

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-DOWNTOWN
Student Newspaper
Guidelines and Administrative Procedures
(Revised Spring 1997)

I) NAME:

The official name of the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) student newspaper is *Dateline*.

II) PURPOSE & OBJECTIVE:

Dateline is a newspaper published by and for UHD students. It includes news, features, editorials, photos and advertising. The goal of the newspaper is to provide news and information to the UHD community. The newspaper also serves as a laboratory to train students for careers and to instruct them in leadership roles.

III) NEWSPAPER ADVISOR:

A) Appointment

The advisor will be appointed by the President upon recommendation of the Advisory Committee. The appointment will be for one year, beginning with the date of spring commencement, and may be renewed. If the advisor is relieved of his/her duties, the President will appoint a new advisor upon the recommendation of the committee. If it becomes necessary to appoint a new advisor prior to spring commencement, the advisor's term will extend through two spring commencements (a term of over one year).

B) Responsibilities

- 1) Advises, on a daily basis, newspaper student staff. Assists in keeping the Advisory Committee informed about publication schedule, budget matters and staff training.
- 2) Provides training sessions to student staff.
- 3) Assists the editor in maintaining the *Student Newspaper Staff Handbook* to provide job descriptions and rules for staff.
- 4) With the aid of the Student Activities Director, reviews GPAs of applicants for paid staff positions.
- 5) Provides guidance to student staff in matters of legality (libel, obscenity, and privacy) and of journalistic excellence consistent with the Canons of Ethics and professional norms in the field, subject to overview by the Advisory Committee policies.
- 6) Is on call for the editor as a sounding board and for experienced opinion.
- 7) Subscribes to the College Media Adviser's (CMA) code of ethics. The advisor is not to be construed to be an editor, a producer, a censor, or otherwise to be in a position to exercise prior restraint of editorial content. However, should editorial matter be apparently injurious and/or illegal in the opinion of the advisor, the advisor should then notify the Advisory Committee so that the material in question might be discussed with the editor and Advisory Committee, with the goal of assessing liability, if any, or any real or indirect damage occurring to the publication or others as a result of this specific material.

IV) STUDENT EDITOR:

A) Qualifications (minimum) for the student newspaper editor:

- 1) Applicants must complete an application form supplied by the Advisory Committee and attach samples of their written work.

- 2) All applicants must meet the following requirements:
 - (a) Academic classification of at least a sophomore;
 - (b) Enrollment at UHD for one semester prior to the effective date of appointment;
 - (c) Preferred candidates should have completed ENGL 1302 or equivalent; ENGL 3302 or equivalent; ENGL 4322 and/or COMM 3311 or equivalent;
 - (d) Have and maintain a GPA for UHD coursework of not less than 3.0 on a 4.0 scale; and
 - (e) Applicants and appointed editors must be currently enrolled, maintain the required GPA, and not be on academic or disciplinary probation/suspension at the time of application or at any time during the period of service.
- 3) The editor may not hold elected or appointed office in the Student Government Association, in any campus organization, or on any university or departmental committee, except with prior approval from the Advisory Committee.

B) Appointment

- 1) The editor will be selected by the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee will interview all applicants prior to the appointment.
- 2) The appointment will be for one year. The current editor may re-apply for the editor's position.
- 3) The deadline for applications is 5:00 p.m. on March 10, if a Friday, or the first Friday thereafter.
- 4) Public notice in the student newspaper inviting applications for the editor position will be given in at least three issues prior to the deadline.
- 5) Selection of a newspaper editor will be made by the Advisory Committee no later than the first week in April.
- 6) The Advisory Committee will make appointments to fill vacancies created by resignations, removals, or other causes in conformity with established procedures. The Advisory Committee may make emergency interim appointments until it is possible to conform to the policies on selection.
- 7) Termination: The editor can be removed or suspended by the Advisory Committee only for serious violations of University procedures or policies. On the vote of a majority of the voting members of the Advisory Committee, a disciplinary hearing for the editor may be scheduled no earlier than a week after the vote. In order for the editor to have sufficient time for a response, the Advisory Committee chair should inform the editor in writing no later than three days prior to the scheduled hearing.
- 8) The editor can be discharged only on a two-thirds vote of the entire voting body of the Advisory Committee. A copy of the discharge must be signed by the chair of the Advisory Committee and the *Dateline* advisor.

C) Responsibilities

- 1) The editor is responsible for carrying out the overall policies established by the Advisory Committee and is held directly responsible for editorial matter which appears in the newspaper. The editor is expected to know the laws concerning libel and obscenity. The editor is also expected to provide the utmost in service to the readers and to perform duties of the editor in a creditable manner.

- 2) The editor is expected to conform with such generally accepted journalistic practices as expressed in the Canons of Journalism.
- 3) The editor notifies in writing any discharged paid staff of reasons for the discharge and rights of appeal. A copy of the discharge must be signed by the editor, the business manager, and the advisor. Any discharged staff shall have the right to a hearing before the Advisory Committee, which then makes the final decision.

D) Duties of the editor

- 1) Assign stories to staff;
- 2) Oversee editing of *Dateline*;
- 3) Assume ultimate responsibilities for layout;
- 4) Appoint staff members to carry out the above duties and report appointments to the Advisor;
- 5) Set and adhere to a publication schedule to cover the entire 12-month academic year. The schedule must be submitted to the advisor by the first Monday of the fall semester and to the Advisory Committee by the first meeting of the fall semester. Extra issues beyond the set schedule, if permitted by the budget, will be allowed;
- 6) Publish a minimum of six issues, budget permitting, during the two long semesters;
- 7) Set and adhere to a publication budget in accordance with guidelines set by the Advisory Committee. The detailed budget, based on the Student Services Fee Allocation Committee distribution, must be submitted to the advisor by the first Monday of the fall semester and to the Advisory Committee by the first meeting of the fall semester. The budget will include recommended staff stipends;
- 8) Maintain a current *Student Newspaper Staff Handbook* to include detailed job descriptions and rules for all paid staff; and
- 9) Fulfill other duties as outlined in the *Student Newspaper Staff Handbook*.

V) BUSINESS MANAGER:

A) Qualifications (minimum) for the student newspaper business manager:

- 1) Applicants must complete an application form supplied by the Advisory Committee.
- 2) All applicants must meet the following requirements:
 - (a) Academic classification of at least a sophomore.
 - (b) Enrollment at UHD for one semester prior to effective date of appointment.
 - (c) Preferred candidates should have completed ENGL 1302 or equivalent and at least one business course or equivalent.
 - (d) Have and maintain a GPA for UHD coursework of not less than 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.
 - (e) Applicants and appointed business managers must be currently enrolled, maintain the required GPA, and not be on academic or disciplinary probation/suspension at the time of application or at any time during the period of service.

- 3) The business manager may not hold elected or appointed office in the Student Government Association, in any campus organization, or on any university or departmental committee, except with prior approval from the Advisory Committee.

B) Appointment

- 1) The business manager will be selected by the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee will interview the applicants prior to appointment.
- 2) The appointment will be for one year. The current business manager may re-apply for the business manager position.
- 3) The deadline for applications is 5:00 p.m. on March 10, if a Friday, or the first Friday thereafter.
- 4) Public notice in the student newspaper inviting applications for the business manager position will be given in at least three issues prior to the deadline.
- 5) Selection of a newspaper business manager will be made by the Advisory Committee no later than the first week in April.
- 6) The Advisory Committee will make appointments to fill vacancies created by resignations, removals, or other causes in conformity with established procedures. The Advisory Committee may make emergency interim appointments until it is possible to conform to the policies on selection.
- 7) Termination: The business manager can be removed or suspended by the Advisory Committee only for serious violations of University procedures or policies. On the vote of a majority of the voting members of the Advisory Committee, a disciplinary hearing for the business manager may be scheduled no earlier than a week after the vote. In order for the business manager to have sufficient time for a response, the Advisory Committee Chair should inform the business manager in writing no later than three days prior to the scheduled hearing. The business manager can be discharged only on a two-thirds vote of the entire voting body of the Committee. A copy of the discharge must be signed by the chair of the Advisory Committee and the *Dateline* advisor.

C) Responsibilities

- 1) The business manager is responsible for carrying out the overall policies (related to the business and the financial transactions of the *Dateline*) established by the Advisory Committee and is held directly responsible for advertising and other financial affairs at the newspaper. The business manager is also expected to know the laws concerning libel and obscenity and expected to provide the utmost in service to the readers and to perform duties of the business manager in a creditable manner.
- 2) The business manager is expected to conform with such generally accepted journalistic practices as expressed in the Canons of Journalism.

D) Duties of the Business Manager

- 1) Appoint advertising sales representatives and report those appointments to the Advisor.
- 2) Sell advertising and write invoices for ads, handle billings and collections, make timely deposit of funds, and solicit new business. The business manager also works with the editor in the production process, ensuring the ads are placed in advance of any publication deadline to give the news editor time to lay out news stories around the ads.
- 3) Circulate the newspaper on campus and fill the newspaper racks with the latest editions.

- 4) Abide by the publication schedule (prepared by the editor, the business manager, and the advisor), which covers the entire 12-month academic year.
- 5) Ensure that the budget allows for the minimum of six issues to be published during the two long semesters.
- 6) Hold responsibility for the financial records and reporting. Each month the business manager will prepare and submit to the advisor a monthly report concerning ad sales, billing, and accounts receivable.

VI) STAFF:

A) Paid Staff

- 1) Definition: Students who receive monetary compensation (stipends) for their work on the student newspaper. Advertising representatives work on commission only.
- 2) Qualifications: Overall GPA of not less than 2.5 on a 4.0 scale must be maintained. Must be currently enrolled and not on academic or disciplinary probation/suspension. The publication advisor, with the aid of the Student Activities Director, has the responsibility to verify academic standing and GPA.
- 3) Appointment: Paid staff will be appointed by the editor and by the business manager.
- 4) Positions: A *Student Newspaper Staff Handbook* will be maintained by the editor and the business manager to detail all paid positions and general rules. Each position will include a job description, discharged only on a two-thirds vote of the entire voting body of the Committee. A copy of the discharge must be signed by the chair of the Advisory Committee and the *Dateline* advisor will be required to sign a document confirming that they have read and understood the *Student Newspaper Staff Handbook*.
- 5) Termination and Appeal: Responsibility for removal or suspensions of paid staff members remains with the editor and the business manager. Any discharged staff member must be notified in writing by the editor of reasons for discharge and rights of appeal. Any discharged staff member shall have the right to a hearing before the Advisory Committee, which then makes the final decision on appeals. To receive a hearing, a discharged staff member must appeal the discharge in writing to the Advisory Committee chair within one week of receiving the written notice from the editor of the discharge. The chair shall schedule a hearing before the Advisory Committee within two weeks of receiving the appeal request. A discharge will be overturned only by a two-thirds vote of the entire voting body of the Committee.

B) Unpaid Staff:

- 1) Long Semester Staff: Students, including Publications Workshop students (ENGL 4360), may participate and work on the student newspaper without receiving monetary compensation. ENGL 4360 students may receive compensation for duties which go beyond their required course duties.
- 2) Summer Staff: Summer issues of *Dateline* normally will be produced by unpaid staff. Summer issues will serve as a training ground for potential paid staff, but no summer staff are guaranteed a paying job during the long semesters.

Advertising may be sold for summer issues. Sales reps are paid commission only for the ad sales.

VII) POLICIES:

A) Editorial:

- 1) The editor will act without "prior restraint" in the same way a trusted editor would act under a general manager and board of directors in a professional publishing business.

- 2) The editor will have the responsibility of determining a conflict of interest by newspaper staff members with final judgment to be decided by the Advisory Committee.
- 3) The editor will exercise all of the rights, privileges and responsibilities of a free press as we know it in the United States today. The editor is specifically charged with understanding that freedom automatically involves responsibilities and judgment.
- 4) The editor is responsible for seeing that an accepted stylebook is followed, that editorial policies of the Advisory Committee are implemented and that the newspaper conforms to the Canons of Journalism as specified by the American Society of Newspaper Editors, or other generally accepted statements of journalistic ethics.

B) Advertising:

- 1) The student newspaper may accept, from any legitimate business, advertising which, in the judgment of the Advisory Committee and advisor, is in consonance with honesty, accuracy, and good taste.
- 2) Discriminatory advertising is not accepted for publication.

VIII) AMENDMENTS

Any change to these administrative procedures will require a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Advisory Committee.

IX) ENDORSEMENTS

Reviewed and approved by the Advisory Committee.

Chair

Date