

**CHARTER OF *THE UNIVERSITY NEWS***  
**of**  
**SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY**

**Preamble**

Academic institutions exist for the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth and the development of students. Free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the attainment of these goals. As members of a University academic community, students should be encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth.

Student publications and the student press are valuable aids in establishing and maintaining an atmosphere of free and responsible discussion and of intellectual exploration on the campus. They are a means of bringing concerns to the attention of students, faculty, staff and the institutional authorities, as well as expressing a student voice on various issues on campus and in the world at large.

Recognizing that Saint Louis University does not have a school of journalism, the students who produce *The University News* have only the incentives of an interest in and enthusiasm for newspaper work; personal prestige on campus for those who attain editorial status; and, for a few, University newspaper writing and producing experience leading to possible future employment. *The University News* also affords an opportunity for students to develop the skills of analytical and independent thought. These incentives must be preserved and supplemented if the devotion needed to produce an excellent student newspaper is to result.

**Freedom of the Press**

The student press at Saint Louis University is a student forum, free of censorship and advanced approval of its content. Student editors are free to develop their own editorial policies, content, programming and news coverage. Freedom of the press -- print, online and broadcast -- is a basic right in a democratic society and is valuable in promoting the development of students as socially responsible persons. Editorial decisions shall be consistent with standard accepted journalistic principles and ethics, including those of accuracy and fairness in all reporting and commentary. The University expects student editors to seek professional advice and legal assistance when confronted with editorial and operational questions.

**Purpose**

In recognition of the fact that the promotion of discussion involves some initial statement of ideas, *The University News* is authorized and subsidized by Saint Louis University to provide a student voice. Since such ideas typically are presented through publications that at the same time serve as a vehicle for information, entertainment and commentary, *The University News* takes the form of a newspaper.

*The University News* is a student voice, not *the* student voice. The views of *The University News* are the expressions of the students involved. The fact that historically it has been the work of a group of volunteer students fits this conception. In the University, as in the local community, the newspaper cannot be expected to express the consensus of the readers it serves. If it can represent a point of view around which discussion may develop, it serves a legitimate and needed purpose.

The University's mission is to educate the whole person. The student's experience as a member of *The University News* staff should include substantial educational programs and opportunities.

As the publisher of *The University News*, Saint Louis University is ultimately responsible for *The University News*. "Ultimate responsibility" means, in part, that the organizational structure and operating principles of *The University News* must be approved by Saint Louis University, in collaboration with student editors.

For the actual operation of *The University News*, the following organizational structure is established.

### **Organization**

*The University News* may be published through The University News Organization. The Organization may adopt a constitution and bylaws for the governance of The University News Organization, provided that such governing documents are not inconsistent with this Charter, and further provided that the governing documents are favorably reviewed by the Advisory Board of *The University News*.

- A. As a student publication, evidence of this fact must be given through appropriate editorial-page disclaimers, indicating that the opinions there expressed are not necessarily those of Saint Louis University or the student body.
- B. To emphasize that the student newspaper is not an institutional spokesperson, *The University News* shall not carry the institution's seal, official motto or name.

The University News Organization will be structured according to the following norms:

- A. Membership shall be open to any interested student who meets appropriate performance criteria established by *The University News*' Editorial Board, which is the group of student editors for *The University News*.
- B. Subject to the established business practices of Saint Louis University, the Organization will be self-disciplining to the degree possible and will assure adherence to the principles set forth in this Charter.
- C. It is the responsibility of The University News Organization to maintain the highest standards of ethics, factual accuracy and truthfulness in the reporting and gathering of the news and in providing an outlet for campus opinions.
- D. Because *The University News* serves the University community, *The University News*' staff shall be mindful of the University's Catholic, Jesuit mission and values.

All revenues generated for *The University News* by the newspaper staff are to be used solely for the purpose of producing *The University News*.

The University will provide adequate office space to *The University News*, at no charge, on the Frost Campus, and in a location that is visible and easily accessible to students. The University will also provide for approved budgeted phone connections, internet access and utilities to *The University News* office space.

*The University News* may submit requests to a Student Media Coordinator for equipment and/or furnishings on an annual basis. Funding is subject to availability of monies and the approval of the Vice President for Student Development.

The finances and business practices of *The University News* must follow all applicable University policies and procedures, as well as local, state and federal laws. Administrative support for *The University News*' operations will be provided by a Student Media Coordinator.

### **Distribution**

*The University News* will distribute copies of the newspaper throughout the University community. The University permits *The University News* the right to distribute the newspaper in all campus buildings and facilities and will not restrict the right of *The University News* to distribute the newspaper in those places where other publications of the University or its students are distributed. The University, in conjunction with *The University News*, will provide distribution receptacles that are appropriate for location, placement and appearance.

### **Student Media Coordinator**

The Student Media Coordinator is an employee of the University, reports to a designated staff member in the Division of Student Development and provides support and direction for administrative operations of *The University News*, but does not manage editorial content or advise about journalistic or newspaper content issues. The Coordinator's chief function is to provide basic operational advising, as well as administrative, financial and sales support for *The University News*.

- A. The Student Media Coordinator oversees and approves *The University News*' budgets, payroll, accounts receivables, and other business services in consultation with *The University News*' General Manager, who is responsible for coordinating the business aspects of *The University News* on behalf of the Editorial Board. In order to fulfill his/her duties, the Student Media Coordinator will have direct access to all business and payroll records and supporting financial documents of *The University News*.
- B. The Student Media Coordinator provides advisement to *The University News*' Editorial Board on general operational issues and assists with professional development programs as needed.
- C. Where otherwise not indicated in this document, disagreement with decisions made by the Student Media Coordinator may be resolved with the Vice President for Student Development or his/her designee.

- D. The Student Media Coordinator's employment may be terminated by the Vice President for Student Development for failure to satisfactorily complete assigned duties.

### **Newspaper Production Advisor**

A Newspaper Production Advisor (Advisor) to *The University News* will be selected by the Vice President for Student Development, with input from *The University News*' Editorial Board, *The University News*' Advisory Board, Student Media Coordinator and the Provost. The Advisor should be a person with professional or faculty experience in the field of journalism or communication.

The Advisor to *The University News* shall be responsible for working with *The University News*' Editorial Board, *The University News*' Advisory Board and the Student Media Coordinator to organize and facilitate orientation, training and ongoing professional development programs for the newspaper staff. The Advisor does not have responsibility for overseeing *The University News*' administrative operations, as this is included in the duties of the Student Media Coordinator.

The Advisor will advise the newspaper staff, and assure that accepted professional standards are met, in the areas of journalistic ethics, practice and technique. More specifically, the Advisor will advise newspaper staff in areas of reporting, writing, copy editing and design. The Advisor's employment may be terminated by the Vice President for Student Development, after consultation with *The University News*' Editorial Board, for failure to satisfactorily complete assigned duties.

### **Advisory Board**

*The University News*' Advisory Board shall be responsible for providing advice and assistance to the staff of *The University News*. A newspaper requires specialized knowledge in order to effectively serve readers, maintain journalistic independence, adapt to technology and ensure financial stability. Therefore, persons selected for Advisory Board positions should be able to relate to the responsibilities inherent in managing a publication in a university community and be able to offer the requisite time, understanding and expertise. All terms are for one year, except for the Dean of Students' which shall correspond to his/her employment as the Dean of Students or equivalent. Incumbents are eligible for reappointment.

The Advisory Board of *The University News* will be composed of the following ten (10) members, seven (7) of whom are voting members:

- A. the Dean of Students, who shall call and chair Board meetings and vote only to break a tie,
- B. one (1) student who is not a member of *The University News*' staff, selected by the Newspaper Production Advisor,
- C. one (1) student who is not an elected SGA representative, selected by the Student Government Association,
- D. two (2) faculty members jointly selected by the Provost and Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate,

- E. three (3) currently or formerly employed media professionals in the St. Louis area, and
- F. four (4) non-voting, ex-officio members: *The University News*' Editor-in-Chief, *The University News*' General Manager, Student Media Coordinator and the Newspaper Production Advisor.

Appointments of media professionals to the Board are made by the Vice President for Student Development, with input from the Student Media Coordinator, Newspaper Production Advisor and *The University News*' Editor-in-Chief.

Student members of the Advisory Board may be graduate or undergraduate students, must be enrolled in good standing at Saint Louis University, and must maintain full-time student status during their terms of service.

The Board, by a majority vote, may declare a seat vacant in the event of a member's excessive absence from meetings. The Vice President for Student Development shall appoint persons to fill vacancies on the Board for the balance of the unexpired terms.

Appointments of members to the board may be reappointed at the end of each academic year following each one-year term.

The Advisory Board shall meet a minimum of five times per fiscal year. Special sessions may be called at any time by the chair.

The Advisory Board shall provide advice, counsel, feedback and direction to *The University News*' Editorial Board, Student Media Coordinator and Newspaper Production Advisor, with particular emphasis on assuring that:

- A. The University News Organization and *The University News* are in compliance with the mission of the University;
- B. *The University News* is journalistically responsible and accountable;
- C. Substantial developmental and educational journalism opportunities exist for the newspaper staff, including participation in educational programs that may include an orientation, practica, seminars and workshops;
- D. The newspaper staff receives the administrative support that is reasonably required for the students to produce a quality newspaper; and
- E. The constitution and bylaws of The University News Organization are consistent with the provisions set forth in this Charter and are being followed by *The University News*' staff.

### **Selection of Student Editors (Editorial Board Positions)**

Wherever possible, student editors and staff should be given an opportunity to grow and advance within The University News Organization and to aspire to leadership roles. The selection of the new Editor-in-Chief of *The University News* shall occur prior to all other Editorial Board appointments. *The University News*' Advisory Board will ensure that the selection processes for the Editor-in-Chief and other student editors are fair and inclusive. The term of service for

student editors is one year, with selections and appointments occurring on an annual academic year basis.

Once selected and appointed, the newly appointed Editor-in-Chief will set a deadline for all other Editorial Board applications, not sooner than 14 days or greater than thirty (30) days following the appointment of the Editor-in-Chief. With oversight and approval from the Advisory Board, the new Editor-in-Chief of *The University News* is responsible for coordinating a fair and inclusive process for filling all other Editorial Board positions, including reviewing nominations and applications, conducting interviews and making selections.

### Appointment Process

#### A. Eligibility for Appointment to Editorial Board Positions

1. An applicant for Editor-in-Chief must:
  - a. have been an editor at *The University News* or another university newspaper for at least one (1) semester;
  - b. be a full-time, enrolled student in good standing in the University; and
  - c. complete all application forms as endorsed by the Advisory Board and required by *The University News*' Editorial Board.
2. An applicant for any other Editorial Board position must:
  - a. be a full-time enrolled student in good standing in the University;
  - b. have previous experience in student media, preferably in publications; and
  - c. complete all application forms as endorsed by the Advisory Board and required by *The University News*' Editorial Board.

#### B. Application Forms

1. Editor-in-Chief
  - a) The University News Organization shall make available all necessary application forms to any student interested in the Editor-in-Chief position.
  - b) The application forms for individual candidates seeking editorial positions shall consist of:
    - i. biographical and experiential information;
    - ii. a cover letter;
    - iii. a resume; and
    - iv. verification of good standing in the University by the Dean of Students.
  - c) Any falsified information within an application form shall be grounds for disqualification and future dismissal.
2. Other Editorial Board Positions
  - a) The newly appointed Editor-in-Chief shall distribute all necessary application forms to any student interested in an Editorial Board position.
  - b) The application forms for individual candidates seeking editorial positions shall consist of:
    - i. biographical and experiential information;
    - ii. a cover letter;
    - iii. a resume; and
    - iv. verification of good standing in the University by the Dean of Students.

- c) Any falsified information within an application form shall be grounds for disqualification and future dismissal.

C. Interviews

1. Interviews for the position of Editor-in-Chief shall be conducted by The University News Organization, with oversight and approval by *The University News*' Advisory Board.
2. Interviews for other Editorial Board positions shall be conducted by the newly appointed Editor-in-Chief and his/her designees. The Dean of Students, acting on behalf of the Advisory Board, shall verify prospective editors are in good academic and disciplinary standing with Saint Louis University, as defined by the current student handbook. At the discretion of the Dean of Students, pending academic or disciplinary matters or financial discrepancies could also affect a prospective editor's good standing.

D. Selection Timeline and Procedures

1. The University News Organization will hold an informational meeting at least four (4) weeks prior to the interviews. At the meeting, application forms will be made available.
2. All application forms are due two (2) weeks prior to the interviews.
3. The Editor-in-Chief selection must be concluded at least two (2) weeks prior to interviews for all other Editorial Board positions.
4. All Editorial Board selections must be concluded by May 1.

F. Selections and Appointments

1. Selection for the position of Editor-in-Chief will be made by those members of the "sitting" Editorial Board who are not applicants for the position and the general manager of *The University News*. The Newspaper Production Coordinator and the Student Media Coordinator will assist the students with this process as needed. Once the Editor-in-Chief is selected, the selection will be forwarded by the opening of business the day after the election to the chair of the Advisory Board.
  - a. The Chair shall forward the nominee to the Board electronically. The Board will then vote electronically on whether to support the election. The election results and the Advisory Board's recommendation will be forwarded to the Vice President of Student Development to ensure the candidate is in good academic and disciplinary standing with Saint Louis University as defined above. The process described above should be completed within 5-10 business days of the election.
2. The newly hired Editor-in-Chief and his/her designees will make selections for the Editorial Board positions. Once selections for all Editorial Board positions have been made, the selections will be forwarded to the Dean of Students to ensure the candidate is in good standing with Saint Louis University as defined above.
  - a. If the Vice President for Student Development does not approve of the candidate, the rejected candidate must be provided a written explanation from the office of the Vice President of Student Development to the extent allowed by law.

3. Once selections for all the other Editorial Board positions have been made, the selections will be forwarded to the Vice President for Student Development for approval and appointment.
4. All appointments to the Editorial Board are subject to the approval of the Vice President for Student Development. Such approval will not be unnecessarily withheld. If approval is not given, the Vice President for Student Development will explain the decision to the Advisory Board to the extent permitted by law.
5. Should appointment of the Editor-in-Chief or any other Editorial Board position be denied by the Vice President for Student Development, an alternative selection shall be made by the appropriate party, as overseen and approved by the Advisory Board. The alternative selection will then be advanced to the Vice President for Student Development for approval and appointment. In the unlikely event that the alternative selection is rejected, the process as defined in this section will be repeated until an appointment is made.

### **Dismissal of Student Editors (Editorial Board Positions)**

The Editor-in-Chief may dismiss an editor or other member of the newspaper staff for failure to adequately perform duties or misconduct, after the case is presented to the Editorial Board for feedback and review.

*The University News'* Editor-in-Chief may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of *The University News'* Editorial Board. The Editor-in-Chief does not have a vote for reasons of conflict of interest. The decision shall be presented in a closed meeting with the Vice President for Student Development, who may affirm the decision or take other action that s/he deems to be appropriate. The Managing Editor, representing the Editorial Board, and Editor-in-Chief, representing him-/herself, shall each present their respective cases to the Vice President for consideration.

Editors (Editorial Board members) of *The University News* may also be dismissed or suspended from their positions by the Vice President for Student Development for misconduct. In the unlikely event that an editor is dismissed or suspended, the Vice President for Student Development will explain the decision to the Advisory Board to the extent permitted by law. High standards of personal conduct are required in order to meet the mission and values of the University.

Each student journalist must avoid misconduct in reporting, including fabrication or other falsification of data, plagiarism and deliberate and knowing failure to comply with federal, state, local or University rules and regulations governing student conduct, and other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the journalism profession or compromise the ability of the editor to perform his/her duties independently. Newswriting should be guided by the search for knowledge and truth, not by benefactors, partisan political activity or any interest group. Honest errors or good faith differences in interpretations or evaluations of data, editorial positions and policies do not constitute misconduct. Student editors will not be removed from their positions because of an expressed viewpoint, news article content or editorial commentary printed in *The University News*, provided that what appears in print is not

considered by *The University News*' Advisory Board to be libelous or contrary to the standards of professional journalistic ethics or conduct, or contrary to the mission and values of Saint Louis University.

Vacancies created by dismissal or suspension shall be filled using the process outlined in the preceding section.

### **Grievances**

*The University News*' Advisory Board is empowered to decide complaints and grievances regarding *The University News* only after the complaint has first been brought to the attention of *The University News*' Editor-in-Chief, the Student Media Coordinator and the Newspaper Production Advisor.

Grievances must be filed in writing with the Student Media Coordinator, who is responsible for notifying the Advisory Board and scheduling a grievance review within a reasonable amount of time, normally not to exceed 30 days. All parties involved in the complaint have the right to participate in a grievance review in accordance with generally accepted policy in the University's student handbook.

The Advisory Board will review the complaint, determine how best to resolve it, identify appropriate courses of action and recommend remedies to the Student Media Coordinator, who will make a determination as to what, if any, corrective action is required. If the required action involves a recommendation for dismissal of an editor, the decision must involve *The University News*' Editorial Board, *The University News*' Advisory Board and the Newspaper Production Advisor and be approved by the Vice President for Student Development.

### **Amendments**

Amendments to this Charter must be presented to the University President for consideration on behalf of Saint Louis University as the publisher of *The University News*. Upon approval by the University President, new amendments shall be enacted.