



# THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

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**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
2024 - 2029

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## Message from the President

Dear Colleagues:



We are excited to present our National Press Club Strategic Plan for 2024-2029, designed to continue our current post-pandemic momentum and our longstanding mission-focused goals. Over the past several years, the Club joined the world in struggling against the deadly COVID-19 pandemic but was able to quickly take steps to protect our members, staff and financial stability. This was largely thanks to strong and collaborative direction from our executive leadership, our board, and our dedicated staff. The pandemic was also a good reminder that the Club offers much more than its physical benefits — its real strength is in its community, of both journalists and communicators.

The Strategic Plan builds on the 117 years of experience the Club retains while continuing its transformation in light of fast-growing changes in our industries. Multiple goals are focused on the differing needs of our current members, such as expanding the working space, improving our communications to members and between member teams, and strengthening professional development activities and the job board. Other goals aim to attract and retain new members with the goal of improving diversity and enticing young members. A common thread in all of these efforts include ensuring that all of our members feel welcomed and belonging.

Some of our goals aim to shore up the security of our Club to ensure the safety of our members and our finances, due to the increased risk of cyber threats and potential physical threats this election year and beyond.

Lastly, the Club plans to elevate our efforts to advocate for press freedom globally and domestically, while also pushing for the safe return of American journalists unjustly detained overseas and the proper investigation of all journalists killed while doing their important jobs. The Club will consider forming a new Center that would work with the Institute to amplify the strong efforts the Club already is doing, while also looking at ways we can substantially help journalists at risk or those seeking asylum for trying to report from their home countries.

I wanted to particularly thank our Vice President Emily Wilkins, who led this impressive effort over the past year, along with all the other members of the strategic planning committee: Mike Balsamo, Poonam Sharma, Mark Schoeff Jr., Michael Smith, Didier Saugy, Bill McCarren, Kate Helster, and Miguel Dominguez. Hudson Pacific was also important in helping us craft our focus groups and surveys that incorporated

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the views of past, present, and potential future leaders and members, which underpinned much of our strategy planning. Together, we've crafted an ambitious but achievable plan that is member- and mission-focused and should help guide the efforts of future administrations.

I also wanted to thank all of the members for your steadfast belief in the mission and efforts of the Club — it is this community which makes us the National Press Club.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eileen O'Reilly".

Eileen O'Reilly  
President

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## *Challenges and Accomplishments 2019-2023*

The Strategic Plan is meant to serve not only as a roadmap for the next five years, but also as a measure of how the Club has grown and developed over the previous five years.

However, when the Club put together the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan, no one could have predicted that in March 2020, the Club, Washington D.C., and the rest of the world, would be at the start of a pandemic that would stretch well into 2022. A main source of revenue for the Club - space rental, events and catering - came to a near halt due to strict limits on meetings and concerns of safety. Members, the lifeblood of the Club, could not meet in person.

All the plans were put on hold, and the survival of the Club became the priority.

As the weeks turned into months, the Club adapted. The kitchen began regular takeout meals, offering everything from a casual lunch to elaborate family dinners. Team leaders moved events online. The broadcast center gained a new level of importance and revenue for the Club. The Board of Governors approved a 2-for-1 deal for members - sign up for the next year of membership, and get the one after free.

The Club took out loans, resolving to not touch the Rockwell Fund. The Board and executive director made difficult decisions about staffing, and while some employees were furloughed, many remained fully employed and paid even as the Club was closed.

When the Club did start to re-open, we incorporated broadcasting events and offering hybrid meetings.

Much credit belongs to Club Presidents Mike Freedman, Lisa Matthews and Jen Judson, as well as Executive Director Bill McCarren for leading the Club through this challenging time.

Even at the end of 2023, the pandemic could still be felt as the Reliable Source still was only open three evenings a week. The continued closure impacted the survey responses, but is on track to be changed at the start of 2024.

Considering all that happened, it would be misleading to measure the success of the last five years by the goals that were laid out in 2019 - not because of the quality of the goals, but because the challenges members and leadership faced were unlike anything in the Club's history.

While the Club is excelling in certain areas and seeking to improve in others, Club members and staff can claim the biggest victory of the past five years - we emerged from Covid-19 stronger than ever.

### **Finances**

Despite the massive hit to the Club's revenue in 2020 and 2021, the Club's finances are better than ever.

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At the end of 2023, the Club had a total of \$18.5 million - beyond what was projected for this point in the previous Strategic Plan. This Club is also debt-free and has a line of credit. Business is back to a pre-pandemic level.

A portion of the revenue also came from the sale of another painting in the Club's collection from N.C. Wyeth, which was in a little-seen area of the Club and would have been costly to insure. The private sale netted several hundred thousand dollars, part of which went to the Institute.

## **Membership**

Maintaining members is a continuing challenge for the Club. The Club was able to hold on to the majority of its members during the pandemic thanks to online programs, loyalty to the Club and a creative deal that allowed members to get an entire year free. But overall, Club membership is not back to pre-pandemic levels.

The number of members declined from 2,939 in January 2020 to 2,544 in January 2024.

The Club has seen slight growth in membership post-pandemic. When the pandemic "officially" ended in May 2023, the Club had 2,489 members. This means in the post-pandemic, the Club has seen numbers rise, albeit slowly.

To help boost new members and help current members get the most out of their membership, the Club began a Membership Enrichment Team, tasked with both ensuring members understand the benefits their membership offers and reaching out to other journalism and public affairs groups to build relationships and introduce the Club to prospective new members.

As the media landscape shifts, there is an increasing need to re-evaluate the standard for Club membership and who should be counted as a member of the journalism community. Certainly, educators, press freedom advocates and those whose primary job is to support and further reporting deserve consideration for membership.

## **Leadership**

In mid-2023, Club Executive Director Bill McCarren stepped down from the role after more than 15 years of service. McCarren, who helped advance the Club's press freedom mission, has remained on as a press freedom consultant.

The Club welcomed Didier Saugy as executive director in June 2023. Saugy was previously the executive director of the Foreign Correspondents' Club, Hong Kong.

Several other staffing changes have also taken place, including one directly tied to the previous strategic plan - the Club hired a Membership Director in 2019.

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The Journalism Institute also went through several changes. Beth Francesco was hired as executive director in April 2023, and expanded the staff including bringing on a full-time fundraiser for the Institute.

## **Press Freedom**

The Club has continued to support the return of Austin Tice, adding events including a 5K Run for Austin, and a "Night Out" for Austin with partnering restaurants, among other events. In addition, we focused on the return of Evan Gershkovich, working with the Wall Street Journal and Evan's family on his return. We are also working with the family of Alsu Kurmasheva to free her.

In a victory for press freedom, award-winning Mexican journalist Emilio Gutiérrez-Soto was granted asylum after a 15-year battle. The Club and Institute both worked to assist Gutiérrez-Soto, who accepted the John Aubuchon Press Freedom award on behalf of journalists in Mexico.

## **Other Goals**

The Club has, in some capacity, either completed or made progress with eight of the nine goals laid out in the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan.

Some of the goals laid out will be on-going as there is always more to do - advocating for press freedom, restoring trust in journalism, working to get more high-profile guests to the Club, building a more diverse membership, and continuing to recruit members.

The Club has grown in each of these areas in the past five years. The Board recently approved an update of the Club's rules, as well as made it easier for members and guests to report concerning or unwelcome behavior.

The Club is also continually working to update its space. Major renovations to the kitchens both on the 13th and 14th floor are nearly complete. In a sign of the times, the Club is about to boost its WiFi and update its website - two items that were also completed before the last Strategic Plan.

The Club also had its first all-woman executive board in 2021 - the same year as the 50th anniversary of the Club finally allowing women to become members in 1971.

It is worth noting that Mike Freedman, Club President in 2020, paved the way for an all-woman executive team and guided the Club through the pandemic, as noted above. Freedman was also the architect of the previous strategic plan, and helped advise the development of this one. Freedman died in September 2023. While a full accounting of his life and his impact would take up a novel, we would be remiss to not acknowledge his significant contributions to the Club in this report.

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## Member Survey Executive Summary

To inform the 2024 - 2028 strategic plan, the National Press Club partnered with the research and strategy firm Hudson Pacific to capture feedback from members, offering them a substantive opportunity to have their voices heard in this process.

Hudson Pacific provided Club leadership with in-depth analysis of the survey results, as well as a series of recommendations for inclusion in this strategic plan, based on member feedback. The firm conducted a similar survey for the Press Club in 2019, so the organization can begin to track member priorities over time.

## About the Research

The results in this summary are based on a survey of 363 National Press Club members conducted online between November 30 and December 8, 2023. The survey was preceded by two focus groups conducted with a variety of Press Club members. To inform questionnaire development, one-on-one interviews were also conducted with NPC leadership and staff.

## Survey Results

The state of the Club remains strong NPC members give the Club high marks, with roughly 9 in 10 saying its reputation is “excellent” or “good” in Washington, D.C. and across the country. These ratings closely mirror responses to the question when it was asked five years ago. More specifically, three-quarters of members rate the Club’s events, meeting spaces and food and beverage offerings as “excellent” or “good.”

Support for journalism and journalists are central to the Club’s reputation. In both the survey and the focus groups, members pointed to the Club’s advocacy efforts as a primary source of its strong reputation. Restoring trust in journalism and protecting journalists are their top priorities for that work. One member wrote that, “I know that my membership dues are always going toward a good cause. I appreciate that kind of advocacy, especially at a really tumultuous time for the industry.”

Questions persist about the role of the club in the changing landscape. As in 2019, members are split over the trajectory of the Club, with a majority (59 percent) saying its reputation is rising and a considerable minority (41 percent) seeing it in decline. This tension is reflected across the survey results. Members see the Club as a storied industry leader but one that needs to adapt to maintain relevance.

There are considerable age differences on this point. Older members have a rosier view of the future for the Club than younger ones.

Members see news-making events as core to the Club’s identity, and they are what brings members to the building. When it comes to priorities for the Press Club, 8 in 10 members say that access to news-making events should be “a top” or “high priority.” Similar numbers say the caliber of speakers



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“matters a great deal” for encouraging journalists to spend time at the building. This is an area where the Club does well – it’s where it receives the highest performance ratings.

However, members would like to see the balance shifted a bit from events toward professional development and social functions. The survey asked what percentage of the National Press Club’s resources members think are currently devoted to different functions and also how they SHOULD be allocated. Members believe that more than a third (36 percent) of the Club’s resources are devoted to events, but they’d like to see that reduced to about a quarter (27 percent), with more focus on professional development and social functions.

One member explained her thinking this way: “I understand the business of renting spaces for conferences and events is what brings revenues. At the same time, I’d like to see [The National Press Club’s] mission in journalism to remain the guiding principle when communicating internally among members and externally to the public.”

Encouraging a sense of community is one of the biggest areas of opportunity for the Club. Offering appealing places to socialize and interact with other journalists is a high priority for members but an area where the Club receives good but not top marks.

#### **The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way members work and what they want from the Club.**

On average, members spend most of their days working remotely – over 3 days per week at a home office or in a public space compared with one day in downtown Washington, D.C. This, combined with the Club’s reduced opening hours, appears to have reduced how much time members spend at the Club. At the same time, there is considerable interest in using the Club as a workspace. A plurality, 41 percent of members, use the Club as a place to work “occasionally” or “frequently.” Relatively minor changes, such as upgraded WiFi and dedicated spaces for phone calls, could make the Club’s workspaces even more appealing to members.

#### **Increased awareness of Club benefits could underscore the value of membership.**

The gap between how often members currently use Club benefits and how likely they would be “now that they know about them” suggests some benefits are the Club’s best kept secrets. Explicit and accessible information about how the Club “works” would be welcomed by many members.

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## **Goals for 2024-2028 Strategic Plan**

### **Recruiting New Members**

While the Club has done a good job of maintaining most of its membership during the pandemic, there has still been a decrease in membership over time. The Club needs to make sure it is actively recruiting new members and ensuring the Club is welcoming to all journalists and communicators.

**Goal #1: Membership Director and Membership Enrichment team will look into partnering with student groups with internships in D.C. and host at least one event per year aimed at getting interns into the Press Club and familiar with offerings. There will be a deliberate campaign to reach out to recent HBCU graduates so they are aware of the one free year and what that entails – including making it easily accessible on the website.**

**Goal #2: The President will continue meeting with a long-term task force designed to improve membership diversity and encourage young members to join and be active members. The President and designated task force leads will work with the Executive Director, Membership Director, and the board to implement some of the actionable changes.**

**Goal #3: Membership Enrichment Team, with assistance from the Membership Director and Membership Team, will work to schedule roughly one happy hour per month on a set date (e.g. every third Wednesday) with an outside journalism organization within the first year of the strategic plan going into effect.**

- These events will be aimed at both recruiting new members and finding ways for Team Leaders to work together with other groups on events.

**Goal #4: Membership Enrichment Team should work with Communicators Team to schedule communicators-focused recruitment events with groups of public relations professionals. The events should focus on expanding diversity among Club members.**

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**Goal #5: Membership Secretary and Membership Director will work on incentives for journalism and communicator groups to use the Club for meetings and events, with an eye to expanding membership and advertising the Club while not losing revenue.**

- This goal should be accomplished with the Club's past experience in mind. The journalism profession benefits from collaboration between groups of reporters and editors. The Club should be mindful in reaching out and partnering with various groups while keeping its revenue and membership goals in mind. Options for collaboration can include giving those who book a room for a group credit for food and drinks at the Reliable Source.

**Membership Categories**

Overall goal is to attract and retain at least 3,000 members, all of whom should feel valued and belonging. As the profession of journalism has evolved, it is important the Club continue to innovate to be "the world's leading professional organization for journalists," which benefits both journalists and communicators. For this reason, the Committee believes the current journalist-communicator ratio should be kept at 55%-45%, and membership should continue to be based on jobs and careers, rather than based on "facility benefits." The Committee also recommends against whole-sale rejection of companies for membership. Instead, the board should retain the flexibility of being able to approve individuals based on sponsor recommendations and other factors.



**Goal #1: Increase the number of corporate memberships for journalists and entice more activity in-person from those members.**

- Membership Director, President and Executive Director should meet yearly to discuss potential targets on corporate membership for journalists, with a goal of adding roughly one new corporate membership per year. Companies get a discount for larger numbers of membership, but have a restricted number of voting members.
- The President, Executive Director and Membership Director should sit down with the heads of targeted organizations at the NPC to show them the benefits of this type of arrangement. Large news organizations and also growing outlets should all be encouraged to consider this.
- Every year, there should be an end-of-the-year report describing how this is going, given by the membership secretary to the board.

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**Goal #2: Consider adding a “Friends of the press” category and a separate "journalist professor, teacher or press freedom advocate" category.**

- The President, Membership Director and Executive Director should determine if these would entail a constitutional change and examine the benefit-cost ratio of adding either of these categories. This should be done by the end of Q2 2024.
- If it would involve a constitutional change, then the President and executive board should decide if it is worth that cost and effort.
- The "friends of the press" category could include anyone who supports press freedom or other issues we tackle, and who may also enjoy the building facilities but not vote in elections. This could also include the families of journalists who've been unjustly detained, such as the Tice and Gershkovich families. We could consider both resident or nonresident categories with relevant pricing determined by the Membership Director and approved by the board.
- The "journalist professor, teacher or press freedom advocate" category would take the professors out of the journalist category and take the advocates out of the communicator category. This would also allow high school teachers in charge of news products and/or teaching journalism classes to join the Club. The price should be suggested by the Membership Director and approved by the board.

**Goal #3: Broaden the current “residents of the building” category in a three-year experiment.**

Attract up to 100 non-journalist and non-communicator members who might join the Club for its facilities, while still retaining our exclusivity and brand.

- The membership secretary should propose this to the board for approval in Q2 2024.
- The board should decide if those 100 people can publicize they are “members of the National Press Club” on their social media or if we need to label them something different like “NPC facilities member.”
- If approved, the Membership Director should determine what the right price point would be and the board should approve it.
- The Membership Director, membership secretary, and membership committee, combined with the marketing department, should try this experiment for three years.



## **Communication**

While the Club is on most major social media platforms and has a daily newsletter, members still struggle to learn what is happening at the Club, what their benefits are, and how to fully utilize the Club. The Club should tap into the expertise and resources offered by communicator members, who should coordinate with staff efforts to boost the Club's branding and communications both within the Club and externally.

**Goal #1: A task force of communicators, staff, the Executive Director and The Wire editors will develop a marketing plan for the Club that leans into the Club's strength including serving as a global voice for press freedom.**

- The marketing plan will contain actionable steps with clear deliverables.
- The plan should be used as an opportunity to plan ahead, and could include a one year food and beverage promotion alongside the Executive Director. It could also include "speaking engagement" calendar tracking when the Club President and other executive officers and leaders are speaking with journalism or educational groups and offer publicity support.
- The task force will work with the Institute as needed to strengthen branding.
- The task force will also look into how to improve our presence on existing social media and with photos, regular posts of events, before and after. Goals include increasing our followers, creating new ways to interact with our audience through re-posting, following, and commenting on major media outlet social channels.

**Goal #2: Communicators and staffers working on marketing should create and maintain a NPC Promotional Calendar to leverage key annual events, seasonal activity, and create an "editorial planning kit" to generate more visibility.**

- Calendar will include all major holidays, special events, and promotional events. It will also set forth a process to create, promote and execute, in a timely manner, key marketing and PR campaigns to better guarantee a successful event/promotion.

**Goal #3: The Club will improve and modernize the website so it is easily searchable and accessible. The Membership Director, staff and board members should consider creating a FAQ page to help answer frequently asked questions (how do I get a parking discount, what are the rules around reserving Cosgrove/McClendon, how do I get my friend a guest pass, etc.).**

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## **Professional Development**

The journalism and communications ecosystem has undergone profound changes over the last few years that both threaten our members' jobs and create new career opportunities for them. The advent of artificial intelligence, for instance, could lead to more job losses in journalism and communications but also could increase demand for nimble professionals who can harness the technology to improve news and communications products. The closing of local newspapers has resulted in news deserts but also has catalyzed ideas for original news outlets that cover small communities. The Club must become the place where our members can develop the knowledge and skills they need to survive and prosper as their sectors evolve, and should be an essential resource for journalists who want to get in – and stay in – the profession and for publications looking for the best candidates for job openings.

### **Goal #1: Establish the National Press Club as a leading voice and center of intellectual output on the biggest challenges facing the profession.**

- The President should work with relevant teams, staffers and the National Press Club Journalism Institute to create programming on these issues and partner with relevant research groups.

### **Goal #2: Strengthen the Club job board by making it more timely and relevant than other journalism job sites.**

- The Professional Development Team board liaison, staff liaison and Team Leaders should work to convince Club-member publications to post their openings on the Club job board before they're posted on LinkedIn and elsewhere. By the time a job gets to LinkedIn, it's often already filled. The Club should become the place to look for jobs for which recruiting is truly active.
- Put a stronger marketing push behind the Club job board so that members who are job hunting – and those who are just curious about what other opportunities are out there – regularly search it. Connect enough publications with quality candidates to make the board increasingly popular.

### **Goal #3: Bring back the journalism boot camp to help Club members better understand what skills editors are seeking and how to land jobs.**

- The Club will re-establish the boot camp but break it into segments that occur throughout the year. The Professional Development Team will coordinate with the Journalism Institute to develop an agenda, invite speakers and promote each segment as it's presented

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## **Security**

The Club will ensure the safety of the Club's members, staff, and guests in a dynamic landscape where technology evolves rapidly and security threats persistently advance, while simultaneously fostering a welcoming environment for all. Our responsibility must extend beyond providing exceptional service for our members and must encompass safeguarding the well-being of our members, guests, and staff and also responding quickly to the escalating sophistication of cyber threats.

### **Goal #1: The Club will hire a full-time technology manager with experience managing cybersecurity and evolving cyber threats.**

- The Club aims to onboard a full-time Technology Manager by the second quarter of 2024.
- The primary objective is to safeguard the Club's technological assets by implementing advanced cybersecurity protocols and fortifying the existing security framework.

### **Goal #2: The Club will enact policies requiring regular information security and cybersecurity training for all staff and institute new measures to combat an evolving threat landscape. The technology manager will identify steps to immediately respond to any cybersecurity incidents and will conduct random phishing tests.**

- The technology manager and Executive Director will provide updates on this progress to the Board of Governors every quarter.

### **Goal #3: The Club will conduct an annual assessment of its technological systems to ensure the Club has adequate cyberinfrastructure.**

- The technology manager and Executive Director will provide an update to the Board of Governors after each assessment.

### **Goal #4: The Security Director will bolster the Club's safety team, overseeing front desk personnel and recruiting new security staff focused on hospitality.**

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- The Security Director will expand the Club's safety and security team by hiring additional staff, and the front desk personnel will be placed under the oversight of the Security Director.
  - The new employees will prioritize hospitality while maintaining the Club's physical security through vigilant surveillance to ensure a safe and welcoming environment.

**Goal #5: The Club will study the feasibility of increasing security measures, including the possibility of arming security personnel and other infrastructure measures to help Club staff identify potential threats.**

- In the first quarter of 2024, the Board of Governors will appoint a task force of Club leaders and staff members to begin examining the facility's physical security infrastructure. As part of that review, the task force will examine whether it is feasible to procure more user-friendly security measures at the front entrance, while ensuring the safety of members, guests, and staff.
- By the third quarter of 2024, the security task force will contact vendors of security products to obtain quotes for any proposed changes.
- By the end of 2024, the task force will make a report to the Board of Governors about its findings and recommendations for any changes to security operations.

**Goal #6: The Club will create a standard operating protocol for increasing security presence or establishing an elevated security presence at sensitive Club events or programs that could draw disruptions or threats.**

- The director of clubhouse operations will work with the security director to develop this protocol.
- The protocol should be presented to the security task force by the second quarter of 2024.

**Goal #7: Club staff will work with the Board to examine whether additional membership qualifications are necessary, including the possibility of implementing criminal background checks.**



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- The membership secretary, Membership Director, director of clubhouse operations, security director, and Executive Director should meet to evaluate the protocols.

**Goal #8: Annually, the Club will offer life safety training, mandating CPR, AED, and Stop the Bleed sessions for department managers, alongside conducting routine emergency drills.**

- The Club will provide annual training opportunities on life safety and require department managers to undergo CPR, AED and Stop the Bleed training each year.
- The Club will conduct regular emergency drills, including active shooter, evacuation and shelter-in-place drills.
- The Executive Director will ensure that the staff is properly trained to respond to emergencies and report to the Board of Governors annually that the training measures have been completed.

**Goal #9: Enhance the security and confidentiality of the Press Club's communications by implementing specialized email aliases for executive board positions, ensuring a safer and more controlled channel for sensitive information.**

- The technology manager will ensure that each of the Club's officers have dedicated Press Club email aliases. Additional member leaders may be assigned email aliases.
- The evolving cyber threat landscape demands more sophisticated measures to protect sensitive information and communications of the Club. Email aliases offer a practical and effective way to enhance security, reduce vulnerabilities and online harassment of Club leaders, and maintain a safer digital environment for the organization.

**Goal #10: Optimize communication protocols with members to underscore the necessity of submitting names of guests to the front desk and communicate clearly that exclusive, invite-only events are not open to guests of Club members.**

- The membership secretary will work with the Club's membership staff to develop a communications plan to achieve this goal.

**Club Space and Events**

To ensure the Club's facilities are meeting member's needs, Club leaders should gather input on club space and events, including desired space improvements and future needs, implement feedback mechanisms to continuously improve events, explore various formats, and gather updates

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on facility usage and event accommodation capabilities to ensure informed decision-making and proactive adjustments to meet member and organizational needs.

**Goal #1: Continue communications with the building over potential changes and ensure the Club has a say by conducting member surveys in 2-3 years, or as more information on potential future plans and renovations becomes available.**

- The Board, when needed, will survey membership on desired space improvements (e.g., working areas, private meeting rooms, rooftop access, workout facility, bigger ballroom, parking).
- The Board will also work with the Institute to find opportunities to better integrate the Institute in the space.

**Goal #2: Implement post-event surveys for major Club-hosted events, including in-person, digital, and hybrid formats.**

- Team leaders who host events and staffers working with those Teams will incorporate a feedback mechanism during events (e.g., QR codes on tables).
- Board liaisons, Team Leaders and staffers will analyze survey data to identify areas for improvement in event planning and execution.

**Goal #3: Headliners Team Leaders, along with the Board liaison and staff liaison, will explore different formats for headliners events.**

- This can include the feasibility of breakfast and dinner-related events, or hosting smaller, members-only meals before larger public events to enhance member engagement.

**Goal #4: The Executive Director will provide quarterly updates to the board on facility usage and event accommodation capabilities.**

- Reports should include the usage of facilities, including the gym and working areas, and insights into how the facilities are being used. They should also include the frequency of lost business due to inability to accommodate events with bigger space needs.

**Goal #5: The Executive Director and President should work to improve the working spaces at the Club, offering places to hold quiet conversations, access to a printer and scanner (for a fee), and easier access to grab-and-go coffee and meals.**

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## **Press Freedom**

The Club has done immense work in the press freedom space, and in the next five years will build upon and magnify its connections, credibility, and outreach capacity. The Club, working with the Institute, will consider steps toward launching a Center on Press Freedom and Safety, which would be designed to become a leading organization for assisting journalists in trouble, such as those imprisoned, mistreated, or exiled. Both journalist and communicator members will join in these efforts.

### **Goal #1: Develop the financial and staffing structure of the Center in the first half of 2024, involving Club and Institute leadership, as well as Club staff and press freedom consultant Bill McCarren.**

- The Center should be structured in a way to ensure both the Club and Institute benefit from the Center's work.

### **Goal #2: The aim is for the Center to eventually become self-sustaining through fundraising appeals including grants, corporate gifts, and individual donations.**

- The Center should aim to increase fundraising to the point where it covers expenses and additional staff to help with fundraising and program development.
- The Center should coordinate and collaborate with the Institute in fundraising to ensure the right sponsors are being targeted by each.

### **Goal #3: The Center should be an extension of the Club's mission, with primary focus on elevating awareness of global and domestic press freedom issues, as well as elevating awareness and focus on specific cases, such as those of our Aubuchon honorees. The Center should advise employers seeking to help their endangered journalists and institutionalize this knowledge to help others more quickly.**

- The Center should institutionalize current knowledge, connections and relationships between Club leaders and the individuals, families, news organizations and others involved in press freedom cases.
- The Club will continue its mission in assisting domestic journalists and newsrooms.

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**Goal #4: The Center should also focus on an unmet need related to exiled journalists trying to settle in the United States. The Center, with the help of the Institute, would help exiled journalists find short-term assistance with housing, health care, education, transportation, professional development, and potential fellowships/internships/employment.**

- For worthy cases, the Center can submit a letter for asylum applicants and offer some legal assistance.
- The Center should promote the Club as a place of journalism community and a location to work safely.
- The Center should work with the Institute to consider developing training and/or a toolkit to help overseas journalists adjust to work life in the U.S.



## **Finances**

The Club's financial situation continues to be strong post-pandemic, with the Club's revenue stream back to pre-pandemic levels and key investments untouched. The Club is debt-free and worked hard to pay back substantial sums borrowed to help with cash flow issues during the pandemic. While our goal is to remain debt-free, we have access to a \$1 million line of credit if needed and maintain a high degree of creditworthiness. In the next five years, the Club should continue to update and improve how it maintains and handles expenditures and revenue.

**Goal #1: The Executive Director will create a new way to report daily revenue, forecasting, having managers involved in the budgeting, being aware of their financials (revenue against budget) and giving them accountability for their department.**

- This will include empowering managers to understand the budget, make forecasts, understand profit and loss, basic accounting. The goal is for managers to be able to analyze their operations. It will also include setting up a succession plan for staff, and setting up a new program to help monitor the food and beverage cost.

**Goal #2: The Executive Director will create a five-year maintenance plan, including capital expenditures and maintenance contracts, to better plan for major expenses.**

- This plan will be presented to the board along with the annual budget. The capital expenditure list will include an itemized list, by department

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- The maintenance plan will help the Club anticipate and prepare for general maintenance, like changing light bulbs or air filters.

**Goal #3: The Executive Director will work on updating our billing technology at events so members and guests can use Apple or Google Pay for drinks, food and tipping.**

## ***Strategic Plan Five-Year Timeline***

Note: This plan is meant to help visualize what needs to be done, but it is also meant to be flexible in how it is accomplished in the next five years.

**2024:**

Q1-

- Membership Secretary meets with Membership Director on ways to incentivize outside journalism groups to use the Clubmore.
- Membership Department and Membership Team meet to develop a plan to reach out to Club-member publications to post their openings on Club job board.
- President, Executive Director and Membership Director begin to target news organizations that would be good for corporate membership.
- Executive Directors set up training for the managers to understand their business and take decisions based on the value of the business. This includes understanding the budget, being able to make forecasts and understand profit and loss statements and basic accounting.
- Task force for the marketing team will meet and begin developing marketing plan for the Club.
- Board of governors appoints a task force to begin examining the facility's physical security.
- Finalize the structure of the Press Freedom Center and take initial steps to get it set up.

Q2-

- Club staff produce small cards/brochures with QR codes to promote Club benefits, registering for membership
- Journalism Institute and Professional Development Team develop a timeline for reviving Journalism Boot Camp as a series of individual sessions over the coming months.
- President, Executive Director and Membership Director schedule meetings with heads of news organizations that might be interested in a corporate membership.

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- Executive Director introduces a mobile payment system.
  - Executive Director introduces a new program for stock control, recipes and reports to help monitor Club food and beverage costs.
  - President and relevant teams and staffers and Institute begin working on programs designed to address major challenges journalism faces.
  - The Club on-boards a full-time technology manager.
  - Press Freedom Center holds an event on assisting exiled journalists.
  - Director of Clubhouse operations and security director create and present to task force a standard operating protocol for increasing security presence or establishing an elevated security presence at sensitive Club events or programs that could draw disruptions or threats.

#### Q3-

- Journalism Institute begins feasibility study for establishing a fellowship focusing on some of the biggest challenges facing journalism.
- Journalism Institute and Professional Development Team set dates for first Journalism Boot Camp sessions.
- The President, Membership Director and Executive Director determine if it would be worth it to add a “friends of the press” category to membership.
- Membership Secretary presents a plan to the Board on creating a “residents of the building” category as described in the Membership Categories section of the Strategic Plan.
- Executive Director ensures having a profit and loss statement for the end of each month for managers to analyze their operations.
- Executive Director prepares estimate of capital expenditures for 2025.
- Communicators and staffers designed by the President begin work on NPC promotional calendar for 2025.
- The task force on Club physical safety contacts vendors of security products to obtain quotes on proposed changes.
- Technology manager and Executive Director begins updating the Board of Governors on efforts to protect the Club from cybersecurity threats.
- The membership secretary, Membership Director, director of clubhouse operations, security director and Executive Director should meet to evaluate the protocols around whether additional membership qualifications, like background security checks, are necessary.

#### Q4-

- Membership secretary presents the board with recommendations on incentives to get more groups using the Club.

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- Journalism Boot Camp program kicks off with the first of a series of programs.
  - Membership Secretary gives a report on success of efforts to add corporate memberships.
  - Executive Director prepares a five-year maintenance plan.
  - Marketing task force present a plan for approval by the Board of Governors.
  - Safety task force reports findings and recommendations to the Board of Governors.

## 2025:

### Q1-

- Membership Enrichment Team schedules first gathering/Happy Hour with an outside group + Club members. Touts the new incentives board has approved to get more groups coming to the Press Club
- Journalism Boot Camp programs continue.
- Promotional calendar goes into effect.
- The President and staffers set up a system for event attendees to leave feedback after events, share findings with Team Leaders.

### Q2-

- Journalism Boot Camp programs continue.
- Executive Director sets up a succession plan for staffers.
- Professional development team leaders, along with board liaison, pair with a marketing task force on how to better promote the job board.
- Technology manager and Executive Director update the board after annual assessment of technological systems on whether the Club has adequate cyber infrastructure.

### Q3-

- Journalism Institute and Professional Development Team evaluate Journalism Boot Camp programs and determine how initiative should evolve.

Q4-

- Membership Secretary reports on success of expanded membership to non-journalist or communicator members, if approved by the Board.
- Membership Secretary reports on success of expanded membership to non-journalist or communicator members, if approved by the Board.
- Executive Director introduces five-year maintenance plan.
- Board of Governors receive update on how Marketing Plan is working and if adjustments need to be made.

**2026:**

Q4-

- Membership Secretary reports on success of expanded membership to non-journalist or communicator members, if approved by the Board.

**2027:**

Q4-

- Membership Secretary reports on success of expanded membership to non-journalist or communicator members, if approved by the Board As this is the last year of the experiment, the board also needs to decide whether to make expansion permanent.