Monthly report for December 2014

1. Highlights

- The fall 2014 term wrapped up, with Wiki Ed supporting more student editors, courses, and instructors than ever before, and the most content added to Wikipedia. While the majority of student editors added high-quality content, a handful of courses encountered challenges adding quality content to Wikipedia, and Wiki Ed's Programs team is working on improvements to our processes to ensure as many student editors as possible are able to contribute positively to Wikipedia.
- Staff visited with representatives of the American Sociological Association, American Psychological Association, National Women's Studies Association, and Georgetown University, to develop partnerships with these organizations and educational institutions.
- We kicked off development of our second major technical project, Dashboards, which provides information about what's happening in courses, including which students complete the online student training, which articles students edit, how much content they add, and how many page views those articles get.

2. Programs

While the vast majority of the courses Wiki Ed supported this term contributed great content to Wikipedia, we saw a handful of classes contributing problematic content in December. Wiki Ed's Programs Team spent several days reviewing student work and fixing problems, and we have been reviewing our internal processes to avoid these kinds of problems going forward.

We've already made some changes. First, we adjusted the volunteer role from course-based to task-based. Rather than committing to a course, volunteers are committed to types of tasks which are required across many courses. Based on feedback from volunteers, we rolled out a new category system for student work. With this system, articles that need specific kinds of help are tagged with the task they need. Volunteers who enjoy helping out with specific tasks can focus on that task, rather than being asked to help with every problem within a specific course.

Wiki Ed staff will take a larger role in onboarding and monitoring student work in individual classes to ensure they see the same level of support and know our suggested best practices. Volunteers are free to help with what they enjoy doing most. This system is guided by the organic spirit of volunteerism that built Wikipedia. We believe that by providing more staff support for each course, we can ensure the course design meets our best practices, and that our student editors make productive contributions to Wikipedia.

2.1. Educational Partnerships

Jami Mathewson and LiAnna Davis traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with organizations and to finalize details of formal partnerships with Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs). The goal of these MoUs is to establish expectations for each organization, make sure our goals align, and develop a strategy about the best way for our partnership to improve content on Wikipedia and student learning.

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We had the following meetings and outcomes:

- **American Sociological Association (ASA):** We met with the Director of the Academic and Professional Affairs Program and ASA's Executive Officer to discuss the current status of sociology contributions from student editors, formalize our existing work together as a partnership, and agree on a plan to get more instructors to teach with Wikipedia to help fill this content gap.
- **Association for Psychological Science (APS):** At APS, we met with our primary contacts and agreed that the spring 2015 term is ideal for us to focus on improving the quality of contributions from student editors rather than the quantity. Alex Kincannon, the Teaching Fellow at APS who has staff time to help support the Wikipedia initiative, is excited about getting more involved with psychology courses and helping identify psychology articles that need improvement and have enough resources that meet the requirements of MEDRS on Wikipedia.
- **National Women's Studies Association (NWSA):** At NWSA, we met with the entire staff to report on our experience at their November conference, discuss common goals, and brainstorm ways to encourage more of their instructors to help close content gaps in their field of study.
- **Georgetown University, Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship (CNDLS):** At CNDLS, we met with our primary contact, Rob Pongsajapan, who supports Wikipedia assignments on campus. With the on-campus support and experience teaching with Wikipedia from CNDLS, we're both interested in expanding the program to more Georgetown students, so we made a plan for reaching new disciplines and instructors in 2015. Rob's expertise about programs at Georgetown are crucial in helping us tap into opportunities with instructors who care about pedagogical innovation and using technology in the classroom.
- **Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA):** COSSA is an organization whose members are academic associations (including ASA!), and they are especially interested in advocacy by way of making quality information available to the masses. In our meeting with the Executive Director, she shared contacts and leads with us about a few of their member organizations who are a great candidate to partner with Wiki Ed, especially because their disciplines are underrepresented on Wikipedia.

In December, Jami and Helaine Blumenthal also presented in a webinar to 25 of ASA's members, giving Wiki Ed the opportunity to share learning outcomes and best practices with instructors who are interested in bringing Wikipedia into the classroom as a teaching tool.

2.2. Classroom Program

In the fall 2014 term, which wrapped up this month, we supported 98 courses, exceeding our goal of 85 for the term, with more than 2,500 student editors contributing to almost 3,500 articles on the English Wikipedia.

This represented significant growth for our Classroom Program. And while this was a record term for us in terms of students and courses, our primary focus is driving top-quality content to Wikipedia. A handful of incidents shed light on some opportunities to strengthen our engagement with instructors, and to improve the communication of best practices for courses.

In response to the challenges we faced in scaling our support this term, we announced new approach to connecting students and professors with volunteers, which complements the launch of our new Assignment Design Wizard. Both of these developments will help ensure more guidance to instructors directly from Wiki Ed staff, based on our continually developing understanding of what works.

To that end, we have expanded the ways in which volunteers can help student editors by creating a new tasks-based system, which encourages volunteers to help in the ways they find most interesting. We are excited about the launch of our Assignment Design Wizard, which will help professors to quickly and easily create plans for their Wikipedia assignments that employ Wiki Ed's best practices while meeting the individual needs of their courses. We've already received very positive feedback on the wizard and are improving it as we see it used.

A standout success for the program came in sheer volume of quality content: student editors contributed more than 3 million words to the article namespace (equivalent to 8 days of silent reading, 64 lbs of paper, or 6.5 copies of War and Peace). And critically, student editors continued to fill important content gaps on Wikipedia, editing more than 150 articles related to issues of gender.

Status of the Classroom Program for fall term 2014 in numbers, as of December 31:

- 98 Wiki Ed-supported courses had Course Pages (42 or 43% were led by returning instructors)
- 2,749 student editors were enrolled
- 779 students successfully completed the online training
- Students edited 3434 articles and created 455 new entries.

Student work highlights
Three more student editors from Joan Strassmann's Behavioral Ecology course at Washington University in St. Louis had their work appear on Wikipedia's main page in the Did You Know section, bringing that course's total to 19 DYKs:

- Mischocyttarus mexicanus
- Polistes apachus
- Polistes chinensis

We saw some great work from several courses:

- Expanding an underrepresented field on Wikipedia, a student from Louisiana State University created Bacteriovorax stolpii.

Other new articles include:

- Fence Cutting Wars from Boston College's course on the History of the American West,
- River barrier hypothesis from the University of Florida,
- Rock art of Uganda and Kariandusi prehistoric_site from a course on African Archaeology at the University

of Wisconsin, LaCrosse.

We saw several great examples of article expansions from these courses:

- Exodusters and Susan La Flesche Picotte from Boston College,
- Peat swamp forest from Ecological Factors in Design at the University of Southern California,
- Djenné-Djenno, Chibuene, and Hyrax_Hill from the University of Wisconsin, LaCrosse.

2.3. Communications

With the term coming to a close, we saw a lot of new information about student work coming in this month. Eryk Salvaggio has been gathering that data from across the team and compiling it into improvements for the student training, including adding additional modules tackling medical editing for students who need them, and improvements to the course pages of instructors using the Wizard tool.

Those efforts will complement the new print brochures on specific topic editing, which were printed this month, in sociology, medicine, and psychology.

Blog posts:
- Exploring the perks of partnership with Louisiana State University (December 1)
- Welcome, Samantha! (December 2)
- Wiki Ed offers a prescription for medical editing (December 3)
- Did You Know? is abuzz with wasps (December 8)
- Two Quarterly Reports now available (December 10)
- Monthly Report for November 2014 (December 15)
- Changes to Classroom Program for Spring 2015 (December 18)
- Wikipedia: An Amateur's Adventure in the World's Biggest Sandbox (December 29)
- A year in review (December 31)

News coverage:
- Darcie Vandegrift and Natalie Jolly, ASA Footnotes, "Using Wikipedia in Sociology Courses: the Faculty Perspective (December 14)
- Virginia Heffernan, "The Lives They Lived: Adrianne Wadewitz" (December 25)

2.4. Digital Infrastructure

This month, we started development on our second major technology project: Dashboards. For the upcoming spring 2015 term, the wikiedu.org Dashboards system will provide a new way to see what's going on in our Classroom Program: how much content student editors from each class have contributed, how many people have viewed the articles those editors improved, which users completed the required training for students, and more. Development is off to a fast start, and you can already see a working prototype — with real data from the Fall 2014 courses. Our goal with the Dashboards is to provide useful information to make it easier for instructors, volunteers, and Wiki Ed staff to stay involved with class activity on a day-to-day basis.

In the longer term, we see Dashboards as the foundation for a whole new course management system. The Dashboards system draws together information about what classes are doing, and presents this information to make it easy to take actions in response. (For example, if several editors in a course haven't yet completed their training, they may need a reminder.) That same information can also be used to automate some tasks — such as informing a student editor when one of their contributions has been detected as potential plagiarism. We'll be sharing more about our software ideas for in early 2015.

3. Research and Development

Outreach to high-achieving students

In December, Samantha Erickson began preparation for the spring term launch of the Student Groups Pilot. This meant contacting student groups in universities concentrated along the west coast, with selected universities throughout the rest of the United States. Samantha has communicated with over 100 individual student groups in more than 20 US universities, with the ultimate goal of encouraging students to edit Wikipedia as an extracurricular activity. The research and development project team met and created a high level program plan to create milestones of accountability for the pilot.

4. Finance and Administration / Fundraising

4.1. Finance and Administration

We were happy to open our doors to our community of San Francisco Wikipedians with our open house event (you can see our attendees in the visitors section). Hummus and wine was shared by all as a laptop displayed a fire in the hearth (actual flames are prohibited by the Presidio Trust).

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Expenses December 2014
Actual vs. Plan
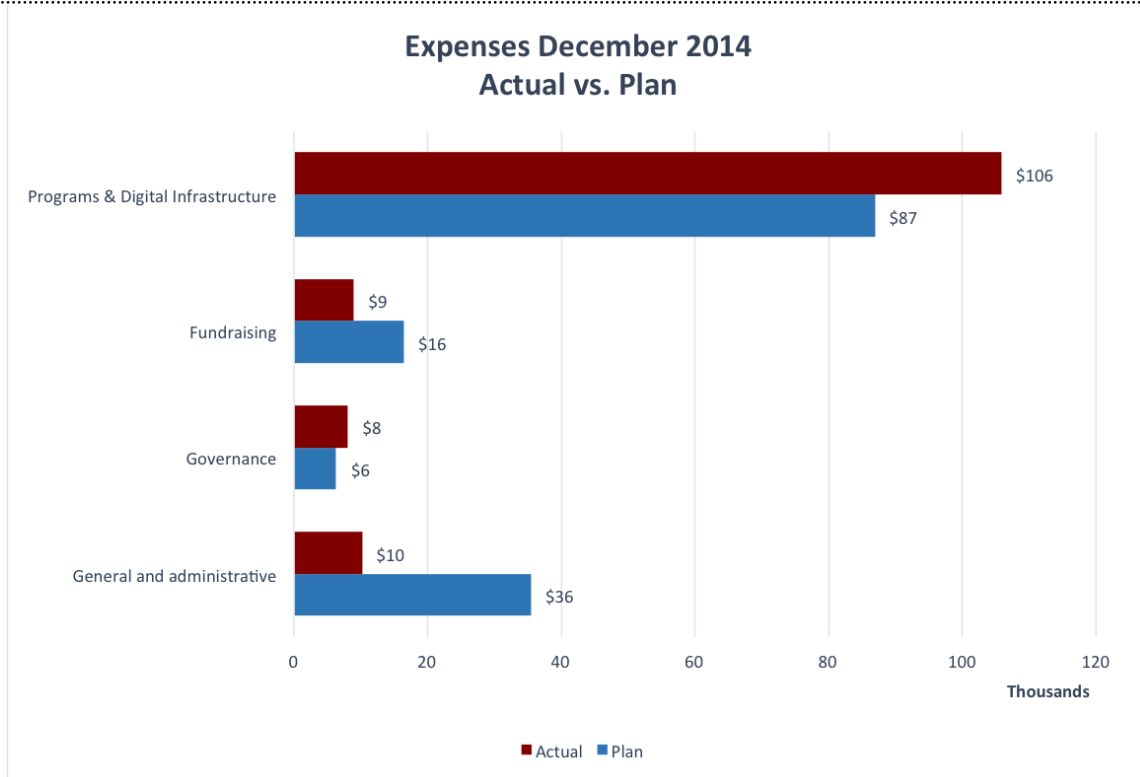
Month of December expenses are $133,021 versus the plan of $145,218. The majority of the $12k variance is due to the timing of the receipt of invoices and release of payments.

Expenses Year to Date December 2014
Actual vs. Plan
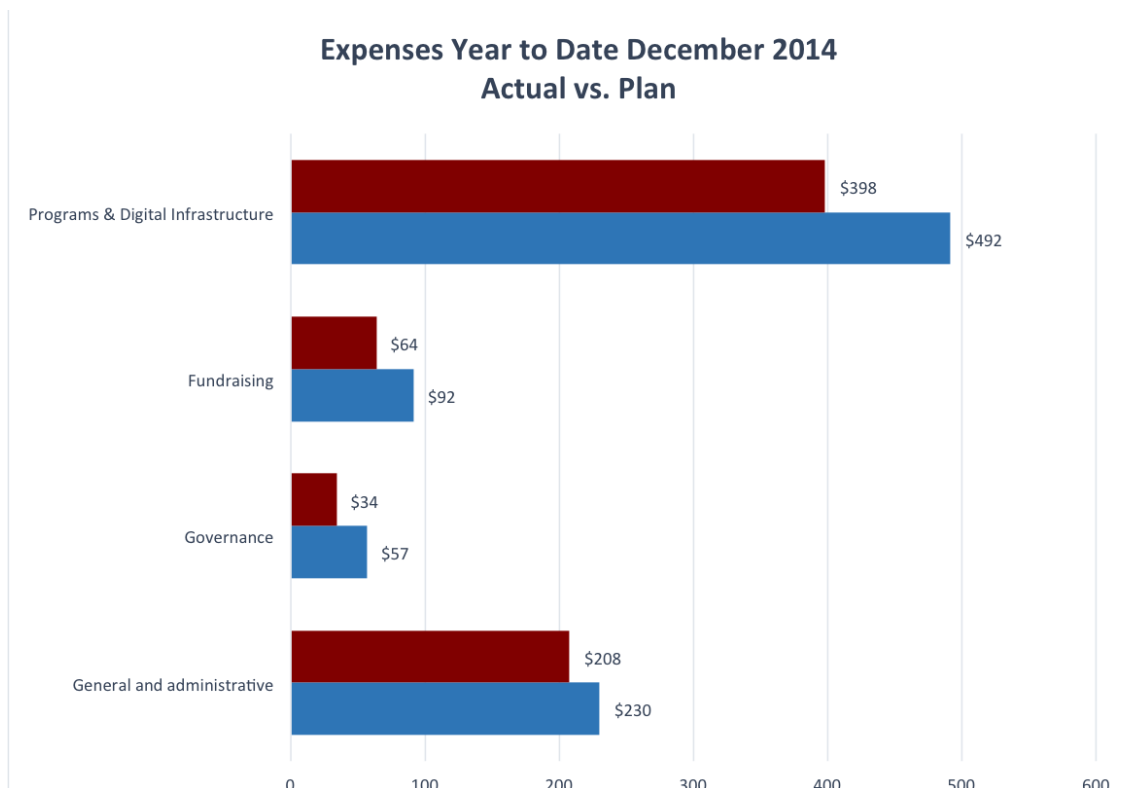
Year-to-date expenses are $703,692 versus plan of $870,382. Much of the variance of $167k is due to delays and timing of projects ($61k) and fundraising ($27k) trips and events. In addition, timing of staff hires accounts for approximately $58k and another $19k in additional office setup expenses.

5. Office of the ED

Current priorities:
• Planning a 6-month strategy process to kick off in early 2015
• Overseeing the planning for Wiki Conference USA next year

In December, Frank embarked on planning a 6-month strategy process. The goal of this process will be to position our organization in a way that increases our chances to fulfill our mission. Also as a result, Wiki Ed staff and board will know how to address the issues, forces, and risks that define and drive our organization's long-term performance. The strategic planning process will be a collaborative endeavor of the senior leadership team, board and staff of our organization. It will kick off in early 2015 and will inform our annual planning process for next fiscal year.

Also in December, Frank and Renée continued engaging with different stakeholders in planning Wiki Ed's support for next year's Wiki Conference USA. With Wikimedia D.C. having agreed to host the event in Washington, we are now jointly setting up an initial meeting with key Wikipedia community stakeholders to take place in early 2015.

Sara Crouse left our organization in late December. We thank her for what she has done for Wiki Ed and wish her all the best for the future.

We held a Classroom Program quarterly review on 22 December.

6. Visitors and Guests

Liz Allison
Aimi Watanabe
David Peters
Dahlia Stein
Josh Van Davier
Pete Forsyth
Rand Montoya
Shreysa Patankar
Toby Negrin
Amy Vossbrink
Bruce Thompson
Dario Taraborelli
Jaime Anstee
Edward Galvez
Eugene Kim
Kevin Gorman
Tanya Mera
Tom Mayer
Andrew Lih
Carolynne Schloeder
David Harris
Floor Koudijs
Naoko Komura
Puneet Kishor
Scarlett Camitelli
Tilman Bayer
Tomasz Finc