

## STUDENT PUBLICATIONS CHARTER

PREAMBLE: Student publications are important and necessary services at Western Washington University to provide a channel for information, to serve as a designated public forum for ideas and opinions in the university community, and to educate interested students in the processes of communications. The following statement of policies and procedures seeks the greatest freedom and the highest quality of expression and fiscal responsibility consistent with general university policy and welfare.

- I. The Board of trustees has the legal right and the duty to define the functions of, to set broad governing policies of, and to review any action of student publications or their governing bodies. By tradition, the Board delegates these tasks to the President or the President's designee. The President or designee may in turn delegate them to the Student Publications Council.
- II. Recommendations to the President or President's designee for amendments to this Charter require the concurrence of two-thirds or the total Council membership.
- III. Advisers to student publications shall be appointed by, directly responsible to, the President of the university or the designee. The role of the adviser is to provide professional information and advice to the publications staffs, the Council, and the President or the President's designee.
- IV. The Chair of the Student Publications Council shall be the principal student publications administrative officer of the university appointed by the President or a designee, presiding ex officio without vote. The first meeting in fall quarter will be called by the Chair or, in the Chair's absence, the Chair of the Journalism Department.
- V. In order to recognize the all-university nature of the student publications, but at the same time to emphasize the student role, the Council shall consist of the Chair and seven voting members, including four (4) students and three (3) non-students to be named as follows:
  - a. Three students will be named by the AS Board of Directors and serving terms of one academic year. They will include the AS Vice President for Activities; the Editor of the AS Review; and a third student-At-Large position appointed by the AS Board. If the AS Board of Directors fails to appoint the At-Large position by one week prior to the first meeting of the Student Publications Council in Fall quarter, an alternate At-Large student will be appointed by the Chair of either the English Department or the Journalism Department, whichever is not currently represented by the rotating position in section b.

**Commented [VB1]:** The concern is that the goal is to have a student majority on the council, and if a student is not appointed, how do we recruit to fill the position?

**Commented [MM2]:** One idea for how to fill this seat

- b. To ensure regular representation on the Student Publication Council and Departmentally Related Activities Committee (DRAC) from all of the SPC publications, a rotating schedule will apply. The designated publication chooses early in fall quarter a representative and an alternate for a one-year term commencing with fall quarter. If a publication does not choose a student representative, the publication that is designated to next supply a representative can do so for that year.

The base schedule is:

~~2013-14~~ 2021-2022: ~~Western~~ The Front chooses the SPC representative; Jeopardy chooses the DRAC representative

~~2014-15~~ 2022 – 2023: Klipsun chooses the SPC representative; ~~Planet~~ Occam's Razor chooses the DRAC representative

~~2015-16~~ 2023 – 2024: Jeopardy chooses the SPC representative; ~~WF~~ Planet chooses the DRAC representative

~~2016-17~~ 2024 – 2025: ~~Planet~~ Occam's Razor chooses the SPC representative; ~~Klipsun~~ The Front chooses the DRAC representative

2025 – 2026: Planet chooses the SPC representative, Klipsun chooses the DRAC representative.

(With subsequent years following the same sequence.)

- c. Two faculty members named by the Faculty Senate to one-year terms commencing the end of Fall and Spring Quarters, respectively. If the Faculty Senate fails to name members by the week prior to the first Student Publications Council meeting in Fall quarter, the VPUE will either designate two faculty or staff members to the council, or defer to the department chair(s) of their choice to designate faculty or staff to serve on the Council.

Commented [MM3]: One idea for how to fill this seat.

- d. One administrator or classified staff employee named by the President or the President's designee to a one-year term commencing the end of Winter Quarter.

e. The terms of all Council members shall be for one calendar year renewable for a maximum of three years. Unscheduled vacancies shall be filled immediately, by the same means as the original appointment, to cover the unexpired balance of the term.

- f. To minimize potential conflicts of interest, voting members of the Student Publications Council shall not, while serving on the Council, hold any ~~student publications~~ Editor in Chief position appointed by the Student Publications Council and shall not serve on any superior budgetary body except as the duty appointed representative of the Council.

- g. The Chair of the Journalism Department and the university controller, or their representatives, to provide information, shall sit as ex officio, nonvoting

members. The council may invite other resource persons, e.g. professional journalists, to sit in as hoc or ex officio but non-voting capacities.

- VI. The Student Publications Council, functioning as the policy-making Board of each authorized student publication, shall:
  - a. Set general policies, including name, objectives, frequency, and method of publication. This specifically excludes daily editorial and operational decisions as to the conduct of each publication.
- VII. Establish the criteria, length of appointment, and bonding procedures for the editor-in-chief of each publication. Among the criteria to be considered should be experience, interest, and academic ability, but in no case shall a person be selected who is not in good academic standing with an overall GPA of at least 2.0. Editors-in-chief of the university newspaper The ~~Western~~ Front and Klipsun periodical shall be appointed or reappointed quarterly. Editors-in-chief of Jeopardy and Occam's Razor shall be appointed annually. The Planet Editor-in-chief term may be for one term and up to three terms. Planet EIC applicants should indicate their intentions during the interview process. Length of term will be taken into consideration but not be a determining factor in selection.
  - a. Develop written procedural methods to handle any matter relating to student publications not covered in this statement.
- VIII. Administration and management of student publications rest with their respective editors. These duties include all daily operational decisions, filling other staff positions, and the preparation, presentation and administration of budgets in consultation with staff and advisers. In the event of an editor's inability to carry out the duties of the office, the editor and/or the advisor shall notify the Council of the situation and recommend necessary interim measures.
- IX. Student publications will be funded through the regular budgetary process that applies to Service and Activities Fee distribution for Associated Student Government and Departmentally related Activities.
- X. The Council may recommend the criteria of dissolution of authorized student publications. These are the university newspaper, the university periodical, the university annual, and such other publications as may subsequently come under the jurisdiction of the Council. To be effective, the recommendation to create or dissolve any publication requires a majority vote of all students voting in the spring quarter Associate Students general election.
- XI. The Chair of the Student Publications Council, as principal student publications administrator of the university, shall see the policies and procedures set by the

**Commented [MM4]:** I feel like this is at odds with section VI- a, which gives the council control over frequency of publication, which could be zero. Also, if budgeting constraints ever indicate a need of ceasing one of the publications, the budgets would be due to S&A prior to Spring quarter. Should this section be removed?

Council are administered and shall conduct the selection of editors-in-chief, review budgets, and hearings of complaints according to the following procedures:

- a. The Council shall interview and ~~recommend~~select candidates for the positions of editors-in-chief.
- b. The Council shall examine the budgets of each publication, recommend action on funding, and advise on any revisions.
- c. The Council shall examine and recommend suitable action on:
  - i. Suggestions or complaints pertaining to student publications.
  - ii. Complaints about student editors-in-chief. The recommendations may include, if necessary, their censure, suspension from office, or replacement, but only in accordance with well-established criteria of due process.

XII. This Charter establishes the following code of freedom and responsibility for all authorized student publications.

a. **FREEDOM**

- i. Freedom of expression and debate by means of a free and vigorous press is essential to the effectiveness of an educational community in a democratic society.
- ii. The press must be free of all forms of external interference designed to regulate its content.
- iii. Freedom of the press must not be abridged by confiscation of issues or facilities, or suspension of publication, except where there is clear danger that publication will violate a public law, nor may it be abridged by academic, personal or financial sanctions, arbitrary removal of staff members, or threats of these actions. No one outside staff shall delete, dictate or revise the content of a student publication.

b. **RESPONSIBILITY**

- i. It is the responsibility of the press to report the news with accuracy, truthfulness and fairness, and to provide an outlet for campus opinion and creative effort.
- ii. The Press must maintain respect for the privacy and rights of the individual. The press must not impugn the character or motives of the individual without substantial evidence, nor shall it ever knowingly violate a confidence.

- iii. In publishing news, news value must be the only criterion. Personal bias, vested interests or editorial policy must not dictate the writing, placement or length of news stories.
- iv. The press provides an open forum for unfettered expression of opinion, including those opinions differing from editorial policy. Such expressions must not be edited so as to distort, after or disparage the opinion.
- v. The press must not misrepresent the opinions or actions of individuals or groups.
- vi. A correction must be properly issued and fairly placed where there has been factual inaccuracy. Where an individual or group has been damaged by the error, and an apology is necessary.
- vii. An article from another publication must not be reprinted in whole or in part without due credit, and permission if necessary.
- viii. The editor must accept final responsibility for the contents of the publication.
- ix. An editor who flagrantly or consistently violates these responsibilities may be removed, but only in accordance with well-established criteria of due process that include full right of defense

--adopted by the Council June 2006  
--approved by the President June 2006  
--amended by the Council June 2013  
--approved by the Vice Provost June 2013  
--approved by the Council May 2014  
--approved by the Vice Provost May 2014  
--amended by the Council February 2022

**Commented [VB5]:** Process:  
-- SPC debates recommended changes to Charter;  
-- SPC votes to approve changes  
-- SPC chair sends proposed amendments to Vice Provost for final approval

## **ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE STUDENT PUBLICATIONS COUNCIL AND PUBLICATIONS**

- The Council selects the Editor-in-Chief.
- The Council approves the budget proposals for each publication.
- The Council deals with overall policy issues (i.e., whether to accept advertising)
- The Council does not handle any editorial questions, which are specifically assigned to the editor and his/her staff.
- The Council acts as a forum for members of the community who may bring concerns or complaints.
- The Council can remove an Editor-in-Chief under certain circumstances.
- The Council provides representation to Departmentally Related Activities Committee, which secures funding through the Service & Activities Fee Committee.
- The Council sets frequency of publication.
- The Council reports to the President and Board of Trustees.