth
- **2027:** Cydney Scott and Nate Edwards
- **2028:** Kristen Grace and Chris Low
- **2029:** Jason Halley and Katherine Seghers

7. Adjournment

Motion: Mark Carriveau moved to adjourn the meeting.
Second: Chris Low seconded the motion.

The meeting adjourned at **3:22 p.m. Eastern Time**.

Minutes prepared by:
Jason Halley, Secretary/Treasurer

Approval status:
Draft—subject to review and approval by the UPAA Board of Director during the 2026 Mid Year Meeting.