

## Guidelines for Student Media

### Preamble

Student media are a significant component of the educational experience at Knox College. Student publications and other media help to establish and maintain an atmosphere of free and responsible discussion and of intellectual exploration on the campus. They are a means of bringing student concerns to the attention of the student body, faculty and administration and of giving voice to student opinion on various issues on the campus and in the world at large. For their staff, student media also function as valuable venues for the development of critical thinking and writing skills, are vehicles for creative communication, and provide a way to contribute to the betterment of the campus community. A concern for their educational value governs the Student Experience Committee (SEC) in its mission to preserve the freedom of expression of all student media, to ensure that they are successfully managed and, in collaboration with the student media faculty advisors, to ensure that their editorial policies and practices are legal and ethical.

The SEC seeks to ensure that student media will be free from censorship, prior restraint, advance approval of copy, or other forms of undue pressure or influence from administrators, faculty or students, and that its student editors and managers (henceforward student editors) will be free to develop their own editorial policies and news coverage within the boundaries of responsible journalism and publishing practices. Editors of student media will be protected from arbitrary suspension and removal as a result of student, faculty, administration or public disapproval of editorial policy or content. Editors will be subject to removal only for proper and stated causes and then by orderly and prescribed procedures outlined in this document.

In the delegation of editorial responsibility to students of Knox College the SEC will provide sufficient editorial freedom and encourage sufficient financial autonomy so that the student media may maintain their integrity of purpose as vehicles for free inquiry and free expression in an academic community. At the same time, the editorial freedom of student editors and their staffs entails corollary responsibilities as determined by the canons of responsible journalism<sup>1</sup> and publishing practices, such as the avoidance of undocumented allegations, attacks on personal integrity, and the techniques of harassment and innuendo, and also by any relevant legal regulations concerning issues such as libel and obscenity.

### Definition of "Student Media":

In this document, the phrase "student media" designates any student organization whose principal purpose is the ongoing publication of vehicles of mass (one-to-many) communication via print, audio or video broadcast, cable transmission or other electronic transmission. Currently, these student organizations are the college newspaper *TKS*, the online broadcast channel *WVKC*, the literary magazines *Catch* and *Quiver*, the arts magazine *X*, and the online essay journal *Common Room*.

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<sup>1</sup> See the American Society of News Editors (ASNE) Statement of Principles originally adopted in 1922 as the 'Canons of Journalism.' The document was renamed "Statement of Principles" in 1975.

The primary function of the SEC in this regard is to act as the guarantor, in cooperation with faculty advisors who have a level of expertise with the media they advise, both of the editorial freedom of student media and of their adherence to the principles described in the ASNE Statement of Principles, more widely known as the ‘Canons of Journalism.’ To that end, the Committee is charged with several specific duties, as detailed below:

### Jurisdiction of the Student Experience Committee (SEC)

1. All student media fall within the jurisdiction of the SEC. All student media organizations are expected to abide by existing legal regulations and the canons of responsible journalism, as well as adhere to College policies, rules and regulations. SEC reserves the right to take action (through mechanisms specified below) to censure and/or to refer individual students and/or organizations to the appropriate office on campus for further review i.e. Honor Board, Dean of Students office, etc.

2. All student media organizations that require College and Student Activities funds and/or other resources (beyond those available to all students) for their operations shall also be regulated by the SEC as to formal recognition and approval by the faculty; annual open nomination and selection of editors; and the appointment of faculty advisors and the maintenance of satisfactory performance by the editors.

### 3. Electronic Media

a. Student media organizations that use existing electronic means of publication (e.g., web-based publications, e-mail newsletters or other computer-based media) will be subject to regulation by the SEC if they seek formal recognition and approval by the faculty and Student Senate as official Knox College student organizations.

b. Student media organizations that use electronic means of publication are, in addition to being within the jurisdiction of the SEC, subject to the expectations for responsible use agreed to as a condition of access to the Knox computer network (See Knox College Acceptable Use Policy). In the case that electronic student media organizations or individuals publishing electronic media are charged with violations of Information Technology Services’ acceptable use provisions, such media organizations or individuals can request, or the SEC can require, that the case be adjudicated according to the procedures set forth in the student handbook below rather than by administrative review in order to ensure that the reasonable autonomy of student media is not abridged.

### Recognition of New Student Media

In order to establish new formal media organizations eligible for support from the College, interested parties or their representatives shall appear before the SEC, and the SEC shall receive and hear for approval petitions to this effect and shall recommend to the Faculty approval of those new media the SEC believes will make a positive contribution to the public discourse of the campus community.

## Faculty Advisors to Student Media

Each student media organization must have one or more Faculty Advisors approved by SEC. Their duties shall be to advise, advocate for, and exercise general oversight of the media organization consistent with the role of student media as articulated in the Preamble. It is understood that advising, at times, may be oppositional, and that judicious advice may not always be accepted, but that in such rare circumstances the advisor does not have veto power over editorial policy or implementation of policy.

### 1. Procedure for Advisor Appointment:

- a. Each applicant editorial staff will present with their application a rationale for the proposal of (a) particular individual(s) as an advisor. It is understood that the editors will consult with the existing advisor and the proposed advisor in this process.
- b. Each applicant's editorial staff will submit with their application a job description of the advisor to which both the editor(s) and the advisor(s) have agreed.
- c. The SEC will review for approval the advisor proposal and render a decision separate from the overall approval of an editorial application. In the event the media organization is unable to identify a viable candidate for advisor, the SEC will make an appointment.

### 2. Term of Appointment:

- a. The advisor shall serve the tenure of the newly appointed editorial staff with continuance through the summer and until the new staff (and advisor, if applicable) is active.

### 3. Procedure for Removal/Change of an Advisor:

- a. Either the editors or the SEC may initiate a request for change of advisor. A request by the editors must be submitted to SEC in writing.
- b. Any action by the SEC must be preceded by a conference with the editors and the advisor.
- c. The decision to remove an advisor rests with the SEC.
- d. The decision of the SEC may be appealed to the Faculty Executive Committee by either of the parties concerned.

4. It is understood that WVKC, due to its particular requirements of FCC compliance, requires an advisor to be conversant with these regulations. The WVKC editor applicant must negotiate a working relationship with the continuing advisor. In the event that the WVKC advisor is not

continued, the SEC will satisfy itself that any proposed candidate for advisor is sufficiently conversant with FCC regulations prior to approval.

### Selection of Editors

The responsibility for selection of editors for student media lies ultimately with the President of the College and the Board of Trustees, who have delegated to the SEC, through the Faculty Executive Committee, the immediate responsibility for selection of editors for student media. It is understood that the editors will choose their staff. The jurisdiction of the SEC includes staff members of all student media. The SEC will appoint editors of student media in the following manner:

1. Requests for the submission of applications for open editorial positions will be widely publicized at least two weeks in advance of the deadline for submission.
2. Applications will consist of name of student, qualifications, a recommendation, statement of intended editorial policy, job description for the media advisor, and a tentative list of staff members.
3. Editors will be chosen on the basis of:
  - a. Their application
  - b. Previous experience in the student media organization
  - c. An interview with current student media leaders and their faculty advisor
4. The term of editors of all student media will normally be for one year.
5. Only under unusual circumstances may editors succeed themselves.
6. Only full-time students may serve as editors of student media.
7. Applications for editor positions will be accepted from individuals who may indicate a wish to serve as co-heads. The SEC may from time to time approve the appointment of co-heads, but each applicant must submit a separate application and the resignation or removal of one co-head does not imply that similar action applies to the other.
8. Once selected, the advisor or current student editor will communicate the appointment(s) to the Campus Life Office. The Campus Life Office will report the appointment of new student media editors to SEC.

### Academic Performance of Student Editors

All media heads are expected to be in academic good standing in each term for which they hold their appointment. Failure to be so may result in their removal by the SEC.

## Dismissal or Censure of Student Media Editors and Staff

The SEC may dismiss or censure editors or student staff members of student media when the media organization or procedures for which the editor is responsible violates legal regulations or the canons of responsible journalism—that is, when the production is libelous or obscene, uses undocumented allegation, attacks personal integrity, or uses the techniques of harassment or innuendo.

1. The procedure for dismissal or censure will be:

- a. Presentation of charges and evidence in writing to the editor and/or staff members in question and setting a date for a hearing, not sooner than one week from presentation of charges.
- b. Charges to be heard by a representative sub-committee of SEC at a specially called meeting.
- c. The person charged has the right to be assisted in his or her defense by a person acting as an advisor, provided that the advisor is a current student or a faculty or staff member.
- d. Other particulars of the regular hearing procedure will be followed as explained in Appendix B (Regular Procedure for Hearing).

2. Sanctions:

- a. The SEC may dismiss or censure the editor or student staff member charged.
- b. In the event the SEC deems a particular case to also constitute an infraction of College policies, the SEC may also choose to refer the situation to the Dean of Students.

## Financial Recommendations

The SEC, having final jurisdiction over financial allocations from the Student Senate Finance committee, may make recommendations to appropriate Student or Faculty committees in financial matters, such as amounts of salaries, payment of salaries, and operating budgets that concern organizations under the governance.

Editors should also be prepared to submit to the SEC upon request a statement on the financial condition of their media organization.

## Insertion of Disclaimer

All college-financed student media must regularly publish a statement that the opinions expressed are solely the opinions of the author or editorial staff, and not necessarily those of Knox College or of its faculty, administration or student body. In the case of print/online media,

this statement must appear in each issue; in the case of broadcast media, the statement must be broadcast at least once during every broadcast day. The disclaimer should read as follows:

The [name of publication] is written, edited and broadcast by student staff members, and they are solely responsible for its editorial policy and content. Views, thoughts or opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the official policy and position of Knox College.

### Committee Participation in Judicial Proceedings Against Student Media

In the event that a charge concerning the content of any student generated medium is brought before any College judicial body, the SEC shall participate in the adjudication of those charges so as to ensure that the canons of responsible journalism, as discussed in the preamble, and rights to freedom of speech are duly considered in the proceedings.

### Legal Workshop

The SEC will schedule early in the Fall Term of each year a workshop on legal and ethical considerations of student media, including libel, to be conducted by an expert in this field. All editors of student media will be required to attend this workshop. Funds for this workshop will be provided by Student Development.

Appendix A:

Insert Knox College Acceptable Use Policy

Appendix B:

Regular Procedure for Hearing

At the Hearing

Three voting members of SEC (one faculty [as Hearing Chair], one student, one administrator), appointed by the chair of SEC, will serve as a representative sub-committee at the hearing.

The Chair presides at the hearing. It is his or her responsibility to see that proper procedures are followed.

The Chair shall introduce each person or the members may introduce themselves.

The respondent, complainant, nature of the complaint or charge, and the issue, volume and publication or broadcast date shall be stated at the beginning of the hearing. (The 'respondents' may be one or more persons. The 'complainant' may also be one or more persons.)

The first witness is the complainant, who will explain the reasons for bringing the case, the nature of the evidence, and any other information deemed relevant. The complainant may wish to rest on his or her written formal complaint. Other witnesses, if any, in support of the complaint or charge will be heard at this time.

The Chair will ask the respondents if they have questions to ask of the complainants. Following, the complainants may ask questions of the respondents and other witnesses. The Chair will determine whether any other witnesses will be allowed to ask questions during the hearing.

When the Chair determines that both complainants and respondents have had ample opportunity to ask questions of each other, the SEC voting members will have a chance to ask questions of the respondents with the intent of addressing the specific charge. They may, at their discretion, excuse either party in order to question the other party.

The Chair will excuse all parties except for voting members, unless ex officio members of SEC are necessary for the purposes of consultation. (These ad hoc members may not vote and may be excused by the Chair at any time as deliberations move toward vote.)

The voting members will determine the merit of the complaint or charge and penalty based on the preponderance of the evidence in the case. The case may be recorded as “no decision,” in which case no penalty is given. In its decision, the SEC voting members strive to preserve balance among the principles of consistency with precedent, justice to individuals, the maintenance of an academic community, and adherence to the principles set forth in the Preamble.

#### After the Hearing

It is the duty of the presiding Chair to notify the reporting party and respondents of the decision in writing within seventy-two hours of the hearing.