

NEWS MEDIA

AP No. 4500

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I. Philosophy

- A. College news media are news/feature publications issued under the name of the college, funded by the District, and produced by students as an integral part of instruction in journalism. It may include, but is not limited to, student newspaper reporting, broadcast news journalism and internet news journalism. The term "editorial" refers to all content other than advertising.
- B. College news media, as laboratory publications of the journalism curriculum, shall provide vehicles to train students for careers in mass communication. College news media shall also serve the entire college community by reporting the news, including college events and activities, providing a forum for comment and criticism, and encouraging free expression as guaranteed in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.
- C. College news media are valuable aids in establishing and maintaining an atmosphere of free and responsible discussion. College news media shall exercise editorial freedom in order to maintain their integrity as vehicles for free inquiry and free expression in the college community. At the same time, the editorial freedom of the college news media shall entail corollary responsibilities.
- D. Each college newspaper or other news medium is published as a learning experience, offered under the journalism department. The editorial and advertising materials published in each news medium, including any opinions expressed, are the responsibility of the student staff. An editorial board should be formed for the news media involved. Under appropriate state and federal court decisions, these materials are free from prior restraint by virtue of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. These procedures are adopted so as to encourage a responsible exercise of such freedom.

II. Journalism Grievance Procedures:

- A. Definition of a Grievance. A grievance is a complaint that alleges facts which, if true, would demonstrate a violation of the grievant's right to free inquiry, free speech, or fair treatment; contains allegations that appear to be substantially credible; and is not frivolous.
- B. Definition of a Grievant. Any reader of the college newspaper or magazine.

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- C. Respondent. The journalism adviser and student editor of the newspaper or the magazine.
- D. Informal Grievance Proceedings: Those readers who disagree with facts, subjects, photos, or editorial positions published in the college newspaper or magazine must submit a written complaint to the Dean of Communications and Languages within 10 working days of the publication that produced the alleged grievance. Upon receiving the written grievance, within 10 working days, the dean shall hold a meeting with the grievant and include the journalism adviser and the student editor of the newspaper or magazine. If the grievance can be resolved informally, the dean will send a memo summarizing the content of the meeting and the resolution to all concerned within 10 working days of the meeting. The matter will be considered to be resolved. If the grievance cannot be resolved informally, it will proceed to the formal grievance process.
- E. Formal Grievance Proceedings: Within 10 working days of the meeting, the dean will convene a committee consisting of the dean, two faculty members in other disciplines, and two students not part of the newspaper or magazine staff. A formal meeting for the grievance committee to hear the grievant's claim shall be scheduled within 10 working days of the committee's appointments being made with the provision that all parties are notified of the time and place of the meeting at least 5 working days prior to it. Prior to the meeting taking place, the committee shall meet privately to select a chair. The decision of the Grievance Committee Chair shall be final on all matters relating to the conduct of the meeting unless there is a vote of a majority of the other members of the committee to the contrary.
- F. The members of the committee shall be provided with a copy of the grievance and any written response provided by the respondent before the meeting begins.
- G. Formal rules of evidence shall not apply. Any relevant evidence shall be admitted.
- H. Unless the Grievance Hearing Committee determines to proceed otherwise, each party to the grievance shall be permitted to make an opening statement. Thereafter, the grievant or grievants shall make the first presentation, followed by the respondent or respondents. The grievant(s) may present rebuttal evidence after the respondent(s)' evidence. The burden shall be on the grievant or grievants to prove by substantial evidence that the facts alleged are true and that a grievance has been established as specified above.

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- I. The meeting shall be closed and confidential. Witnesses, if any, shall not be present at the meeting when not testifying, unless all parties and the committee agree to the contrary.
- J. The Dean of Communications and Languages shall provide for the means to have detailed notes taken of the meeting. A summary and a copy of these minutes shall be made available to both parties no later than 10 working days following the meeting.
- K. Within 10 working days following the close of the meeting, the committee shall prepare and send to the Vice President of Academic Services a written decision. The decision shall include specific factual findings regarding the grievance, and shall include specific conclusions regarding whether a grievance has been established. The decision shall also include a specific recommendation regarding the relief to be afforded the grievant, if any. The decision shall be based only on the record of the hearing, and not on matter outside of that record. The record consists of the original grievance, any written response, and the oral and written evidence produced at the meeting.
- L. Within ten working days of receiving the recommendation of the committee, the Vice President shall send to all parties his or her written decision, together with the committee's decisions and recommendations. The factual findings of the committee shall be accorded great weight; and if the Vice President does not accept the decision or a finding or recommendation of the committee, the Vice President shall review the record of the hearing, and shall prepare a new written decision which contains specific factual findings and conclusions. The decision of the Vice President shall be final, subject only to the appeal as provided below. All records of the formal grievance shall remain in the office of the Vice President.
- M. Any party to the grievance may appeal the decision of the Vice President. These appeals shall be submitted to the Superintendent President or designee no later than 10 working days following the receipt of the decision of the Vice President. The Superintendent President or designee shall review the record of the meeting and the documents submitted in connection with the appeal, but shall not consider any matters outside of the record.
- N. Following the review of the record and appeal statement, the Superintendent President or designee may decide to sustain, reverse, or modify the decision of the Vice President. The Superintendent President's decision shall be in writing and shall include a statement of reasons for the decision. The Superintendent President's decision shall

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be final. It shall be included with the other grievance materials related to the case in the office of the Vice President of Academic Services.

- O. The decision on the appeal shall be reached within 10 working days after the receipt of the appeal documents. Copies of the Superintendent's decision shall be sent to all parties in a timely manner.
- III. More formal grievance procedures may include a grievance hearing committee and appeal to the CEO or designee in a timely fashion. The procedures should include how grievance hearings should be conducted, access to and maintenance of related records, and the responsibility of the authorities to respond to the grievance in a timely fashion.