

# YEAR-END REPORT FOR THE MEDIA BOARD (2023-2024)

Respectfully submitted by Siân White, Chair ([white2se@jmu.edu](mailto:white2se@jmu.edu))

The Media Board met on November 3, 2024; February 2, 2024; and March 29, 2024. What follows in this year-end report is a list of the membership from AY 2023-2024; a list of the new and TBD members for AY 2024-2025; and summaries from each of our meetings, highlighting action items and other concerns.

## Media Board Membership AY 2023-2024

Constitution	Member
1. The chair shall be the chief academic officer of the college that contains the media arts and design unit or their designee.	Siân White
2. A non-student representative of the university administration appointed by the president.	Mary-Hope Vass
3. A faculty member selected by the chair.	Roger Soenksen
4. A faculty member selected by the Faculty Senate, but not an officer of the Faculty Senate.	Elizabeth Price
5. An adviser to The Bluestone.	Cynthia Martin
6. A news/editorial adviser to The Breeze.	Ryan Parkurst
7. An adviser to WXJM.	Matt Bingay
8. The chief financial adviser to The Breeze.	Brad Jenkins
9. The adviser to Iris	Erica Cavanaugh
10. The student editor of the Bluestone.	Olivia Sandoval
11. The student editor of The Breeze.	Grant Johnson (Editor-in-Chief) Michael Russo (Executive Editor)
12. Student News Director of Breeze TV	Kayla Brown
13. The student general manager of WXJM.	Kate Bean
14. The student editor of Iris.	Grace Keeler
15. A student selected by the board, who is not a member of the Student Government Association or any of the member media groups.	Vacant 23-24
16. A student selected by the SGA Executive Council but not a member of the Executive Council or a candidate for Executive Council.	Treya Gunn

Ex officio	Kristi Shackelford
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**Media Board Membership 2023-2024** (new members in purple, pending members highlighted)

Constitution	Member
The chair shall be the chief academic officer of the college that contains the media arts and design unit or their designee.	Siân White
A non-student representative of the university administration appointed by the president.	Mary-Hope Vass
A faculty member selected by the chair.	Roger Soenksen
A faculty member selected by the Faculty Senate, but not an officer of the Faculty Senate.	Elizabeth Price
An adviser to The Bluestone.	TBD
A news/editorial adviser to The Breeze.	Ryan Parkurst
An adviser to WXJM.	Matt Bingay
The chief financial adviser to The Breeze.	Brad Jenkins
New: Student co-editors of the Bluestone.	Meirra McChristian, Breanna Thweatt
The student editor of The Breeze.	Eleanor Shaw (Editor-in-Chief) Vacant 24-25 (Executive Editor)
The student editor of BreezeTV	Alexa Bonilla
The student general manager of WXJM.	Kate Bean
New: Student co-editors of Iris.	Grace Keeler, Amelia Bailey
An adviser to Iris	Erica Cavanaugh
A student selected by the board, who is not a member of the Student Government Association or any of the member media groups.	TBD
A student selected by the SGA Executive Council but not a member of the Executive Council or a candidate for Executive Council.	TBD
Ex officio	Kristi Shackelford

## Summary of AY 2023-2024 Meetings and Action Items

### November 3, 2023 (Zoom)

The November meeting was an introductory one, with participant members introducing themselves and their organizations and reviewing the mission of the board.

#### **Review of Media Board Constitution Changes**

In advance of the meeting, all members received a copy of the drafted Media Board Constitution with tracked changes based on the vote in the 10-7-22 meeting. Chair summarized the changes made to the constitution, which include the name change of Temper to Iris and the decision to add BreezeTV representation to the board. After questions and comments, the board voted unanimously to accept the changes.

#### **Election of Vice-Chair and Secretary**

Erica Cavanagh was unanimously approved for the role of Vice Chair; Brad Jenkins was unanimously approved to continue in the role of Secretary.

#### **Election of Ex-Officio Member**

Kristi Shackelford was recommended, seconded, and approved unanimously to be invited as our Ex-Officio Member of the board.

#### **Student Media Budget Outlook and Funding**

Chair shared briefly that the financial officer responsible for the student media budgets, Mark Angel, anticipated no changes to the Media Budget.

#### **Update on News, Successes, and Challenges of Student Organizations this year**

In this section of the meeting, organizations were given the opportunity to share their successes and challenges in doing their work so far this semester.

- **Bluestone** Editor Olivia Sandoval provided the following update about Bluestone: The book is halfway done. It will be done earlier this year so that it can be available during the Grad Fair so that more students will pick up copies. The editorial board is brand-new to leadership positions this year, so there has been a “learning curve,” but production is moving along. The staff is exploring leadership options for next year and is considering a co-editorship arrangement.
- **The Breeze/Breeze TV** Executive Editor Michael Russo provided the following update about The Breeze and Breeze TV: The staffs have collaborated this year more than in other years, which was a goal of the staff for this year. This has “created more community” within the organization and has created more

multimedia content that works together. There has been some turnover with print/web staff, which has been a challenge but has provided some opportunities in more collaboration between staffs, and in creating a stronger audience-development staff.

Editor-in-Chief Grant Johnson added these updates: The staff has been finding new ways to tell stories, and that has included having two “audience editors” who work on social media and other efforts to gain readership. Grant also highlighted that The Breeze has reimagined its newsletters to draw in readers.

- **Iris** Editor Grace Keeler reported on Iris updates: The magazine is in the design phase, and the staff is hoping to have the publication ready for distribution on December 8 at The Union, which is open to the public. The team is working on the website and is also looking at software to streamline submissions to the magazine.
- **WXJM** General Manager Kate Bean: The semester has gone well, even as the organization has had a large influx of new students with less experience than in the past. WXJM is working to create a social-media team to increase engagement on the station’s social-media platforms.

### **Other Matters**

Cynthia Martin is working with her Advanced Editing class to create a handbook for student-media advisers. Grace Keeler is working with Cynthia on this and they are getting ready to have it reviewed by Media Board chair, Siân White. [Advisor handbook finalized and approved by December 2023.]

### **February 2, 2024 (Zoom)**

The February meeting was devoted to presentations by and elections of the student leadership for Media Board organizations (Iris, the Bluestone, WXJM, and positions for The Breeze and BreezeTV). Presentations from 9 candidates were followed by questions for the candidates and discussion, then voting. The results were as follows:

- Breeze Executive Editor: To remain vacant 2024-2025
- Breeze Editor-in-Chief: Eleanor Shaw
- Breeze TV News Director: Alexa Bonilla
- Iris Co-Editors: Grace Keeler and Amelia Bailey
- Bluestone Co-Editors-in-Chief: Breanna Thweatt and Meirra McChristian

### March 29, 2024 (Zoom)

The chair reminded everyone that budgets for next academic year were due by Friday, April 12.

#### **Election of Secretary for 2024-2025 Academic Year**

Kristi Shackelford was unanimously approved to serve again as board Secretary.

#### **Election of Student-at-Large Member**

The board received no nominations. This position remains vacant.

#### **Student Leadership Reports – Successes, Challenges, Questions, Concerns**

- **The Breeze & Breeze TV** – The last printing was March 27, and the last Breeze TV was March 29. We were struggling with staff turnover, but that has not been a problem this semester. We raised a lot of money on Giving Day – over \$8,000. The social media team contributed to promoting our fundraising efforts. Very collaborative staff this Spring. Every production day we saw our product improve. We improved our newsletter. We enhanced our storytelling with data visualization.  
**Challenge:** Did not have the hard-hitting long investigative reporting in our department. Our staff retention improved because we got a very good group of applicants who were motivated and had fresh energy. We learned that we are only as good as our staff.
- **Iris:** Grace – Iris in the process of second production this year. We have a design team that is truly awesome. May 1 will be our launch party. Things have been going very well. We have had success recruiting our staff and found a great new printer.  
**Challenges:** We tried to run a workshop but failed to generate interest. Suggestions from the board about tagging the College and SGA on social media, asking professors for permission to visit classes, and contacting The Breeze advertising contact. Grace will continue serving Iris as co-editor with Amelia Bailey.
- **Bluestone: Olivia** We had success at the commencement expo distribution. We will continue to attend this event in the future. We are distributing books at unmanned sites but increased signage has meant that students are picking up their books.  
**Challenges:** Old problems have been addressed. The biggest challenge is to increase our social media presence. A very successful year in addressing the past.

- **WXJM: Kate** Things are going very well. We took 9 members to the NYC Intercollegiate Broadcast Conference. Kate will continue as GM next year. We will work to create more meaningful talk radio.  
**Challenge:** We are still recovering from Covid. Kate will continue as student leader at WXJM.

### **Recent Membership Changes**

In addition to new student leadership, Cynthia Martin is stepping down as advisor to Bluestone but is working to help find a new advisor or advisors. We thanked Cynthia for her contributions to Bluestone. Her advice truly helped student leaders of the organization improve the yearbook and the processes surrounding its distribution, and we wish her well.

### **Budget Meeting: April 26, 2024 (with Mark Angel, Meredith Bauer, and SGA Treasurer)**

At this meeting, Siân presented budgets for the Breeze, Bluestone, Iris, and WXJM Media Board organizations. Mark reviewed, asked questions, and, following a few revisions from The Breeze, approved all budgets.