Minutes 3/3/15

TMC Membership Committee

Present: Jo Ellen, Alex, Aarti, Alana, and briefly Andrew (the A-Team!)

Unavoidably Absent: Lisa, Christa, Shay

1. No one present wanted to tak on the role of chairing the Committee…. Let’s have a chair by next meeting, folks. Christa has spent 2+ years in the role—let’s give her a break!

2. Jo Ellen –with Andrew’s help--reviews what we look for in new members:

* Journalism—we want outlets producing original journalism
* Self-supporting—members must be able to support at least 2 full-time staff; we do accept associate members if they fill a TMC need and the other 2 criteria.
* Mission-Driven and Mission Compatible—we seek outlets that care about TMC’s mission to increase the impact of progressive independent outlets.

3. Review of members. Because we did not have a quorum, I’d like members who were not present to weigh in if you disagree with any of the votes below. If we have a disagreement, we will resolve online or table the vote until our next meeting.

**National Catholic Reporter—YES (full members: $1000 dues)**

NCR has been publishing for over 2 decades. They are the primary news source for progressive Catholics. They are self-sustaining, with a budget of $4.5 million and 45 employees. And they care deeply about social justice. Some on the committee wondered if they are too large for TMC, but we have at least 10 other members at this budget; also, NCR needs to learn how to go digital, and they believe they can learn a lot from us.

**Kindred Media/ Families for Conscious Living—NO**

The Kindred website publishes only 1/week and seems to aggregate a lot of content. Content that is original does not always seem to be journalism. In addition, the 501c3 only brings in $10,000 per year, yet the magazine has 10 staff—presumably these are all volunteers, but how have they been getting out their print magazine? What makes this project sustainable?

Suggestion: Ask them to re-apply in 2016 if they have found a funding model and are publishing more frequently.

**Newsdesk—YES (associate member: $75 dues)**

We had a little discussion about Newsdesk. Founder Josh Wilson admits it’s a shell of an outlet—it is not publishing and has no money. However, he suggested that he was very enthusiastic about bringing his personal expertise to the Media Consortium, and willing to think about how Newsdesk could serve as an innovation platform. The Membership Committee liked the enthusiasm, and thought it would be worthwhile to experiment with having him come on.

**Oximity—NO**

Oximity does not create news: it is a news platform. Jo Ellen has been intrigued by it because it is growing rapidly outside the United States, and she thought it might deliver international outreach for our members, as well as access to international reporters. However, the Membership committee were concerned that Oximity is publishing non-journalistic content, for example, content direct from labor unions. They also worried that Oximity might be aggregating without permission (the concern centered on Think Progress, which has strict re-use rules). There also was concern that Oximity does not yet have a revenue model. However, the main concern was around journalism.