



March 8, 2021

Dear SPD Community,

The workplace assessment by OIG has been completed and it concludes that SPD needs a reboot of its management, workplace policies, and relationship between staff and leaders. Brent Cunningham has stepped down as Executive Director and the board is immediately starting a national search for a new ED. At the same time, we will search for an interim ED to bridge the time until a new ED starts. Staff will be included in the selection process in both cases.

Until the interim ED starts, SPD staff will report to Finance Director Andrew Pai. Meanwhile, in order to ensure business continuity, Brent will provide operations services, and will serve in an advisory role during the transition process, reporting to the board of directors. No staff will report to him.

We are asking the small press community to help identify candidates to fill the ED role, as well as a capable interim ED. Publishing experience is helpful but fundamental expertise in progressive nonprofit management will be the primary emphasis. If you have recommendations, we welcome them.

As we told you last Friday, we have shared the workplace assessment report with SPD staff. There is a lot of private information in it about those who participated, and both staff and board have strong reservations about releasing it. We'll have more to say after further consultation with staff.

This has been an extremely painful time for the SPD community and the board recognizes its share of responsibility for that. We've heard and understand the deep frustration with how long this process has taken. We needed an independent assessment of the many allegations and complaints, corroboration where available, and the implicated parties' response to those allegations. The assessment is complete, and now we'll work with staff to refashion and rebuild SPD together.

On that note, we've identified three excellent candidates to facilitate mediation and conflict resolution. We've asked staff to select the one that they think will be most helpful.

The small press world needs a healthy SPD. We're committed to thoughtfully selecting and welcoming new leadership into SPD who will work collaboratively with staff to transform the organization and better serve the community. And, most importantly, provide a healthy and supportive workplace.

Sincerely,

Alan Bernheimer, on behalf of the SPD Board of Directors