Committee: Communications and Technology  
Date: August 25, 2020  
In attendance: Charles Sgrillo, Roberta Jackson, Tina Breedle, Cara Ross, Heidi Permattio, Christina Gerrish, Patricia Bauler

I. Overview of proper meeting protocols and meeting procedures - Tina  
   A. Need: new meeting minute notetaker  
      1. Patricia volunteered to take meeting minutes

II. “Technology person” update - Tina  
   A. Frank is no longer with USARS  
   B. Tina, Brent, and Eric are currently handling social media  
   C. No plan to fill this position in near future  
      1. COVID has reduced need  
      2. Lack of skaters and event funding at this time  
   D. Tina to replace Frank as staff member for Communication and Technology Committee  
   E. May need to hire dedicated Safe Sport staff member  
      1. Requires more clarification  
      2. This would be the priority hire as the position may be required  
   F. What platform is currently being utilized?  
      1. SiteCore  
      2. Send notifications to Tina if there are issues or updates needed with the website  
   G. Recent focus has been on launching new membership platform for the season  
   H. May try to use an intern from the University (TBD with Eric)

III. Committee structure going forward - Tina/Charlie  
   A. Patricia will take the minutes  
   B. No new “tech” person for the foreseeable future

IV. Status of new YouTube channel - Cara  
   A. Has not posted anything new  
      1. Focused on Brand Messaging project  
      2. Technical difficulties with computer, which has been resolved  
   B. Working on a content plan  
   C. No new progress to report  
   D. Plan clarification  
      1. Goal: content will be 1:1 in entertainment:information  
      2. Any content is acceptable at this point - we do not yet have an established formula  
      3. How-tos would be a good addition  
      4. Plans to do collaborations with members who want to promote Star Skate  
      5. Who to contact for hockey/derby/extreme skating?  
         a) Christina can help with derby  
         b) Michael Jacques may know more high level competitors in other disciplines
V. Determining USARS Message & Brand - Roberta & Cara
   A. How to come up with a message?
      1. Why do people skate/why do they like to skate?
      2. Adults = exercise/social
      3. What about other ages/groups of skaters?
      4. 4 years ago poll among youth skaters = “fun”
   B. What is the tagline?
      1. “Skating’s for everyone” or “We live for speed”
      2. What is our branding?
      3. Send out a poll and let members decide?
         a) Some opposition to polls because of knowing how people interact
            on social media make priorities clear without needing to poll the
            membership
   C. Short presentation from Cara
      1. Branding = look & feel
      2. Messaging = statement
      3. Why: establishes character, personality, voice, tone, emotion, becoming
         relatable, memorable, etc.
      4. Example: Team USA Instagram - homemade video mix with bold text &
         focus on top athletes (consistent messaging/look)
      5. We should try to have consistent messaging in a similar way - lots of
         contrast, bold images, unified theme
   D. Has USARS ever had a tagline?
      1. Heidi: yes but the explanation was not audible
   E. It seems like the logo/emblem is new every year - constantly updating
   F. Roberta: marketing plan from 2014 had a tagline, etc. but never got implemented
      1. Older materials probably will not be helpful because things have changed
      2. We can review the older materials to find anything relevant but do not
         want to move backward
   G. Goal: we need to “look like a part of Team USA”
   H. Team USA has 1 Instagram for many sports, but USARS has one for each
      discipline
      1. Would be better and more consistent to have one Instagram with
         everything
      2. Instagram: usarollersports_official - account is currently blank until
         marketing plan is implemented
      3. “usrarollersports” account was not available when Instagram was set up
         a) Facebook also has a lot of non-official USARS pages that were
            NOT created by the organization
         b) Once we have something that has clear branding and looks official
            there won’t be confusion
         c) Not going to be possible to take down the other pages that are
            using USARS name
      4. Creating viral content: try to make Instagram look like a “wall of art”
I. Campaign example: hear the athlete’s voice
   a) What life lessons
   b) How to deal with disappointments, etc.
   c) Why is practice important to goals, etc.

J. Platform discussion: why do we need a blog and a newsletter?
   1. Discussion: stop the biweekly newsletter and make it quarterly
      a) Use the information that goes out to stretch the content over multiple mediums
      b) Blog is not logical to maintain with biweekly newsletter - content burnout
      c) Can do blog posts after major events
      d) Blog is good for Google searches (you will get clicks that will come from people who may not get the newsletter)

K. We need to provide marketing templates (PPT, Canva, etc.)
   1. 2021 goal: what is the “marketing packet” that we give to all the disciplines
   2. Make it “click and edit” or “drag and drop” level editing for ease of use

L. Discussion of “content management” and waivers that are utilized to go with the marketing to have consistent branding
   1. Can only have 2 people per discipline
   2. We are not sure the current state of who has these forms
      a) Tina: to look up which forms are being used by active members
   3. Need to set up this structure
   4. Need to be able to easily send new marketing content to the account managers
   5. Need clear line of communication between discipline level posters & marketing oversight
   6. Clubs will need to operate at own level
   7. ”Account takeover” options for in depth coverage at an event
   8. Roberta & Charlie to create a to-do list/diagram so the methodology is clear

VI. Updates on the judges training platform
   A. Patricia continues to work on creating materials
      1. Asked for color hex codes, marketing materials from prior discussion for consistent branding
   B. Current issues: lack of materials, etc.
      1. Going to focus on streamlining the introductory level and putting more effort into the higher level which should have more long-term viability

VII. Status of USARS blog
   A. Can collect content before we are ready to post
   B. Not ready to post until marketing messaging is approved
   C. Might be a better place to put the material that has been in the newsletter
      1. A way to make the newsletter bigger without stretching the content
   D. Cara has started on content, but we need to decide where the articles will exist
1. Blog does not have to be very long in today’s market; approximately 1-3 paragraphs
2. Need to clearly state that any opinions are from the contributor

E. What frequency of posting?
1. Can depend on many factors:
   a) Maybe once every two weeks, or once a quarter
   b) When do you want to be in front of your audience?

F. How to engage the audience?
1. Create interactive quizzes
   a) “What type of skater would you be?”
2. Need to make things more entertaining
3. How to get people to the site/engaged
4. Who is the audience?

G. Types of content that can go on a test blog
1. Results
2. Posts
3. Quizzes
4. How tos
5. Links to rule books
6. Class promotions
7. Events
8. Marketing trends/tips
9. Star Skate

H. Switching newsletter to blog would need approval from Eric
1. Charlie to discuss with Eric

VIII. Project Connect
A. Meeting goals: what to keep and what to remove from the to-do list
B. Overarching Goal: find ways to get more skaters
1. Button on USARS site can direct people to rinks, lessons, etc.
   a) This information is not currently populated because Sport 180 went live last week
      1. USARS does not have club class informations to post
      2. Sport 180 has information spaces for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. to direct people to club information
      3. Most Clubs with Charters maintain their information on Facebook
      4. How to take that and convert it to a platform that can be posted on the website & point people where they need to go?
2. Have a sticker or flyer to use with vendors to provide information about where skate classes are available
   a) Support for the idea of a card/insert that has QR code to partner with vendors
      1. Who does this?
Where are these connections/relationships coming from?
Who has the time to do this?
b) We need someone from each discipline to say who the vendors are before being contacted

3. Skate lessons - may be too difficult for national office to coordinate with individual rinks and lesson classes
   a) Promote the rinks and let rinks promote their own classes, etc.
   b) USARS information points them to USARS affiliated rinks

4. Expand non-competitive memberships
   a) Fitness skaters = not at an event = no insurance
   b) Need to give them some other service to make membership worth the fee
      (1) Live streaming (for further discussion in the future)
      (2) Corporate discounts
      (3) Etc.

5. Digital marketing information
   a) Create documents where rinks can use USARS branding in their marketing if they are affiliated
   b) Don’t want USARS to be responsible for marketing for rinks
   c) Consensus - remove this item from the project - goal of this item has been covered by other project areas

6. Need to reach out and find which vendor contacts we have
   a) We need to provide the marketing for them we don’t have the numbers to demand things
   b) Create an “Official skate of” or “Preferred vendor of” - we need to provide value to the vendors
   c) Item is on hold: to be removed temporarily until further discussions regarding vendors occur

7. Presence on social media - handled in earlier sections

8. Content calendar for social media
   a) creating post regularity
   b) using consistent hashtags
   c) Do we have Hootsuite or social media platform management system?
      (1) USARS had one but it wasn’t utilized
      (2) Small fee
      (3) Check for non-profit deals
      (4) Easy to pre-schedule media
      (5) Can schedule posts on Facebook now
      (6) Tina will look into restarting Hootsuite
         (a) If a college intern is available then it may be worth it but otherwise it can wait until budget permits

IX. Other topics
A. USOPC email about redesigned USA website
1. New opportunity to be featured on social media to drive views to the site
2. Want to start around Sept. 7
3. Office staff wants feedback on content/marketing of this

X. Meeting adjourned

Next C&T meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 23, 2020