



STUDENT PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE BYLAWS

I. PURPOSE OR OBJECTIVES — The Student Publications Committee (hereafter referred to as the Committee or the SPC) has been established by the University of Houston to formulate, implement and supervise general policies as related to student publications.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. This committee shall have the responsibility for the execution of the rules and procedures, as set forth in these Bylaws, for *The Daily Cougar*, the official student newspaper of the University of Houston. It shall also have similar responsibility for any other specific publication which may be formed in the future and which falls under its jurisdiction.

The SPC recommends for approval:

1. Budgets
2. Student Salaries and Commissions
3. Contracts
4. Advertising rates
5. Subscription rates
6. Financial reports
7. General editorial policies
8. Advertising policies

B. The Committee elects the editor (or co-editors) of the publications.

C. The Committee has the power to remove or suspend any student editor provided the student has violated section VI. C. 1 of the Student Publications Bylaws and has been given an opportunity to present his/her case before the Committee. Such a removal or suspension would require a 2/3 vote of the voting members.

D. The Committee will, when required, serve as arbiter for problems arising from content or format of the publications under its jurisdiction.

E. A suggested change to the bylaws can be effected only with the approval of at least 2/3 of the voting members present. Recommendations for bylaw changes and/or amendments will be made to the Vice President for Student Affairs for approval.

III. MEMBERSHIP — Membership shall consist of eight (8) voting members, and nine (9) ex-officio members, appointed by their respective parties.

A. Student Voting Members

1. There shall be five student voting members:

- a. Two students shall be appointed by the staff of *The Daily Cougar*. One shall represent Editorial and one shall represent Advertising.
 - b. Three students shall be appointed by the University of Houston's Student Government Association (UHSGA) President with the advice and consent of the UHSGA Senate. At least one of these students shall be a communication major.
 2. No student member shall be editor or managing editor of a student publication.
 3. No student member shall be an executive of the SGA.
 4. Student members must have at least a 2.5 overall grade point average and cannot be on either academic or disciplinary probation when nominated or during their term of office; must have completed 12 semester hours in residence in the semester immediately before membership is passed; must be a full-time student at the time of election and during their term of office.
- B. Non-Student Voting Members
 1. There shall be two non-student voting members.
 - a. Two representatives of the professional community shall be appointed by the Committee, to serve for one academic year.
 - b. No Committee member shall have a designate serving in his or her place unless approved by the Committee.
- C. Terms of Office
 1. The student appointees from UHSGA shall serve a one-year term from September 1 through August 31. These appointments shall be made before the first committee meeting.
 2. All other Committee members shall serve one academic year.
 3. Any voting member who is absent from three consecutive meetings shall be removed from the Committee.
- D. Officers
 1. A Chair shall be elected by the Committee from its student membership, including ex-officio members, at the first September meeting, which will be chaired by the Student Publications director or his/her representative until the new Chair is elected. The Chair will serve for a period of one year starting at the September meeting and continuing through the following year.
 2. A Vice Chair shall be elected by the Committee from its student membership after the Chair has been elected. The Vice Chair will assume that position immediately after election at the September meeting and continue through the following year.
 3. Vice Chair shall retain full parliamentary and voting rights.
 4. The Chair shall have no voting rights, except in the case of a tie.
 5. Neither the chair nor the vice chair may hold an elected office of the SGA or be a candidate for such an office.
 6. A secretary shall be appointed by the Committee from its own membership at the first September meeting. The secretary shall record the minutes of the meeting.
- E. Ex-Officio Members
 1. Ex-officio members shall have all the rights and privileges of the appointed members other than the right to vote.
 2. Ex-officio members shall include:
 - a. The editor of *The Daily Cougar*.
 - b. The director of Student Publications.
 - c. The assistant managers of Student Publications.
 - d. A designated representative of the Student Affairs Division nominated by the Vice President for Student Affairs.
 - e. Director of the School of Communication or designated representative.
 - f. Advertising manager of Student Publications or designated representative.
 - g. Financial Director.

- h. Student Government Association President.
 - i. Three faculty members shall be nominated by the Faculty Senate. At least one faculty member shall be from the School of Communication.
 - j. One UH staff member shall be nominated by the Staff Council.
3. The committee may establish new ex-officio positions and offer one-year appointments on a case-by-case basis.

IV. MEETINGS

- A. The SPC shall abide by the Procedures and Guidelines as established by University policy.
- B. The Committee shall meet at least once per month during the Fall and Spring semesters. A meeting will be official only as long as a quorum of the appointed members is present. A quorum shall consist of the chair or vice-chair and five members of the Committee.
- C. Special meetings will be called by the chair or vice-chair if requested in writing by any three or more voting members of the Committee, or by general agreement at a committee meeting.
- D. All meetings will be conducted according to *Robert's Rules of Order*, except where the bylaws specify otherwise.
- E. All meetings should allocate time for an open forum for discussion from members of the committee and visitors. Forum may be suspended with the consent of the committee.

V. PUBLICATIONS DIRECTOR

- A. Appointment — The publications director will be appointed by appropriate University authority upon recommendation of the Vice President for Student Affairs. The publications director will report to the Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee). The SPC may make recommendations for removal to the Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee).
- B. Responsibilities
 - 1. Advises, on a daily basis, student staff members of publications responsible to the SPC.
 - 2. Supervises non-student employees and is responsible for conducting performance interviews, incremental raises, reprimands and similar personnel matters with the Student Publications staff.
 - 3. Provides guidance to student staff in matters of legality (libel, obscenity and privacy) and of goals of journalistic excellence consistent with the Canons of Ethics and professional norms in the field, subject to oversight by SPC policies. The publications manager will be on call by the editor as a sounding board and for experienced opinion. The manager is expected to initiate comments, counsel and advice, and to respond to editors' requests; but this person is not to be construed to be a censor or otherwise 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 manager — and the editor indicates that the questionable matter will be published — the manager shall then notify the SPC so that the material in question might be discussed with the editor and others, with the goal of assessing liability, if any, or any real or indirect damage accruing to the publication or others as a result of publication of this specific material. It should be clear that the editor has final discretion to publish; discussion of legalities may clarify unforeseen factors, which, upon reflection, the editor may wish to reevaluate prior to publication.

VI. STUDENT EDITORS

- A. Qualifications (minimum) for Editors of *The Daily Cougar*:
 - 1. Applicants must be currently enrolled and not on academic or disciplinary probation at the time of application or at any time during the period of service.

2. Applicants must fill out an application form supplied by the publications manager and attach samples of work.
 3. Applicants for editor of *The Daily Cougar* must meet the following requirements:
 - a. Enrolled at the University of Houston for at least one year prior to effective date of appointment, with service in a satisfactory manner (as determined by the SPC) on *The Daily Cougar* or the *Houstonian*. Service on *The Daily Cougar* shall include at least one semester on the editorial staff during the regular school year.
 - b. Overall GPA of not less than 2.5 and in required communication courses not less than 2.5.
 - c. Satisfactory completion or enrollment of the following courses: Print and Digital Media Writing, Advanced Writing and Reporting, Editing for Print and Digital Media (or their equivalents). These requirements may be waived by a majority vote of the Committee.
- B. Election
1. Editors of *The Daily Cougar* shall be elected by the SPC after certification of eligibility by the publications manager or his/her representative.
 - a. The deadlines for applications will be determined by the Committee. Applications are due at those times in the Student Publications business office.
 - b. Public notice in *The Daily Cougar* will be given at least two weeks in advance of the application deadline.
 - c. The SPC will interview the applicants prior to the selection of an editor.
 - d. Selection of the editor will be made within 10 working days after the application deadline.
 - e. If a voting member of the Committee is running for the position of student editor of *The Daily Cougar* or the *Houstonian*, he or she shall relinquish his or her vote for the duration of the election. Quorum, having been established prior to the election, will remain in place provided that the editor candidate(s) resume their voting positions once the election is completed.
 - f. Appointments to fill vacancies created by resignation or other causes will be made in an expeditious manner conforming, as near as the circumstances allow, to the requirements set forth in VI. B. 1. a-d.
- C. Responsibilities
1. The editors are responsible for carrying out the overall policies established by the SPC and are held directly responsible for editorial matter that appears in their respective publications. They are expected to know and obey postal regulations and the laws concerning libel. They are expected to provide the utmost in service to their readers and perform the duties of editor in a creditable manner. The editors shall provide the University of Houston community the publication they are responsible for in a timely manner. The editors must be currently enrolled as students at the University of Houston. They are expected to conform with generally accepted journalistic practices.
- D. Duties
1. Appoint and remove editorial staff members. Any discharged staff member must be notified in writing of their rights of appeal and reasons why they are discharged. Any discharged member shall have the right to an SPC hearing.
 2. Maintain proper communication within Student Publications.
 3. *The Daily Cougar* editor shall be members of the subcommittee to prepare or review budgets and aid the publications manager in adhering to the prescribed budgets.
 4. Hold regular staff meetings and maintain proper communication with their staff.
- E. The SPC may waive requirements under the qualifications section except for VI. A.1. and VI. A. 3. b.

VII. EDITORIAL POLICIES

- A. Overall
 - 1. Editors of these publications shall exercise all of the rights, privileges and responsibilities of a free press as we know it in the United States today. They are specifically charged with understanding the freedom automatically involves responsibility and judgment.
 - 2. Editor shall 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. They also shall have the responsibility of determining a conflict of interest, with final judgment to be rendered by the SPC.
- B. The Daily Cougar
 - 1. *The Daily Cougar* is the official student newspaper of the University of Houston community. It should conform to commonly accepted journalism practices.
 - 2. The editor is responsible for seeing that an accepted stylebook is followed.
 - 3. Generally, *The Daily Cougar* will follow the rules set down by the Associated Collegiate Press. The editor shall establish and enforce an editorial staff handbook and ensure a written constitution is followed.

VIII. ADVERTISING

- A. Policy — Publications may accept advertising from any legitimate business that, in the judgment of the Committee and publications director, is in consonance with honesty, accuracy and good taste. Discriminatory advertising will not be accepted.
- B. Staffs — The publications director and/or advertising manager are responsible for the appointment and activity of student staff members engaged in selling advertising or raising funds for the respective publications.

IX. SUGGESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

- A. It is the policy of the Student Publications Committee that all persons associated with the SPC and any part of Student Publications should always be ready to listen to any suggestions or complaints by any member of the University of Houston community. They should direct those who complain to the appropriate individual and see that the complainant receives an answer.
- B. Complaints about the content of particular articles in *The Daily Cougar* or any other student publication under the jurisdiction of the department should first be referred to the editor, then to the SPC, in care of the Student Publications Director.