

Sorting It Out: The Hosty Decision

PAGE 4

college media **REVIEW**

THE FLAGSHIP PUBLICATION OF COLLEGE MEDIA ADVISERS, INC. • FALL/SPRING • VOL. 43, NO. 2





*"If the adviser can persevere and help everyone to pass the course
in American freedom, what a glorious achievement that will be for everyone."*

—Louis Ingelhart

Student media programs are a diverse lot. When someone at our university once asked me to find programs similar to ours so we could compare apples to apples, I went in search of such programs -- looking to find more Jonathans, shall we say. I did not find a single other Jonathan that was just like our program. If you'll pardon the analogy, I found one Red Delicious, one Granny Smith, one Braeburn, one Gala, and some that seemed so different as to be oranges and mangoes and plums. Not a bushel of any of them, but generally one or a few of each kind.

The structures varied markedly. Some media were tightly woven into academic departments; others were loosely fitted into student activities; others were incorporated and/or somewhat independent. Some media were part of big departments with lots of media and full-time staff advisers; others were tiny with an adviser that did not even get release time for the work. Some schools featured a combination of these, with print media having one structure and broadcast media another. Some media were at state universities with an established hands-off history; others were at state universities where they were still fighting for their First Amendment rights. Still others were at private institutions where the First Amendment did not apply -- but some of the lucky ones had been granted those freedoms by their institution anyway.

With such an assortment of apples, oranges, mangoes and plums, how can one organization like College Media Advisers possibly be applicable to them all?

The answer is that the same principles apply, even though the structure is different.

"Student media must be free from all forms of external interference designed to regulate its content," according to CMA's Code of Ethical Behavior. "External interference" means no one outside the staff exercises authority-- not the adviser, not the faculty members, not school administrators. The CMA Code means that at state institutions, where students have this legal right, the adviser's duty is to insist, if necessary, that the students be allowed to exercise that right. At private institutions, advisers should work to get this right granted. In other words, legally there is a difference between students' rights at public and private schools, but CMA does not recognize a difference in the way advisers should work with the students.

Another structure that raises questions is the journalism workshop course, examined in this issue's refereed article, "When teaching is advising." With such a structure, the advisers/teachers often have to decide at any given moment which hat they are wearing. Some of the advisers answering the authors' survey reported they distrust the journalism workshop course because of the potential for content control. Although producing a publication in such a course does not mandate content control, the structure certainly makes such control easier—and indeed, some schools expect the teacher to exert such control because it is a class. The concerned advisers are right in understanding that, if the publication is truly to be a student medium, any such control is not proper.

So, whether the student media program is public or private, big or small, tied to the journalism department or to student activities, whether it is carried out through a workshop course or done by volunteers, the principle is the same. "Student media must be free from all forms of external interference designed to regulate its content."

An article by Kimberly Voss in the Features section of this issue gives tips on working with the campus community, including the constant need to educate. The article brought to mind Louis Ingelhart's wonderful statement: "Teaching in this largest classroom on the campus will take patience and persistence, since the adviser is apt to deal with many slow learners, some of whom have faculty rank or even sit in the offices of administrators, including that of the college president or board of trustees. If the adviser can persevere and help everyone to pass the course in American freedom, what a glorious achievement that will be for everyone."

 Pat Parish

College Media Review

is an official publication of College Media Advisers Inc.; however, views expressed within its pages are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect opinions of the organization or of its officers.

Any writer submitting articles must follow the Writers Guidelines included on page 31.

CORRESPONDENCE

Address circulation inquiries to:
Ron Spielberger, Executive Director
College Media Advisers
Department of Journalism
University of Memphis
Memphis, TN 38152
or rsplbrgr@cc.memphis.edu

Address editorial inquiries to:

Pat Parish, Editor
Office of Student Media
39 Hodges Hall
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
or pparish@lsu.edu

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

- One Year, \$15 (foreign \$17)
- Two Years, \$27 (foreign \$29)

COVER

CMR BOARD OF REVIEWERS

CMR Board of Reviewers
David Adams, Indiana University
Ron Bland, University of Texas-Arlington
Ralph Braseth, University of Mississippi
Jenny Tenpenny Crouch, Middle Tennessee
State University
Albert O. DeLuca, James Madison University
W. Dale Harrison, Auburn University
Amy Kilpatrick, University of Alabama at
Birmingham
Warren Kozireski, SUNY Brockport
Kathy Lawrence, University of Texas
Lesley Marcello, Nicholls State University
(retired)
David Martinson, Florida International
University
Shawn Murphy, Plattsburgh SUNY
Mary Lynn Polk, Lander University
Ken Rosenauer, Missouri Western State
College
Trum Simmons, Harrisburg Area Community
College
Brian Steffen, Simpson College
James Tidwell, Eastern Illinois University
Laura Widmer, Northwest Missouri State
University

College Media Review

College Media Review
(ISSN 0739-1056)
is published quarterly by
College Media Advisers, Inc.
© 2004, CMA.

EDITOR
Pat Parish
Office of Student Media
39 Hodges Hall
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
Office: 225.578.6694
Fax: 225.578.1698
E-mail: pparish@lsu.edu

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver
335 Journalism and Mass Communication
Florida International University, ACII
North Miami, FL 33181
Office: 305.919.5625
Fax: 305.919.5203
E-mail: kopenhav@fiu.edu

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS
Melissa Moore
Louisiana State University
Ann Thorne
Missouri Western University

CMA OFFICERS
President
Kathy Lawrence
University of Texas-Austin

Vice President
Lance Speere
Southern Illinois University

Vice President for Member Services
Kelly Wolff
Virginia Tech

Secretary
Laura York
Garden City Community College

Treasurer
Bill Neville
Georgia Southern University

Immediate Past President
Jenny Tenpenny Crouch
Middle Tennessee State University

Executive Director
Ron Spielberg
University of Memphis



college media REVIEW

THE FLAGSHIP PUBLICATION OF COLLEGE MEDIA ADVISERS, INC.
WINTER 2004 • VOL. 42, NO. 1



SORTING IT OUT

HOSTY v. CARTER DECISION

Chances are, you have already been asked, “What does the Hosty v. Carter decision mean for *us*?” On June 20 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh District handed down a decision on this case that is clear to no one. Many observers agree that the decision presages problems for student media and/or advisers, but opinions differ on exactly how those problems will play out. Here is a collection of viewpoints on the subject, including some recommendations on how to do good journalism in a post-Hosty world.



For a link to the full decision, visit www.splc.org and check the News Flash Archives for June 20, 2005.

Colleges can **CENSOR**, too

by **DOUG LEDERMAN**

Inside Higher Ed, June 21, 2005 (reprinted with permission)

The full U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit ruled on Monday that a controversial 1988 Supreme Court decision that gives high schools the ability to restrict the free speech rights of student newspapers may apply to student newspapers subsidized by public colleges and universities, too. The Seventh Circuit's ruling in *Hosty v. Carter*, which involved Governors State University in Illinois, overturned earlier court decisions and brought a full-throated outcry from First Amendment advocates.

"This decision gives college administrators ammunition to argue that many traditionally independent student activities are subject to school censorship," Mark Goodman, executive director of the Student Press Law Center, said in a news release. "I fear it's just a matter of time before a university prohibits a student group from bringing an unpopular speaker to campus or showing a controversial film based on the Hosty decision. Such actions invite havoc on college campuses."

Student editors of the *Innovator*, a now-shuttered student publication at Governors State, sued a group of administrators and trustees there in 2001 after Patricia A. Carter, the dean of student affairs and services, told the company that printed the newspaper not to do so unless and until a university administrator had approved the content in advance.

A federal district court judge, in a 2002 ruling, and a unanimous three-judge panel of the Seventh Circuit, in April 2003, ruled that the students had the right to sue Carter (and that she lacked state immunity) because college journalists had constitutional protection that the Supreme Court, in a 1998 case known as *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*, had concluded that high school journalists could, in certain cases, be deprived of.

"The differences between a college and a high school are far greater than the obvious differences in curriculum and extracurricular activities," the Seventh Circuit panel said in its April 2003 decision. "While *Hazelwood* teaches that younger students in a high-school setting must endure First Amendment restrictions, we see nothing in that case that should be interpreted to change the general view favoring broad First Amendment rights for students at the university level."

The Seventh Circuit vacated that decision in June 2003 and agreed to rehear the case. Monday, more than 18 months after the Seventh Circuit heard oral arguments in the case, the court's 11 judges issued a split decision, with a seven-judge majority siding with the university.

It concluded that the lower courts had made too much of a footnote in the *Hazelwood* decision that seemed to give college students full-blown constitutional protection from oversight and prior review by campus administrators. The Seventh Circuit majority played down the distinctions between student newspapers and other

"This decision gives college administrators ammunition to argue that many traditionally independent student activities are subject to school censorship. I fear it's just a matter of time before a university prohibits a student group from bringing an unpopular speaker to campus or showing a controversial film based on the Hosty decision. Such actions invite havoc on college campuses."

Mark Goodman

executive director, Student Press Law Center

activities at the high school and college levels, and ruled that the key question for an administrator deciding whether he or she had the right to censor — in college as well as high school — is whether the institution has created a "designated public forum" in which students have been given the authority to make the content decisions.

"If private speech in a public forum is off-limits to regulation even when that forum is a classroom of an elementary school ... then speech at a non-public forum, and underwritten at public expense, may be open to reasonable regulation even at the college level," the majority ruled, adding: "We hold, therefore, that *Hazelwood*'s framework applies to subsidized student newspapers at colleges as well as elementary and secondary schools."

The appeals court did not conclude that Carter had the right to censor the *Innovator*; only that it was unclear enough whether *Hazelwood* applied to the case that a competent official could have decided that it might, and that Carter therefore deserved immunity.

Four of the court's 11 judges dissented from the majority's ruling, accusing it of ignoring key differences between the high school and college contexts. "There are two reasons why the law treats high school students differently than it treats college students ... : high school students are less mature and the missions of the respective institutions are different. These differences make it clear that *Hazelwood* does not apply beyond high school contact."

Administrators at Governors State could not be reached for comment late Monday.

The Student Press Law Center said the student plaintiffs in the case were planning to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.



HOW TO **survive & thrive** IN A POST-HOSTY WORLD



By LLOYD GOODMAN

The First Amendment was never intended to give permission for good journalism. It was intended to give protection. Good journalism occurs wherever good journalists practice it, usually without institutional permission.

Hosty is a true and serious threat. But some advisers' initial reactions to the decision suggested that if it is upheld, college journalism, among other things, will be no better than high school journalism. That shrill conclusion ignores some very good journalism still being done by high school students, years after the Supreme Court's 1988 Hazelwood decision. Where I live, for example, The Dallas Morning News followed the lead of the Duncanville (Texas) High School Panther Tale to report about school district spending. A few years ago, The Colt at Arlington (Texas) High School won accolades from readers as well as from the journalism community for a story — uncensored — about a post-football-game drinking party at which a student said she was sexually assaulted.

These and other post-Hazelwood bright spots occur because people work hard to ensure that they can still occur. As the Hosty appeal proceeds, our best outside-the-courtroom strategies may be to take a clue from high school programs that have thrived post-Hazelwood: We need sound arguments, staying power ... and roll-up-our-sleeves hard work.

- Guide your own student media handbook through a revision process to reinforce student editors' rights. It's usually a many-step process. It's hard work. (I've been trying to guide our handbook through the revision process for more than five years.) You'll fight the same fights again and again. But it's worth it: Your handbook is your operating bible. As the good folks at the Student Press Law Center reminded me several years ago when I was finding negotiation over wording a bit too tedious for my tastes, exact wording in policies approved by the university administration are the guarantee that practices and protections in our operation will exist long

after I'm gone and they won't be dependent on favorable interpretation by administrators ... or advisers. Ditto for Hosty: Nothing in Hosty says colleges and universities must restrict college media, only that they can. Our task is to persuade administrators why they shouldn't even if the eventual final court ruling is that they can. And that needs to be in writing, in a policy manual. (If you don't have a policy handbook, begin working on one now. Hosty makes this a front-burner issue.)

When you write or speak about Hosty, avoid the "They're killing the puppies!" approach. My local public radio station depends too much on guilt in on-air fund-raisers: If listeners don't send money, favorite programs may go away, they seem to be saying, taking a "Send us your money or we'll kill this dog" approach made famous by National Lampoon. Their glass always seems half-empty. Some initial responses to Hosty took that approach: The end of the world is near. Base arguments on fact and informed analysis, not speculation, not rhetoric.

- Remember that your local professional media, often our staunchest allies, may need some attention, too. Professional media are often our best friends. But don't assume they'll be eager to jump on your bandwagon any more than you would want your student staffs to editorially comment on an issue without independently researching it. Suggest editorials or columns on Hosty. Provide background information, too. Present your best arguments and supporting materials for the need for uncensored information sources in college communities. At a convention luncheon recently, I was seated at a table with daily newspaper editors not altogether supportive of student-run media: They've hired entry-level staffers who had to "unlearn" bad habits they'd learned at student newspa-



“As the Hosty appeal proceeds, our best outside-the-courtroom strategies may be to take a clue from high school programs that have thrived post-Hazelwood.”

pers, they argued. Why not put professionals — or professors — in charge? they asked.

- Educate and enlist our natural allies.
 - Educate your student staffs. Too many students seem uninformed or blasé about the importance of this issue.
 - Location, location, location (and timing, timing, timing).
- What you need to do, and when you need to do it, may depend on where you are. Efforts by college media in the federal court district directly affected by Hosty are on-target to try to get university officials publicly on the record now affirming the rights of student media. Where I am, the best tactic is probably different: I'll find out where our university president stands and keep him up-to-date on all developments. But I'll need him out in front when we revise our student media handbook more than I need him out front now about Hosty. This is going to be like a campaign, and, as Tip O'Neill said, all politics is local.
- Don't mix messages. Holding advisers accountable for perceived sins of student editors is another serious, front-burner issue but not altogether the same issue as Hosty. Whether combining them both is a good strategy depends on your community and environment. Avoid harsh rhetoric. (The real world isn't a

classroom or the CMA listserv.) Don't risk coming across as a member of a special interest group who is prodded into action mainly by fear of losing a job.

• • •

There is no green light, no “smooth sailing guaranteed” in journalism. Even with the best of court protections and the most supportive of college administrations, good journalism is done, often uphill, by practitioners committed to the hard work of doing journalism at its highest level. Just as courageous journalism helps us all, sloppy journalism hurts us all.

And everything we do in this post-Hosty climate will be in the context of that reality.

Lloyd Goodman is student publications director at the University of Texas at Arlington and is immediate past president of the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association. He has also advised the Daily Egyptian at Southern Illinois University and Voyager at the University of West Florida, where he earned a master's degree. He has worked at the Pensacola (Fla.) News Journal, Charlotte Observer and Miami Herald.



Win, lose or draw:

Ruminations on the Seventh Circuit's decision in Hosty v. Carter

By **CRAIG M. FREEMAN**

Students do not “shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech at the schoolhouse gate.” The court’s decision in *Hosty v. Carter* does not compromise that basic tenet of Constitutional law. The case represents a victory for university administrators, but does little to restrict the rights of student journalists. A close examination of the *Hosty* decision reveals that university administrators won, student newspaper advisors lost, and student journalists may continue to serve as Innovators for campus change.

The Innovator, of course, was the name of the now defunct student newspaper at Governors State University (GSU) in Illinois. In the fall of 2000, Margaret Hosty, wrote a number of articles attacking the integrity of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Administrators issued statements challenging Ms. Hosty’s reporting. According to GSU officials, the Innovator refused to retract false statements or print the administration’s responses. Patricia Carter, the Dean of Student Affairs and Services, stopped funding for the publication of the newspaper.

Ms. Hosty (along with a fellow reporter and the paper’s editor in chief) sued the University, all of its trustees, most of its administrators, and several staff members for damages under 42 U.S.C. §1983. The federal statute provides personal liability for government officials that deprive citizens of rights protected by the Constitution. The district court found that the trustees, administrators and staff members did not directly violate the Constitutional rights of the Innovator staffers. The court dismissed the claims of personal liability for all defendants except Dean Carter.

The narrow question presented to the court in *Hosty* was whether Dean Carter should be personally liable for withholding funds for the student publication. The district court held that Dean Carter could be personally liable for her actions. A panel (three judges) of the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals agreed with the district court. Dean Carter appealed to the entire 7th Circuit. In a 7-4 decision, the full 7th Circuit held that Dean Carter could not be personally liable for withholding funding.

The court noted that the decision to withhold funding for the newspaper was probably unconstitutional. The court refused, how-

ever, to make Dean Carter pay for the Constitutional violation. The court said “public officials need not predict, at their financial peril, how constitutional uncertainties will be resolved.”

The statement should come as great news for any college administrator faced with a tough legal predicament. Administrators will not “owe damages from [their] own purse” for making the wrong decision. In reaching this conclusion, the court presented a number of cases that show the wide range of decisions regarding the suppression of speech on college campuses. If courts can’t make a coherent decision on the matter, the 7th Circuit reasoned, how could they hold administrators personally liable for failing to make the right decision?

While the decision was a boon for university administrators, it may be a curse for newspaper advisors. The threat of personal liability was a powerful deterrent for overaggressive administrators. Now that they can safely hide behind the shield of qualified immunity, administrators may put more pressure on advisors to control the content of student publications. The first casualty in the war of words at GSU was Geoffrey de Laforcade, the paper’s faculty adviser. The *Hosty* court hinted that the administration’s failure to renew de Laforcade’s contract prompted the animosity between the paper and school officials.

The narrow holding of the court – that administrators can not be held liable when the law is unclear – is buried beneath pages of analysis on the propriety of suppressing college newspapers. That discussion has caused great consternation among supporters of aspiring journalists. The court spent an inordinate amount of time applying tenets of the *Hazelwood* decision. In *Hazelwood*, the United States Supreme Court held that a high school journalism teacher was within his rights to censor a publication produced by a journalism class. The court in *Hazelwood* expressly noted that there was no need to “decide whether the same degree of deference is appropriate with respect to school-sponsored expressive activities at the college and university level.” Despite that reservation, at least four federal appellate courts have applied reasoning from *Hazelwood* to college publications.

The *Hosty* court noted that “*Hazelwood*’s framework applies to subsidized student newspapers at colleges as well as elementary and secondary schools.” The court analyzed the situation at GSU using factors from *Hazelwood*, correctly noting that GSU created a public forum that could not be censored by the administration. The decision yielded the right result, but for the wrong reasons. University newspapers are not like newspapers produced in high school journalism classes. High school journalism teachers may have a legitimate pedagogical concern that would enable them to censor classroom publications. There are no similar concerns for college administrators.

The *Hosty* court’s reliance on *Hazelwood* flies in the face of a long line of cases supporting speech rights on college campuses. Before *Hazelwood*, a number of federal courts weighed in on the issue of



The result in Hosty should put future student editors on notice: Courts will enforce the right to **publish**, but will not support the desire to **punish**.

student press freedom. At North Carolina Central University, the school's president was uncomfortable with allegedly racist content in the campus newspaper. When he withdrew funding for the student newspaper, the editors successfully sued to restore funding for the paper (*Joyner v. Whiting*). When administrators at the University of Virginia tried to deny funding for a magazine solely because of its religious content, student editors successfully sued to restore funding for the magazine (*Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia*). The same must hold true for all campus publications. Universities cannot restrict funding based on content.

The tactics used by the plaintiffs in Hosty did not mirror the successful lawsuits in Joyner and Rosenberger. Instead of suing for a restoration of funding, the GSU students sued for money damages. The result in Hosty should put future student editors on notice: Courts will enforce the right to publish, but will not support the desire to punish.

While the Hosty decision affects universities in the 7th Circuit, its effect in other jurisdictions is limited. A majority of circuits have cases similar to Joyner v. Whiting, which proscribe the censorship of student publications. Administrators would be well advised to review

those cases (or consult with university counsel) before taking action against a student publication.

Despite Dean Carter's actions, journalism seems to be thriving at GSU. A new newspaper – the Phoenix – rose from the ashes of the Hosty dispute. The existence of the Phoenix should provide hope for student journalists. Purse strings can not silence the sound of a student's voice.

Craig Freeman is an assistant professor specializing in First Amendment theory at the Manship School of Mass Communication at Louisiana State University. A practicing attorney, he has represented parties in both state and federal courts on a number of Constitutional issues. He has also been a print and television journalist in Philadelphia.

REFERENCES:

- Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 260 (1988).
- Hosty v. Carter, 2005 U.S. App. LEXIS 11761 (7th Cir. 2005).
- Joyner v. Whiting, 477 F.2d 456 (4th Cir. 1973).
- Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia, 515 U.S. 819 (1995).



Student Press Law Center statement

BY MARK GOODMAN,
SPLC Executive Director

The Hosty decision represents what could be the start of a slow erosion of press freedom on college campuses. The SPLC and many other organizations are going to be working hard to limit the impact of Hosty, and to reverse it. But we're concerned about those college and university officials anxious to "control the message" and "present a positive image" of their schools who will see this decision as ammunition in their campaign to undermine an independent student voice.

The good news from Hosty (to the extent that anything good can come from a decision that suggests adults at public colleges and universities have rights no greater than those of teenagers) is that it recognized that some college student media will be entitled to strong First Amendment protection where "no censorship [is] allowed." Those publications that are operating as "designated public forums" where student editors make the content decisions will still be safe from censorship by school officials.

Every college student publication in the country should demand that their school sign off on a written policy statement recognizing them as designated public forums. The SPLC will be publicizing those schools that do so as well as those that refuse.

BOARD OF THE INDIANA COLLEGIATE PRESS ASSOCIATION **Letter to the editor**



We write to express our deep concern about a June 20 federal appeals court decision that threatens to limit First Amendment rights of young adults at public colleges and universities in Indiana and two other states, if not the whole nation. This case, *Hosty v. Carter*, was decided by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, which hears cases from Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin. In a 7-4 ruling, the appeals court reversed what had been a lower court victory for three student journalists at Governors State University in Illinois. The students, Margaret Hosty, Jeni Porche and Steven Barba, had successfully contended that a university dean, Patricia Carter, had ordered a commercial printer not to press another copy of the student newspaper, the *Innovator*, without administrative approval of its contents before publication. The students contended the dean's order violated their First Amendment rights to freedom of the press.

Against a backdrop of recent national surveys that show a lack of understanding and appreciation for First Amendment principles, the Hosty decision will further erode freedom of expression on college and university campuses, both public and private. And not only is there a grave First Amendment principle at stake, but the Indiana Collegiate Press Association believes that empowering students to make the decisions is also the best way to teach them the roles and responsibilities of a free press in our democracy.

ICPA believes the ruling, if allowed to stand, will do great damage to nearly 40 years of First Amendment protection for student publications, both those at public schools and those at enlightened private institutions who take their lead from the public. Very simply, this ruling could allow a university administrator to seize control of the content of a student publication and in effect become

TO THE EDITOR

its editor. ICPA very much believes such a seizure of the freedom of the press would be contrary to the principles of the Constitution and that the principle of responsible freedom for adults is neither conservative nor liberal.

It is important for public colleges to continue to declare their student-edited media as what are called qualified public forums. When administrators do not practice prior review or censor student media, they are also shielded from legal responsibility if problems develop. And students are given a needed voice in the “mix” of voices that thrive in American education.

The court wrongly found that Dean Carter’s actions were condoned because justices determined that this case might well fit within the “framework” of a 1988 U.S. Supreme Court case, *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier*, which allowed censorship and prior review of high school student media under limited circumstances. Most public college and university student media, regardless of funding sources, have operated as qualified public forums where duly appointed student editors made final content decisions. Decades of respect for this press freedom tradition exist throughout America, and administrators wisely give students broad freedom to determine content of established student media. Educationally, this makes sense and gives students a needed voice while they are part of their campus community.

The Hosty decision is vague and does not seem to state under what conditions a public college official might censor student media. We fear that some campus officials might overreact and attempt to censor the free interchange of ideas that is critical for students. As representatives of more than 40 student-edited publications at more than 20 public and private universities and colleges across the Hoosier state, ICPA needs your help in bringing attention to this important issue.

As America attempts to spread greater freedoms abroad, we must also continue to respect the broad freedom of expression that has been historically given to students and the campus media.

Board of the Indiana Collegiate Press Association

Publications advisers:

David Sumner, Ball State University; David L. Adams, Indiana University; Jeanne Criswell, University of Indianapolis; Vincent Filak, Ball State University; Merv Hendricks, Indiana State University; Bob Franken, University of Notre Dame; Michael Mullen, Vincennes University

Student officers:

Whitney Allen, President, IUPUI; Sam Nissen, Indiana University, Bloomington; Andy Welfle, IPFW, Ft. Wayne; Mo Ertel, University of Notre Dame; Lindsay Owens, Vincennes University; Dave Studinski, Ball State University

The court wrongly
found that Dean
Carter’s actions were
condoned because
justices determined
that this case might
well fit within the
“framework” of
Hazelwood.

In a recent article on “culture change” at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Peter J. Gade and Earnest L. Perry defined “organizational culture” as “an organization’s way of doing things—its customs. It is a combination of macro (e.g., values and beliefs) and micro (e.g., roles, practices, and procedures) variables that give meaning to organizational life.” Newsroom culture is, in this definition, a combination of big-picture, “mission” ideals and day-to-day routines.

CREATING CULTURE

How to take an active role in creating a positive atmosphere that promotes excellence.

By **AMY CALLAHAN** and **LORI SODERLIND**

Every newsroom, be it at a large national publication or a small college newspaper, has, for better or worse, its own quirks, practices, moods, rituals, and general atmosphere. That’s newsroom “culture,” and it directly affects the quality of the product a newsroom creates. A positive culture is an environment of productivity, professionalism, diversity and camaraderie, where disruptions to the culture are addressed.

If an organization’s culture is ignored and disruptions not repaired, the culture may soon become broken. But with attention and effort, even a broken newsroom culture can become positive and productive, and directly affect the success of campus publications or broadcasts.

In a college newsroom, the adviser—the one source of continuity—can actively create a positive newsroom culture despite the drawbacks unique to student journalism. Those drawbacks include the staffers’ youth and frequent immaturity, their lack of experience in journalism, and the high rate of turnover. Those drawbacks make the establishment of a positive culture even more important, since the newsroom’s future leaders gain their experience as junior members on the staff.

The work of creating strong customs and procedures, of setting and promoting the consistent, big-picture standards vital to any successful news organization, largely falls to the adviser, who must, of course, carry it out while performing that delicate balancing act so familiar to advisers: exercising influence while also stepping back to let students do the work and ultimately be responsible for it.

The authors conducted an informal survey of college journalists and their advisers at the 83rd Annual College Media Convention in Nashville, during their seminar, “Creating Culture in a Revolving Door Newsroom.” The survey revealed that students overwhelmingly feel that they, not their advisers, have the most impact on newsroom culture. Still, the students’ belief in their own influence probably speaks to their feeling of empowerment in their newsrooms, which is as it should be. Good advising will promote and respect that empowerment.

Creating A Positive Culture

Team spirit

At our seminar in Nashville, our informal survey found that when an environment of teamwork exists, the newsroom culture is usually positive. Of the 30 respondents who said their overall newsroom environment was “mostly positive,” 28 characterized their work environment as “based on teamwork.”

Students in our journalism programs overwhelmingly say they imagine they would work better in a non-competitive newsroom environment than a competitive one.

In a sense, this is prescient of a trend in journalism on the whole. Any organization will always strive to outdo another organization, but within many newsrooms, internal rivalry and competition is no longer emphasized and “team-style” reporting is beginning to replace the traditional beat model of staff management (Gade, 2004).

A teamwork model challenges students to work better and harder in the spirit of camaraderie—not in a contest to outshine each other.

The adviser can set a positive tone by showing in a variety of ways how the students are all part of a team. Use meetings as an opportunity for the group to brainstorm constructively about how to make stories more interesting or how to display them with greater appeal in the newspaper. Where possible, involve all staff members in the success of each story or page; make sure that all staff must attend at least some part of “press nights” or program production, and make sure every member in attendance either has a job to do, or is learning a part of the process of getting a publication out the door or a show on the air.

When possible, eat together. When the pizza arrives on press night, encourage students to stop their work for a few minutes and meet at a table for a break, rather than skulking back to their work stations with a slice.

And at these mealtimes, or other impromptu meetings or breaks, what will the staff talk about? An adviser can actively direct the conversation to journalism, and keep the level of discourse professional and constructive. Take the lead in setting the tone, or “shaping the culture,” by prompting students to discuss issues in the news—and



how they might be handled in the college's media. Encourage staff to read the Poynter.org Web site, so that the newsroom buzzes with hot topics in the practice and ethics of journalism.

Prompting students to discuss, for example, the latest Romanesko column on the Poynter site promotes the best kind of "gossip" in the newsroom—water cooler talk about journalism.

Professional attitude

A healthy culture must be created by urging students toward positive growth and action. While student staffers are not always as mature and experienced as their advisers wish they were, they will learn "professional" values and practices if the bar is set high enough.

To create a professional atmosphere, regularly remind students of the newspaper's, or broadcast medium's, very public nature, and in turn, of the importance of accuracy and precision—"professional" values. "Professionalism" in newsroom culture is greatly aided by creating in students a sense of the importance of their work. Advisers need to generate awareness that the newspaper or broadcast station matters—that what appears in the newspaper is, indeed, read and noticed by many people.

To create this awareness, pass along any and all comments from readers or viewers. Even better, advisers should encourage readers to deliver feedback directly to the students. When you hear praise or complaints from administrators, colleagues or students, encourage them to contact the reporter. All feedback helps create the "buzz"—the sense that the newspaper or station is a topic of interest, and that the staff, not the adviser, is responsible for that. Critical feedback can be healthy, because it will encourage discussion of choices that the staff made and whether and how things should have been (and could be) done better.

Every newsroom staff needs to understand the importance of correcting errors and of making sure the entire staff is part of the discussion when corrections are run. The point is never to humiliate those who make errors, but to place value on getting the facts right.

Publicly praise good work. The more visible, the better. Review with students what their successes were in each issue or program. Keep track of the articles or programs that appear to have been read or most noticed by the newspaper's audience—especially student readers, whose opinions are often most valued. Note—publicly and as loud as possible—any positive feedback the newspaper has received. Display in the newsroom examples of outstanding work. Celebrate those successes—spend more time on those than on the defeats.

Don't wait for the big national awards; create your own awards ceremonies for specific features each year, and fete the winners. In the spirit of teamwork, it is wise to create awards for group efforts—perhaps an award to the year's best issue or jointly produced program, in addition to awards for individual achievement.

Another way to show that quality work performed on deadline is the standard for the newsroom is to have a solid work record be the prerequisite for obtaining a key to the newsroom.

These tactics build the positive spirit in the newsroom and place the emphasis where it helps most: on good journalism. A newsroom culture that values good journalism will inspire more of it.

Strength in diversity

Advisers can discourage cliquish behaviors, which often shut out students considered different, and actively recruit students from diverse backgrounds—including students of color, gay and lesbian students, students with disabilities, and even students with a diversity of political or religious ideologies.

On many campuses there are significant populations of students who speak Spanish or other languages. This reality should be reflected in the newspaper or broadcast station. Suggest that your staff consider publishing a column or producing a program written in Spanish, and be certain to encourage coverage of newsworthy multicultural events across campus.

Professional workspace

Appropriate work space can play a huge role in creating a positive newsroom culture, but it is often the factor most difficult to control. A good facility is important to morale and productivity; it is clearly difficult to preach professionalism when the level of equipment or the newsroom's dedicated space is not of a professional level.

For a newsroom that will foster a culture of individual responsibility, commitment to the team, and overall professionalism, it is desirable that each staff member have his or her own computer, and can personalize the workspace with photos, posters, etc. Also, the newsroom should be available to all regular staff members at all hours—though remember, access can be a reward for proven performance. The newsroom should have its own phone and fax line, copy machine, and other relevant equipment.

When the pizza arrives, encourage students to stop for a break, rather than skulking back to their workstations with a slice.



And, in the interest of creating a creative, inviting atmosphere: Let the music play...within reason. Hard work should have its rewards. At the same time, it is crucial to keep the fun atmosphere in balance. One author of this article has had to post a friendly set of rules in the newsroom—to discourage gatherings in the newsroom for purposes other than news. The culture should be centered on the student staff, and should encourage them to work; distractions to that work are counterproductive.

Negatives that can disrupt the culture

Advisers always need to be on the lookout for problems that can disrupt a carefully-built culture. Here are some to watch for:

The personality that most quickly and noticeably becomes a detriment to newsroom culture is the “slacker”—the student who joins the staff, perhaps even takes on a leadership role, but then simply fails to produce work. The “slacker” actively undermines the work ethic of an organization in his or her own special, passive way. By ignoring deadlines or missing meetings, the slacker can threaten to delay or halt production, or can seriously weaken quality.

The slacker also creates more work for reliable staff members—who will often double or triple their own load to make up for the slacker’s shortcomings. Where slacking is tolerated, the overall effort to create an energetic, hard-working newsroom culture suffers.

A healthy newsroom will create “values” and “practices” that leave only a fringe role for the slacker on the staff. Deadlines should not be pushed back for late stories; waiting on the students who are always late simply makes them the focus of attention, and elevates their importance, as if the whole paper or station is willing to wait for their work.

Advisers should set the tone of deadlines and commitment early and clearly. Make sure the whole staff recognizes the substandard results of missed deadlines: wire service filler, reduced pages, and sloppy copy editing. Students who don’t keep their commitments to the paper should be counseled frankly about why their performance is unacceptable. Discourage student leaders from spending too much time complaining about the slacker.

Ultimately, a culture that doesn’t tolerate laziness will develop a stronger staff.

Another problem that can be a threat to a healthy newsroom culture is the “negative force.” This staff member could be hard-working but nonetheless have a bad influence on newsroom culture by ridiculing or denigrating a part or all of the newspaper or station. “Nobody watches us anyhow,” or “all of these stories are lame,” are typical negative comments. Negative students don’t do as much real damage to the final product as the slacker does, but they can seriously damage the morale and culture of the newsroom.

Negativity is best dealt with before it arises—by creating a deliberately positive culture where negativity cannot flourish. Advisers can also work to build a culture of constructive criticism. Those who make negative observations should be asked to follow those criticisms with suggestions for improvement, and should be asked to take the initiative to change—not as punishment, but as part of a responsive, active culture. No one reading the paper? Devise a more effective distribution plan. Dull news show? Brainstorm better stories.

A newsroom culture that values good journalism will inspire more of it.

Establishing a teamwork model

- Brainstorm as a group
- Involve all staff members in production
- Eat together. Talk about journalism issues.
- Creating a professional atmosphere
- Set the bar high.
- Remind students of the public nature of their work.
- Make sure staff gets plenty of feedback from audience.
- Emphasize accuracy and the importance of correcting errors.
- Create perks for good work performance.
- Publicly praise good work.
- Create your own awards ceremonies.
- Encourage diversity.
- Discourage cliquishness that shuts out “different” students.
- Recruit students from backgrounds of all types.
- Try publishing a story or producing a program in a language other than English.
- Provide professional workspace.
- If possible, provide each staff member a personal workspace.
- If possible, provide access at all hours.
- Provide standard office equipment.
- Let the music play--- within reason.

Another type of student who may crop up on staff is the loner. The loner may not be heavily invested in the social network of the newsroom, and that may cause other staff members to speculate, gossip, or ostracize their lone peer. Noting this, the adviser should discourage gossip. However, the adviser who sees loner students on staff may be facing a more serious challenge to the overall newsroom culture. The loner suggests that the staff is not a team, and that some staffers feel excluded. How to bring the loner into the fold? That’s where the teamwork efforts come in.

When advisers have successfully created a positive culture and addressed disruptions to that culture, the result will be productivity, professionalism, diversity and camaraderie – with an end result of excellence.

Amy Callahan is the journalism coordinator and on the faculty at Northern Essex Community College, where she advises the NECC Observer. She was a journalist for 10 years and worked as managing editor in the Office of Public Affairs at Columbia University. Lori Soderlind is program coordinator for communication arts and associate professor at Norwalk Community College. She is adviser to the school newspaper The Voice, which she started four years ago. She is a veteran reporter and editor at newspapers in New York and New Jersey.

References:

Peter J. Gade Journalism and Communication monograph (2004, Spring). Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.



TIPS ON SURVIVING IN YOUR CAMPUS COMMUNITY

By **KIMBERLY WILMOT VOSS**

Dept. of Mass Communications
Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville

When the campus newspaper you advise publishes a raunchy sex column or the campus radio station insists on playing music that sounds like a chainsaw, and alumni call the university president to complain, what will happen next? Will the president defend you, demote you, or dismiss you?

And, will the president even know who you are?

Establishing a good relationship with administrators and the campus community before controversy arises is an essential tactic for media advisers. The job of adviser is a balancing act – while you are protecting the rights of your student journalists, you also have to be aware of your job security. When a controversy arises – and it will -- the better your relationship is with the rest of the campus community, the more likely you are to survive.

Here are some tips on how to build that relationship with your campus community:

Be visible

Make sure people on campus know who you are. Judi Linville, newspaper adviser at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, recommends that advisers go to campus receptions, readings, gallery openings and chemistry lectures. She says, “Get to know the people in charge of various cultural and current events planning, making it clear that [you] can’t get things in the paper for them but this is the person they can talk to. It is vital to meet and get to know people outside one’s own department or academic discipline, because if the paper gets into trouble, the broader base of support you can call upon, the better.”

At Florida Atlantic University, if the university president has an open function at his mansion, newspaper adviser Michael Koretzky makes sure to be there. If there’s a holiday party, he shows up with a gift for a needy child.

Build respect for your quality operation

“It’s far better to build a foundation of credibility in advance of a crisis,” says Chris Carroll, director of student media at Vanderbilt University. What you aim for, he says, is “positive recognition that administrators appreciate.” So make sure the campus knows about successes, yours or your media’s.

Enter competitions. Being able to show that a third party has honored your media and/or your work as an adviser can be very helpful

“The more bridges you
have built ahead of time,
the more doors you have
opened, the easier the
road will be when the next
controversy pops up.”

in demonstrating to administration how important your work is. Your boss can also take some credit for that good newspaper, or at least being smart enough to hire you.

Judi Linville, the student newspaper adviser at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, points out, “The better the paper is, the more people respect it, and

the more likely, all other things being equal, the administration is to treat the paper with respect when it disagrees with or is embarrassed by a story, instead of trying to censor it.”

Carroll says he not only lets administrators know about awards but also about students attending conventions. His department also helps keep administrators happy by engaging in “considerable outreach efforts at our own initiative and expense,” such as alumni newsletters.

Build bridges and coalitions

Reach out to the campus community. An adviser can find opportunities to help other departments and work with other departments. At Florida Atlantic Koretzky says, “I keep administrators on my side by doing whatever I can for them without compromising the newspaper’s ethics or the staff’s integrity.” In another example, when an administrator at his school was working on a book, he volunteered to help with copyediting it on his own time.

Koretzky also looks for projects in which he can work with other departments. Last year he put together a meeting with the school’s football coach and the newspaper’s photo editor, sports editor, and designers. They worked out a project where the newspaper staff would write, design, and edit a soft-cover commemorative football book while the Athletic Department paid for its production. This partnership led to a good clip for the students and good karma for Koretzky without any cost to the newspaper.

Be **VISIBLE**, be **RESPECTED**, be a **BRIDGE-BUILDER**, a **COMMUNICATOR** and **EDUCATOR**

At Louisiana State University, student media director David Kurpius went to the graphic design department after winning a training grant. He offered to let the department choose the graphic designers who would be brought to the school under the grant. The guest designers then led workshops both in student media and in the graphic design department. More good karma!

Communicate

Keep the doors of communication open. Carroll, at Vanderbilt, says he promptly responds to questions from administrators. Typically, it is just a matter of explaining who makes decisions and to refer complaints to student editors. He said, "I'll meet with administrators, student leaders, or others who have concerns. My role generally is to explain the standard practices of student media and offer advice."

Brian Steffen, newspaper advisor at Simpson College, says the lines of communication need to extend to the students. He does not shield them from campus criticism. "I don't think we do our students any favors when we try to blunt criticism of their work."

Educate Others

Teaching about the obligations and limitations of an adviser's position is one of the most important things you can do. Linville recommends that advisers provide administrators with a summary of court cases pertaining to student media, not as a threatening action but rather as a matter of educating them about student rights they may not be aware exist.

Carroll says he is lucky as the chancellor and key vice chancellors at his school are all lawyers who have publicly acknowledged the legal and educational necessity of allowing the student media to be independent. The time to ascertain the knowledge level of key administrators is before a controversy arises, while there is still time to educate if necessary.

Ira David Levy, the student newspaper advisor at two-year Wright College, says he and his students invite, at random, several members of the administration and faculty to observe the critique after each issue hits the newsstand. He also attends occasional faculty in-services to explain the role of the student newspaper advisor.

Rachele Kanigel, the student newspaper adviser at San Francisco State University, recommends that advisers continually educate campus members about the functions of the student newspaper including "how it works, who runs it, what the students learn from the experience and how difficult it is for student reporters when sources don't return their calls. If administrators are willing, invite them to meet with student editors or the whole staff. These meetings can open the lines of communication."



Crisis Management

When controversy arises, view it as an opportunity to teach. Stay calm. Steffen says, "If your student newspaper is doing its job, someone is going to get upset eventually and you're going to find yourself in the middle of that. I try to keep in mind that every controversy in which the newspaper finds itself is a chance to teach our audience about the importance of a free and responsible press. But it's hard to do that if you, the adviser, are defensive about your role."

The more bridges you have built ahead of time, the more doors you have opened, the easier the road will be when the next controversy pops up. At the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh in 2002, for example, the student government objected to the content of the student newspaper and cut its funding. The chancellor stepped in and reinstated it. A good relationship can literally pay off.

Kimberly Wilmot Voss is an assistant professor in the Department of Mass Communications at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville. After earning her doctorate at the University of Maryland, she has taught at nine colleges and universities. She has been a reporter and editor at several newspapers, magazines and wire services including the Chicago Tribune, the Baltimore Business Journal and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

THE ADVISER MONOLOGUES

What do advisers do? Three share their experiences.

By DAVE WADDELL

I'm in San Francisco for the National College Newspaper Convention when I receive an urgent-sounding phone message to get in touch with a columnist at a California metro. The columnist critiqued The Orion just days ago. When I reach him, he tells me he received a perplexing piece of writing from an Orion staffer, and he wonders whether it is a cry for help. The staffer, who I'll call "Charles," had shown me an earlier draft of the story, and it had not raised the alarms perhaps it should have. The version Charles had sent to the columnist for feedback included mentions of depression, binge drinking and "suicidal tendencies."

As is often the case, at the same time I was being sensitized by the College Media Advisers listserv, and in particular an e-mail comment from one adviser that "the complexity of issues mental health counselors now see is alarmingly beyond what" many of us could imagine.

Facing a hellish Monday, I e-mail Charles and ask him if he could drop by during my Tuesday office hours. Acting as if he couldn't wait, Charles shows up shortly after noon Monday. I encourage him to tell me, at any point, to mind my own business, but that I need to discuss the article he had sent to the columnist. "Does that mean it's good?" Charles asked. He doesn't have a problem with any of my questions, and I learn that he is on Prozac, that he feels alienated from his peers and that he is extremely surprised that someone is actually taking an interest in him.

PO•TAY•TOH, PO•TAH•TOH

TO•MAY•TOH, TO•MAH•TOH

ADVISER, ADVISOR

For four wacky days at the end of the spring semester in 1996, CMA-ers on the CMA-L listserv debated the spelling of adviser/advisor, a debate that, along the way, touched on the Great Dictionary War of 1961, a Senate filibuster on cheese farming, and advisers that were more ready than the students were for the semester to end.

A little wacky humor now and then can liven up advisers' busy days, so in service to the profession, CMR is reprinting the thread. Enjoy!

APRIL, 1996

Someone posted an innocent question about the proper spelling of our job title: Is it "adviser" or "advisor"? And the debate began:

Hence the old adage: "To ER is human, to OR is divine."

Marcy Cook
Indiana State University

. . . .

Subject: Re: Advisor/adviser

Here is another of the 10,000 "adviser/or" replies. Some years ago our university made an "official" policy decision. Big decision! That it was going to be "advisor," which, of course, is more British, I understand, and more artificial. Affectation is always a good thing at a university. However, my favorite dictionary, at least my favorite dictionary that I can afford, "Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary," 10th edition, lists "adviser" first. I promise now to get back to meaningful work.

O'Ryan Rickard
Western Michigan University

. . . .

Subject: Editorial AdvisEr

I have been finding it a bit depressing that the discussion of how to spell adviser/advisor has in two days prompted more than a dozen messages, while my request for editorial adviser job descriptions drew but two responses.

Finally, this morning, I discovered what surely MUST be my problem: I requested job descriptions for "editorial advisors". Now I get it!! While there are many editorial advisers, there are apparently very few editorial advisors. ;)

Eric Jacobs
University of Pennsylvania



I'm a picky copyeditor by nature and ordinarily pounce on misspellings, but I can't seem to get hot and bothered about the use of "adviser" in e-mail. Is there any reason why AP's dictates must rule for every usage everywhere?

When there is more than one acceptable spelling or meaning of a word, AP picks one, for consistency. That doesn't mean the others are wrong or unacceptable in non-AP contexts.

The only dictionary I have handy here is missing its first sig and begins with "allodial," but the last time I looked, "adviser" was an acceptable spelling.

Pat Parish

Louisiana State University

. . . .

I tried to post a reply to Pat Parish at LSU the other day that we have chosen to live in an AP world and to use AP style: adviser.

Throughout the decades, newspapers have chosen to use the first spelling given in the dictionary, which is of course in alphabetical order. The only spelling I can remember AP changing in the last 15 years is that of *cigarette,* which AP insisted for years had to be *cigaret.*

Bill Click

Winthrop University

. . . .

I don't know how dictionaries decide first spelling, but it's not by alphabetical order. Otherwise judgement would be first. If anyone knows how dictionaries decide, I'd like to know.

As for the adviser/advisor debate, let's call the whole thing off, please.

Berl Schwartz

Michigan State

. . . .

This horse has long been dead but everyone else keeps beating it so let me get a lick in. Phonetic (or should I say fonetik) logic appeals to me. Nite is better than night, thru better through, etc, etc. The ending should be -er because it makes more sense to the ear. Nonetheless, I think the minority opinion is important so there should be consideration for creating College Media Advisors, Inc., a competing organization that cares about vowels. Will this be the final blow to this wretched carcass?

Richard Daigle

Emory University

. . . .

I know I am dating myself but I worked for AP in the early 1970s and the big word then was "employee" with one "e." Also, there have been changes in the usage of OK or Okay or Oked, etc.

O'Ryan Rickard

Western Michigan University

I ask him if he's ever had counseling, and he tells me he hasn't. I ask him if he thinks he might benefit from counseling, and he thinks he might. I ask him if he wants me to walk him over to the campus Wellness and Psychological Counseling Center, and he says he would. I leave him at the front desk with the request that he check in with me the next day. Charles does so. He says he had done most of the talking in a long session with a counselor the day before, and that he had made another appointment. "Thanks for caring," he says.

. . .

"Stephanie" stops by upset that her news story was made inaccurate in the editing process, and wanting me to know that it wasn't her fault. I had confronted her the previous semester with evidence that she had plagiarized a short phrase from a press release, which, I became convinced, stemmed from a one-time lapse in judgment rather than basic dishonesty. She says a correction to today's inaccuracy is in the works but that the university police sergeant who had been quoted inaccurately was quite peeved. I tell her that I am going to suggest to the managing editor that the correction begin with the following phrase: "Due to an editing error . . ." Shannon's unexpected visit gives me a chance to talk to her about attending the Spring Conference for African-American Journalists of Faith at Morehouse College. She's quite interested.

. . .

I get a holier-than-thou e-mail from a member of the "Campus Conservation Committee," which I call The Environmental Police, telling me that Orion distributors had been spotted dumping leftover papers in a refuse bin. The e-mail came at a bad time and initially I pounded out a pointed reply. Occasionally I violate my frequent advice to students to never write e-mails when you're angry, but the longer I worked on this reply the more gracious it becomes. The ensuing discussion results in a recycling bin being set up near The Orion office.

. . .

On my walk to have lunch with a former Orion editor with the "I'm graduating, and I don't know what to do with my life" woes, I cross paths with a current Orion copy editor. "Randy" is in the middle of campus passing out fliers in support of a controversial student ballot measure to fund a campus recreation center. I personally detest it when a journalist crosses the line of being the committed observer into being the political activist. Randy's still doing his thing when I return, and I stop by The Orion office and tell the news editor that my advice would be that Randy should not be allowed to get anywhere near stories about the ballot measure.

. . .

An e-mail arrives in my In Box from a high school newspaper adviser who will be attending Chico State Journalism Day. She is seeking my advice on whether she should allow a story about sexually transmitted diseases to be written. Since stories about genital warts and the like are every-semester fare in The Orion, I am again struck by the very different worlds that we inhabit -- and that press freedom does indeed stop at the schoolhouse gate for high school journalists. My advice was that the topic was indeed appropriate, but that it should include some strong voices from proponents of sexual abstinence.

. . .

Some 75 students from a dozen high schools show up on a Saturday for Journalism Day, which I had organized. We use the occasion to induct two members into the fledgling Orion Hall of Fame. It's a great day, full of instruction and inspiration. The only negative comment I hear comes from my department chair-elect, who is annoyed about being identified in the program as an "associate professor" rather than a "professor." Everything is normal.

Dave Waddell worked 20 years as a newspaper reporter and editor before coming to California State University, Chico, in 1996. There, he teaches reporting and editing and advises The Orion, a perennial National Pacemaker finalist and winner. In 2001, he was selected by the American Society of Newspaper Editors to be an Institute for Journalism Excellence fellow.

19

Actually, I think this extended discussion of adviser/advisor, employe/employee, per cent/percent and indications that the world and journalism have gone to hell hand-in-hand simply demonstrate that we're all possibly weary of some of our students [who also probably are more than a bit weary of us], more ready than they are for the semester to end, thinking about calling the sister-in-law who wants us to go into business with her ... and -- let's admit it -- right now we would rather sit at our computers involved in this inane discussion but at least looking busy than face one of the problem children who frequently comes to our office with yet another reason why his or her story in today's paper seemed not to have a lead on it, used "dominate" when he meant "dominant" and misspelled the school president's name ... even though the dear child has now been a reporter for a full semester (don't scoff it happened).

Lloyd Goodman
Southern Illinois University

. . . .

Rite on!

This horse has long been dead but everyone else keeps beating it so let me get a lick in. Phonetic (or should I say fonetik) logic appeals to me. Nite is better than night, thru better through, etc, etc. The ending should be er because it makes more sense to the ear. Nonetheless, I think the minority opinion is important so there should be consideration for creating College Media Advisors, Inc., a competing organization that cares about vowels. Will this be the final blow to this wretched carcass?

Richard Daigle, Ron White
Louisiana Tech

. . . .

But it still doesn't explain the adviser/advisor conundrum.

At the time the style decision was made, following were the general rules for dealing with multiple spellings.

1. First choose the shortest. Hence, canceled rather than cancelled.

2. Otherwise, choose the first alphabetically. Hence, adviser rather than advisor.

Adviser is/was probably the second dumbest style decision. Is it summer yet?

Gerry Lynn Hamilton
Pennsylvania State University

. . . .

You folks are funny. This is like watching a Senate filibuster on cheese farming.

My only opinion on this is that...as blasphemous as this may sound... SOMETIMES AP IS WRONG! Look at black vs African-American vs Negro; black is not capitalized but Negro is? African-American still doesn't appear in the book, yet Negro still does.

That's why we all have individual style books. Maybe CMA should have one, too.

As for cheese, I've always been a cheddar guy!

Dan Kasten
Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville

10:10 a.m. – Our copies of this morning's Northern Star have been delivered; I grab a copy and skim the headlines. It's tempting to dive right into my daily critique, but I always make myself see the paper as a reader first.

10:20 a.m. – Start critique. I usually mark the paper with a red pen, and also type a separate page or two that I'll print and staple to the paper. Generally I'll point out both good and not-so-good. It takes a ton of time to do this with any depth and to offer thoughtful suggestions, so the critique often becomes a daylong process, done in short increments.

10:45 a.m. – A friend on campus calls to tip me to a potential story. He knows the drill: I can't make any promises, but I'll talk to him, try to understand the situation and then brief an editor about it.

This is one of the many gray areas for advisers – especially those of us who have worked as journalists. We use our reporters' and editors' instincts, but only to the extent that we gather and pass the basic information along to the students ... who then may or may not decide to pursue a story. I'm careful in these situations not to exert too much influence. The students trust me, so if I suggest a story they generally take me seriously. I also always encourage the original source to call an editor or reporter, so the pitch for a story comes more from the source than from me.

This process can drive an adviser nuts: knowing about a good story and having to watch it evaporate because nobody jumped on it in time. There's a flip side, though, when our students find good stories that I knew nothing about.

11:10 a.m. – Reporter Nick wants to talk about a story he's starting on: An NIU department appears to be spending way too much money on a project no one is sure the university even needs. He shows me the figures he's been given, and we talk about what other figures he needs to get from NIU. How will we know, he asks, if the figures the university provides the paper are honest and complete? Try getting the numbers from two different sources, I suggest, and see if they match.

11:35 a.m. – Answer e-mail from a Star alum, now a columnist at a big downstate paper. He wrote a column this week about the death of Hunter S. Thompson. Today's reporters, he wrote, are book smart, but "they treat reporting like a cubicle-dweller at IBM. They wait for news to happen: an agenda out of City Hall or news release over the fax."

I post the column in the newsroom.

Noon – Eat a brown-bag lunch. Most days I eat in the lunch room and read the Chicago Sun-Times. The lunchroom has been filthy lately, littered with unwashed coffee mugs, Rubbermaid containers and food scraps. It's not the greatest spot to enjoy lunch. But the alternative is eating at my desk, and that never works because there are too many interruptions.

Once in a while I break down and clean the lunchroom. But lately, I'm leaving it as the students left it. It's become a silent test of wills, and I'm not giving in.

12:35 p.m. – Campus Editor Sara and I drive to the hospital to see our injured reporter and take him a card.

1:30 p.m. – Back to the critique. I make the lengthiest comments about the page-1 stabbing story, with an eye toward what sorts of questions reporters might ask in the follow-up story.

1:35 p.m. – Jason, one of our photographers, stops by. He's going on a Christian missions trip to the Middle East this summer and needs a faculty member to sponsor an independent study where he'll write about and photograph his experience. He hasn't gotten anywhere with faculty yet, so I offer to talk to a faculty member and then work with him on it.

1:45 p.m. – Back to the critique. Whoops, not yet. Reporter Christina has a question. She's graduating in May. What's the next step in her job search? "Where do you want to live?" I ask. I write down a few papers and editors I know in those areas and suggest she contact them and ask if she could stop by the newsrooms for a visit soon.

1:50 p.m. – Critique. I'm finally finishing the sports section, the back of the paper. I print the critique, staple it to the marked-up paper and walk it over to the bin by the editor's office. An editor intercepts me. "Is that the critique?" she asks, with her hand out.

"Here you go," I say. "Put it in the bin when you're done."

I put four papers from today in my contest box, with a Post-It note that lists today's potential entries: column, cartoon strip and sports photo.

2:15 p.m. – Attend a Q&A session across campus, featuring one of the four candidates to be communication department chair. The Star has no official connection to the department, though I do teach as an adjunct. This is the first of four such meetings with candidates in the next week and a half.

4:15 p.m. – Create and post a sign-up sheet for a session later this week with the director of a journalism graduate program. This took a while to print because someone was printing a term paper.

5 p.m. – News budget meeting. I don't always attend these, but do at least 2-3 times a week. I ask a question here and there, but don't pitch for story placement. The big story for tomorrow is a follow-up to the stabbing, along with trying to cover a meeting tonight between administrators and Greek Row representatives.

One of our campus editors asked me the other day about access to meetings like this. I told her she always should try, but that a reporter probably won't be admitted because the meeting doesn't fall under the Illinois Open Meetings Act. Plus, organizers will reason that people will feel less willing to speak candidly if they know the press is there. So they have to show the administrators why it's in their best interest to make these meetings public. Anticipate their arguments and come back with better ones.

[That's how it plays out. The reporter goes to the meeting and is denied entry. He talks to people afterward for a story. Later, the editorial board also writes an editorial criticizing the university for not allowing the public to attend the meeting. This is dicey, because the target of the editorial is the vice president of student affairs, who is ultimately my boss.]

5:30 p.m. – Wander the newsroom and see how people are doing before I head home. Remember that I'd promised a student a letter of recommendation for grad school, and he needs it by tomorrow. Better to write and mail it now rather than push it to another day.

From my list of things to do today, there are three or four things I knew I wouldn't get to, and haven't. I write out tomorrow's list, so it's ready for me when I get here in the morning.

5:45 p.m. – Leave for home, and an evening of grading papers from my news design class.

Jim Killam is the adviser for the Northern Star at Northern Illinois University. He also co-advises the paper's Internet radio station, NSRadio. He worked 10 years in daily newspapers in Beloit, Wis., and Belvidere and Joliet, Ill., before returning to NIU in 1995. He writes books and free-lances articles for several national Christian publications and is past president of the Illinois College Press Association.

Are you sure it's cheddar? I think the correct spelling is either cheddar or cheddar. I'm going to go look it up.

Mark Witherspoon
Southern Methodist University

. . . .

Mark,

You ask: "Are you sure it's cheddar? I think the correct spelling is either cheddar or cheddar. I'm going to go look it up."

I was going to make a similarly flip comment, especially considering all of the brain cells that have been sacrificed this week on the burning adviser/advisor debate. For clarification on style for references to names of cheeses, I was going to go straight to the cow's mouth. I know I have it here somewhere, but I can't seem to find the Wisconsin Dairy Association's stylebook to clarify the point.

So I checked the old Webster's leaning against my Mac. It actually calls for a capitalized form of the word: Cheddar, named, apparently, after an area in England where the cheese was (is?) made. More recent dictionaries (I admit mine was published as one of Gutenberg's first projects) list it lower case.

While we're on style as it applies to CMA's name, AP style for several years now has advised no comma before "Inc." But it still appears as "College Media Advisers, Inc." on CMA letterhead. Oops, I hope that doesn't start another debate. (Thank God the Internet is free.)

We all must be very tired. C'mon, commencement!

Merv Hendricks
Indiana State University

. . . .

Merv,

You make an excellent point about CMA Inc. At SMU, Student Media Co. Inc. officially has a comma before the Inc. It's on our letterhead and ON OUR DOOR that way. I have officially refused since I came here in 1990 to put the comma anywhere in any correspondence and I have fought long and hard (in the tradition of our great Alamo defenders) to delete the comma. Alas, I have been unsuccessful. (But so were the Alamo defenders)

Mark Witherspoon
Southern Methodist University

I'm pleased that we had a serious discussion about a journalistic decision and that they thought about what I said, even if the conclusion wasn't what I would have chosen.

By **MELISSA MOORE**

Wednesday – A managing editor brings me the front page to ask a question about the layout. The front-page package is a story about some LSU alumni serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. The headline reads “From Civilians to Heros.” After discussing the design question, I ask the editor and managing editor about whether we cheapen the term “hero” by using it to describe all soldiers. We discuss it at some length. I say I think it’s a mistake to use “hero” without identifying some extraordinary act that makes that term appropriate. The students don’t feel strongly and decide they aren’t interested in changing the headline. I’m pleased that we had a serious discussion about a journalistic decision and that they thought about what I said and came to a conclusion about it, even if the conclusion wasn’t what I would have chosen. I’m coaching, mentoring, helping them grow into responsible, thoughtful editors.

At no point during what must have been 90 minutes or more of discussion of this weighty question does anyone (including me) notice that “heros” is misspelled.

Thursday – I’m teaching an unenthusiastic summer class when a professor who was a copy editor at the L.A. Times (and whom the students adore) walks in with the paper across his chest, front page facing me. He is pointing at the spelling error. AAAAARRRRGGGHHH!

When I point it out to the managing editor, he is crushed. He’s a good student and usually a good editor, but sometimes he tries to pay attention to too many things at a time and misses something. No point fussing at him. He already feels worse than I do.

Then I learn that the story about the university the local newspaper ran yesterday came from a luncheon Tuesday that the chancellor hosted for all local media, including us. When I inquire, I find our editor not only didn’t go or make sure someone else went, she didn’t even respond to the chancellor’s invitation. This chancellor is not particularly media-friendly to begin with -- he was running NASA in 2003 when the space shuttle Columbia crashed, killing seven astronauts, and the kind of coverage that ensued would not fill me with warm fuzzies about the media either -- and snubbing him probably won’t impress him with the level of professionalism of our student journalists.

Meanwhile, our computer manager keeps suggesting that we need a poster showing the game show “Wheel of Fortune” with the managing editor saying he’d like to buy an E for our Heros headline.

That helps some, because the reporter, who worked for weeks on the story (the first in a two-part series) is extremely disappointed that she won’t be able to use the story as a good clip to go with her resume. I suggest she use the Web version for her portfolio. Later, I remember that The Reveille won a national award a couple of years earlier for a story about racial discrimination in bars that had the word “prejudiced” misspelled in the front page headline. I need to tell her that.

Did I mention this was the first paper we published since Student Media got a new boss? He’s a newspaper editor with decades of experience. Thankfully, when he brings in his critique of the paper, he lets me mention the spelling error first.

As the managing editor reflects on the newsroom processes that let the spelling error slip through, he remembers he did spell check the front page, and the misspelled word had been flagged. Trouble was, the

misspelled word looked correct to him so he let it be. This makes further analysis of the process breakdown that led to the error unnecessary.

The editor says she will write a letter of apology to the chancellor about the missed luncheon.

Sunday – The managing editor comes over to walk my dog (I have no idea what I did to deserve this miraculous favor) and by the time he gets back, he’s gotten a cellphone call from a friend telling him that the boyfriend of one of our writers has been found dead in Spain, where he was visiting Pamplona for the running of the bulls. At the beginning of this journal I mentioned the swing, from the little things to the big picture... it’s one of those times. Our writer, who is the managing editor’s roommate and close friend, is in London on an internship. The ME is terrified that we are going to have to be the ones to tell her that her boyfriend fell off a cliff and drowned. I phoned her parents and learned they had already told her. We have to write a story about it, as the boyfriend was a law student here doing a summer program in Lyon, France. The first media reports we find tell us a fairly significant complicating fact: A nude woman was found dead with him, apparently having fallen from the same place at the same time.

Monday – We read speculation in the Spanish media that the writer’s boyfriend was having sex with this woman when they both fell from a cliff into a river. However, we can find no credible evidence of this. He was fully dressed. The editors and I spent much of the day discussing how much of this to put into the story in Tuesday’s paper. The editors’ instinct is to leave it out to protect the dignity of our writer, their friend. That’s my instinct too, but I know I have to be the devil’s advocate and ask over and over if we would include the information if it was about someone we didn’t know. This is one time I was actually glad we weren’t able to get much information. Our story is quite conservative and doesn’t mention that the dead woman was naked because we couldn’t confirm it independently.

Tuesday – Our writer calls. She’s back home, with her parents in Missouri. She has a question for me, this writer who has spent a semester covering criminal justice and who knows I spent a decade covering crime before I became an adviser. Her question breaks my heart. She says she knows we usually have way more information about a death investigation than we are able to confirm sufficiently to put in the paper. What do we know about her boyfriend’s case that we didn’t publish?

I tell her most of what we’d seen in the Spanish media reports, leaving out the sex speculation. She also has read those reports, so I’m not telling her anything surprising. I realize that she’s grieving the only way a reporter can grieve this kind of tragedy, by trying to learn all the details, doing all the reporting to finish the story. And that’s when I realize that my real value comes at times when I can try to help them figure out the complex and unusual way journalists relate to the world and the people around them, even when they’re “off duty.” Because journalists know that there’s no such thing as off duty.

That spelling stuff will take care of itself.

Melissa Moore advises The Daily Reveille at Louisiana State University and teaches classes in media writing. She has also been a newspaper crime reporter and is on the board of directors of Criminal Justice Journalists.



When Teaching is Advising: The Role of Workshop Publication Courses in Smaller Institutions' Journalism and Mass Communications Programs

Ann Thorne
Ken Rosenauer
Bob Bergland

Missouri Western State University

Since the 1970s only a small number of studies have been conducted on the role of student media in training journalists. Many of these studies focused on issues of free speech and independence. Virtually all of these studies included material from both large and small programs with only scant attention paid to the effect of school size. In our recent research on publications workshop courses (Bergland et al 2005), we noticed a strong correlation between school size and the offering of for-credit publication workshop classes.

We suggested three possible reasons: 1) The need for student participation on student publications made it necessary to require the classes; 2) In smaller institutions there was a closer tie between student programs and academic programs; and 3) With larger ad revenues, larger institutions were more interested in maintaining both financial and editorial independence. This study will take a close look at student publications in small programs – those with enrollments under 10,000 – to test these assumptions and more fully explore the role of the for-credit publication course in small programs.

Review of literature

Most colleges and universities today have student media – newspaper, yearbook and/or magazine – many of which are campus fixtures, often as old as the schools themselves. This longstanding

The smaller the institution, the more likely the position held by the respondent (adviser) will be a tenure track academic position. . . The larger the school, the more likely it is that the adviser holds a non-academic appointment.

tradition has withstood administrative pressures, legal challenges, social and cultural upheavals and shifting student interest.

Many schools also offer journalism workshop classes that give academic credit to students working on these media. The course typically awards between one and three credits to participating editors and/or staffers. Depending on various criteria – survey size, sample, date and methodology – the percentage of schools that have offered workshop courses, notably for work on the campus newspaper, vary widely. They range from one-quarter (Kopenhaver and Spielberger 2000) to one-third (Kopenhaver and Spielberger 1993, Spevak 1977, Bodle 1997, Trayes 1973) to one-half (Kopenhaver 1983) to nearly two-thirds (Reuss 1975). Even though multiple surveys have reported the prevalence of this class, very little has been written about the course itself – the schools that offer it, the number of hours of credit awarded, how it fits into the curriculum and why schools choose to include it in their curriculum.

Most of the very limited literature that deals with journalism workshop classes has covered other concerns: the relationship of the campus press to journalism departments, the frequency and amount of credit offered for working on student media and the impact of these courses on the independence of the student newspaper (see above; also, Stewart and Atkins 1970, Deaver 1977, Rampil 1982). These articles have dealt only with newspapers. To our knowledge, no research has been done about journalism workshop courses for other campus media: yearbooks, magazines or multimedia publications.

In short, while journals such as *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, *Journalism Quarterly* and *College Media Review* have published numerous articles about journalism curricula and the content and pedagogy of other traditional journalism courses, the journalism workshop course largely has been overlooked. Journalism educators seem to have inves-

Ann Thorne, Ken Rosenauer and Bob Bergland are at Missouri Western State University in the English, foreign languages and journalism department. Rosenauer is chair; Bergland and Thorne are associate professors. E-mail: thorne@missouriwestern.edu; rosenauer@missouriwestern.edu; bergland@missouriwestern.edu



tigated all other aspects of the profession, attempting to offer insight and understanding. That the journalism workshop course has largely been ignored piqued our curiosity.

As early as 1970, Stewart and Atkins suggest that journalism schools and departments had been cutting ties to the campus press for years and that the trend was continuing. At the same time, though, they note that journalism advisers continued to be commonplace, though their power and duties varied widely from one school to another.

Another trend revealed by their study was the diminishing number of campus media where journalism students were given academic credit. Instead, students were earning credit for working at local commercial papers. Although Stewart and Atkins did not suggest it, we might conclude that the downtrends they describe likely would have negative consequences for traditional media workshops in those programs.

Evidence concerning the lack of formal connection between the campus press and news-editorial sequences is offered by Spevak (1977). He found in a survey of 59 university catalogs published by ACEJ-accredited sequences that two-thirds, or 41, "neither require their students to work on the student newspapers nor do they provide courses whereby the journalism students may earn academic credit for working on student newspapers."

Moreover, Spevak reported that 13 of 18 accredited sequences with connections to student newspapers require news-editorial majors to work on their student newspapers. The other five give credit for working on the student newspaper, with one of those allowing students to earn academic credit for working on either the student newspaper or a commercial newspaper.

A brief survey by Reuss (1975) of 28 journalism departments, all with fewer than 100 undergraduate majors, showed that only 18 allowed academic credit, typically limited to six hours.

"Some schools allow neither credit nor payment for work on the student newspaper. Some are considering allowing credit in order to attract more able staff to their student publications," Reuss said. Credit seemed tied to how close newspaper staffs were to journalism advisers

and journalism departments. In those instances where credit was given, students completed specific assignments for a journalism instructor.

Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver and Ron Spielberg have conducted regular surveys of the college media, beginning as early as 1983. While their focus typically is on advisers, since their articles often are published in *College Media Review*, they also regularly provide data that reflects the status and development of college media. Yet, their extensive surveys do not deal specifically with media workshop courses. At best, they have reported about course credit granted to editors and other media managers, suggesting that a traditional media workshop course is in place.

Fortunately, some of those data are revealing. For example, a 1993 survey showed that credit was most likely for newspaper editors and managers on the editorial side from two-year schools, where the percentage ranged from 57 percent to 64 percent. Credit for comparable positions at four-year schools drops considerably, ranging from 11 percent to 25 percent (Kopenhaver and Spielberg 1993). In a comparable survey in 1999, Kopenhaver and Spielberg wrote that credit offered at both two-year schools and four-year public schools had dropped, though a slight increase for four-year private schools was noted. Yet, salaries over the same period increased. The fact that fewer newspaper editors and managers are earning college credit may reflect a decline in the traditional media workshop course.

College newspaper independence, a topic related to journalism workshop courses, also has drawn limited interest in the journals. It is worth mentioning here, because key criteria for independence may discourage any relationship to traditional media workshop courses. Louis Ingelhart (1979) is probably the chief spokesperson in determining those criteria, totaling 25, with the following seven considered relevant:

- *The publication cannot receive student fee funds.*
- *The publication cannot receive college or university subsidy, directly or indirectly.*

- *The publication cannot use campus facilities or space.*
- *The publication cannot have a university adviser.*
- *The publication cannot have any relationship to any instructional program.*
- *Membership on the staff of the publication cannot be limited to or specify student status.*
- *The university cannot provide placement assistance to staff members on the basis of learning done on the staff of the publication, nor can it grant course credits for work on the staff not awarded in a similar manner for work on commercial publications.*

Bodle (1997) writes, "An AEJMC curriculum task force, after considering more than 100 earlier studies and articles, concluded that the 'purpose of media education is to produce well-rounded graduates who have critical-thinking skills as well as practical skills.' The instructional role of student newspapers was not included in their published findings and discussions."

Bodle's survey of 97 student dailies also reported:

- *One-third had an adviser supported by university funding.*
- *17.5 percent had business managers paid by the university.*
- *Three-fourths had student-only staffs.*
- *21 percent of student staff earned academic credit in a manner similar to work for commercial publications.*

Bodle's interpretation of the data suggested that 26 of 97 newspapers were "moderately" to "strongly curriculum-based," with only 12 "strongly independent." These numbers likely suggest the presence or lack of traditional media workshops. Bodle, Kopenhaver and Spielberg, and Frank Deaver (1977) offer data to suggest that the number of legitimate independent college newspa-

pers is quite small. Yet, even those that do not meet *all* the criteria may negatively impact traditional media workshop courses as they strive to meet *many* of the criteria above.

More recently, at a meeting of College Media Advisers in Nashville, TN., we reported a relationship between school size and the offering of for-credit publication workshop courses. The larger the school, the less likely it is to offer a workshop course, for both newspaper and yearbook (Bergland et al 2004). Size was also a factor in how many credits were offered. Smaller schools were more likely to grant fewer hours for yearbook and especially for newspaper. We further noted, "Ironically, publication students at larger schools are more likely to be forced to one extreme or the other. Either they are not offered any credit and thus have no perceived faculty/department/university control over them, or they are at a school that offers three credits and thus may be very concerned

(At small institutions) the most common benefit respondents noted was that grades and credit make the students accountable for their performance.

about making content decisions of which the faculty member/department/school may disapprove."

Survey methodology

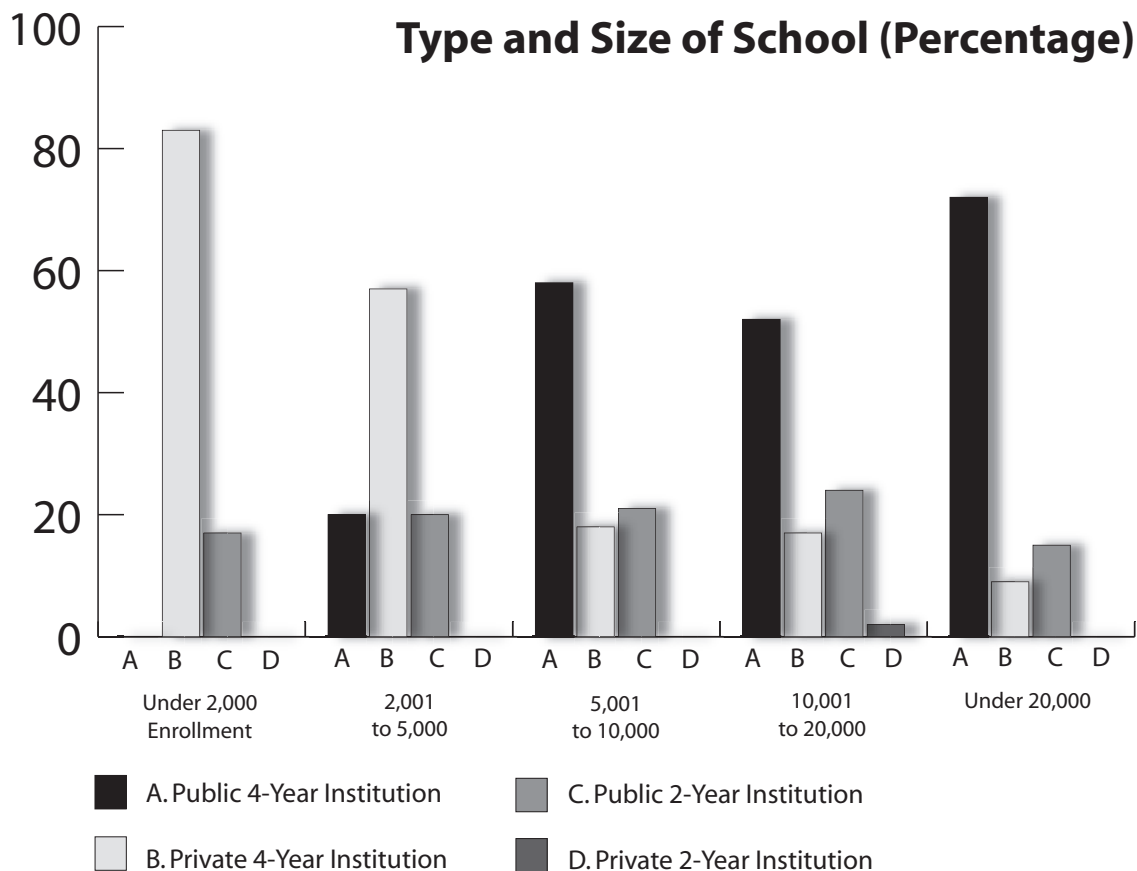
As detailed in our earlier research, we used the 2003 College Media Advisers directory as our target audience for this research. The directory is created from data on the membership forms, which have each member circle all media they advise, if any. To ensure the information was up-to-date, we requested a current CMA mailing list (December 2003). We

then selected all 2003 directory members whose listing was coded with an "N" (for newspaper advising) or "Y" (for yearbook) and who were on the current mailing list. Because at this time we wanted to focus on print publications, we excluded members who advised only radio or television. We also excluded members who joined after the directory was printed, members who did not advise media (ven-

dor representatives, journalism educators, honorary/lifetime members, etc.) and ourselves. We then sent our questionnaire to 555 members of the 840 on the mailing list.

The survey included a cover letter and three pages that included 36 questions. Nine questions were demographic questions for all respondents, five were questions specifically for those who were not at a school that offered workshop classes for credit, and 22 were questions for those at schools that did offer credit classes. Questions called for both quantitative

TABLE 1





and qualitative responses. An addressed, stamped envelope was included with the survey, which was mailed Jan. 15, 2004. Of the 555 surveys, 164 were returned, for a 29.5 percent return rate. Of those, 54 percent were from schools with less than 10,000 students. Broken down further, 18 percent of respondents were from schools with enrollments under 2,000, 17 percent of respondents were from schools with enrollments of 2,001 to 5,000, and 18 percent were from schools with enrollments from 5,001 to 10,000. In the over-10,001 category, 21 percent were from schools of 10,001 to 20,000, while 23 percent of respondents were from schools with greater than 20,000. This study will focus on results from respondents at schools with 10,000 or less. (See Table 1.)

Results: Demographics of small school programs

In all categories, the vast majority (97 percent) of the respondents in small school programs referred their title as "Adviser," rather than "Director of Me-

"Required courses mean there will be workers."

dia," "Publisher," "General Manager" or other title. Only 3 percent referred to themselves as "Director of Media" or "General Manager." However, the media each advised varied considerably by school size. Fifty-three percent of advisers at schools with less than 2,000 advised newspapers only, while 6 percent advised yearbook only, 3 percent radio only, 3 percent magazine only, and 26 percent both newspaper and yearbook. Of the advisers at institutions in the 2,000 to 5,000 range, 75 percent advised solely newspaper, while 20 percent advised both yearbook and newspaper, and an additional 3 percent advising solely yearbook or other media. (See Table 2.)

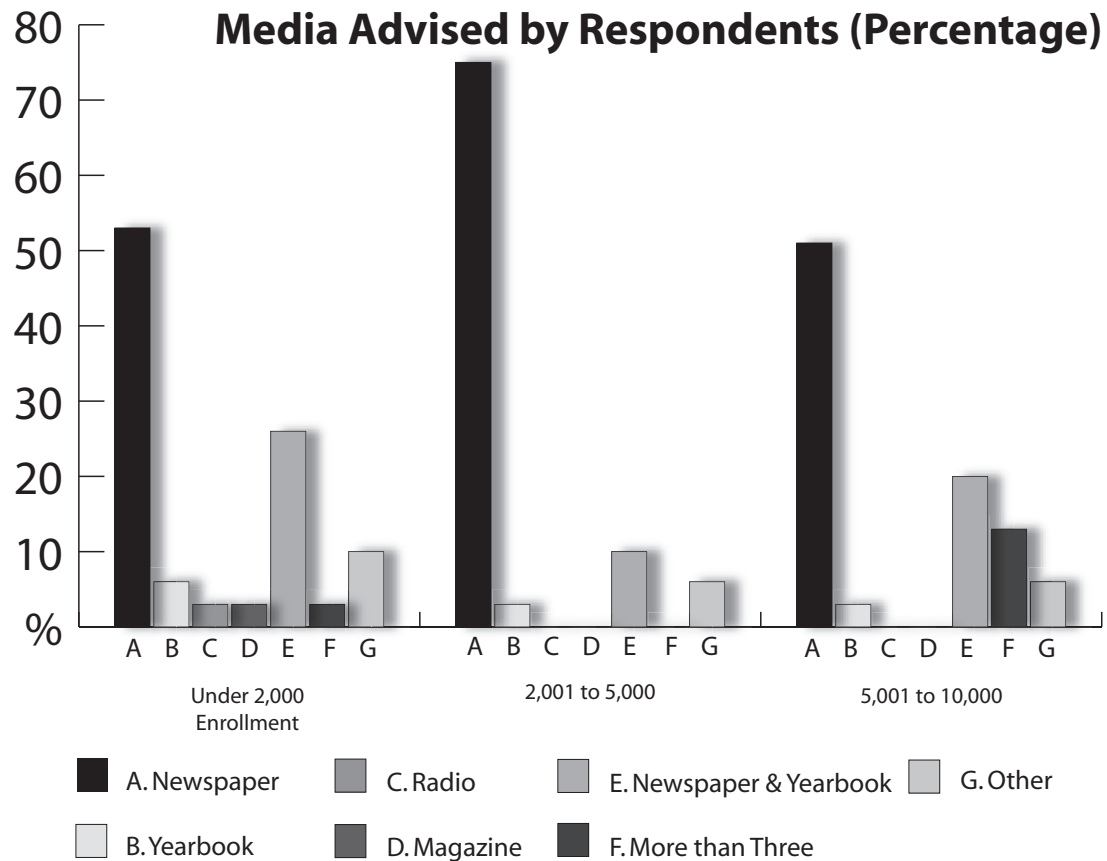
The type of institution where respon-

dents taught varied considerably by size. Of schools with enrollments less than 2,000, 84 percent were private four-year institutions and 16 percent were public two-year institutions. In the 2,001 to 5,000 range, 21 percent were four-year public institutions, 57 percent private four-year institutions, and 21 percent were public two-year institutions. Of institutions with enrollments 5,001 to 10,000, 58 percent were public four-year institutions, 19 percent were private four-year institutions, and 22 percent were public two-year institutions. Overall, of the 100 respondents at schools with enrollments under 10,000, 42 (42 percent) were at public institutions while 58 (58 percent) were at private institutions. This is in strong contrast to the largest institutions (enrollments over 20,000 students) where the respondents serve at institutions of which 74 percent are public four-year programs, with only 10 percent private four-year programs and 17 percent public two-year programs. (See Table 3.)

Another area of strong contrast be-

TABLE 2

Media Advised by Respondents (Percentage)



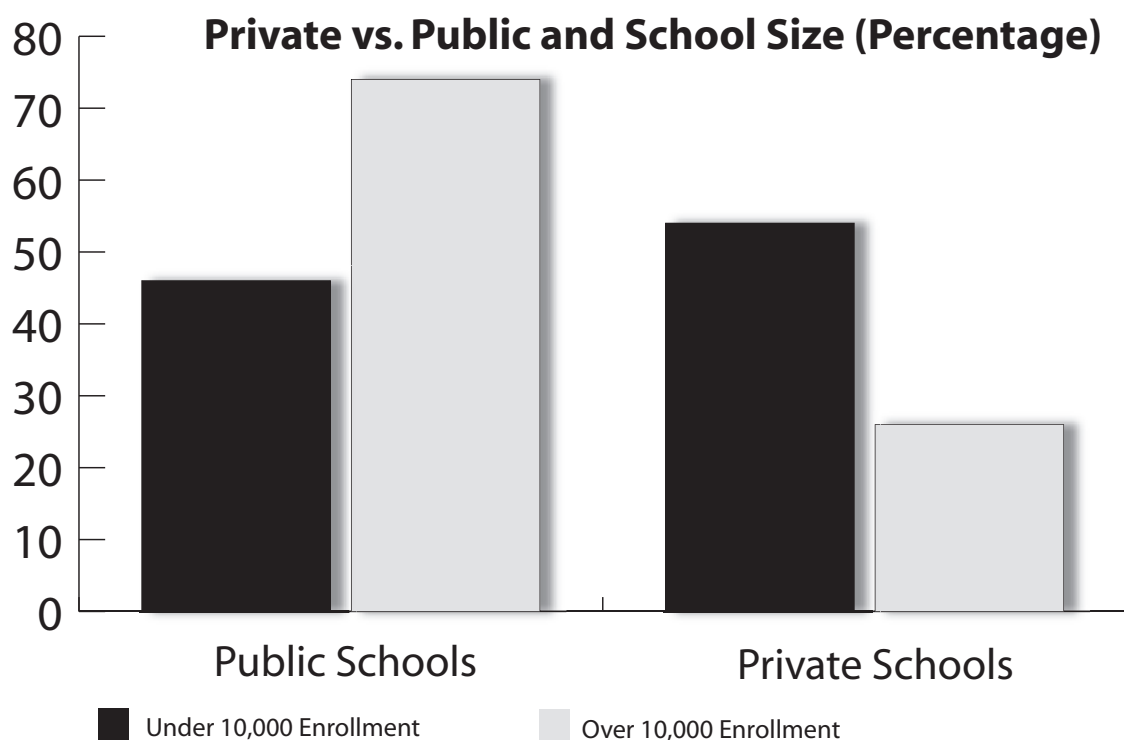


TABLE 3

tween the small-school program and those at larger institutions is the nature of the appointment of the respondent within the institution. The smaller the institution, the more likely the position held by the respondent will be a tenure-track academic position, and the less likely the appointment will be an administrative or staff position. More than half of the advisers at institutions with enrollments under 2,000 are academic, tenure-track positions. Twenty-five percent of the appointments are academic, but not tenure track, with only 10 percent of the appointments administrative or staff positions and only 10 percent part-time or adjunct. At institutions with enrollments of 2,001 to 5,000, 50 percent of the advisers are in academic tenure-track positions, 14 percent are academic appointments, but not tenure track, 20 percent are administrative or staff positions, with only 3 percent part time or adjunct positions. At institutions with 5,001 to 10,000 only 41 percent held academic, tenure-track positions, with 13 percent of po-

sitions academic, full-time non-tenure track positions, 35 percent administrative or staff positions, and 6 percent part-time or adjunct positions. In contrast, at schools over 10,000 but less than 20,000, 37 percent of the respondents held academic tenure-track positions; 17 percent held academic, non-tenure track positions; 34 percent held administrative or staff positions; and 8 percent held part-time or adjunct positions. At the largest schools, only 20 percent of advisers held tenure-track, full-time academic appoint-

ments, while 10 percent held full-time, nontenure-track appointments, and, most importantly, 85 percent held administrative or staff positions. Thus, the larger the school, the more likely it is that the adviser holds a non-academic appointment. (See Table 4.)

Along with this, the department, school, or office responsible for the publication is much more likely to be in an academic department (either journalism or mass communication) in smaller institutions than in larger institutions. In the smallest schools, only 3 percent of student publications were located in the Office of Students Affairs. However, at institutions with enrollments of 10,001 to 20,000, 40 percent of the publications were housed in the Office of Student Affairs, and at institutions with an enrollment of over 20,000, 38 percent were housed in the Office of Student Affairs. (See Table 5.)

Advising a yearbook publication as a for-credit course along with advising a news-

"I am always amazed at how quickly they learn, but I would prefer not to grade the process" – teacher/adviser for a small-institution lab class



paper course is also more likely to occur in smaller schools than at larger institutions. At institutions with less than 10,000 students, 70 percent of the advisers advise only newspaper, but an additional 22 percent advise both newspaper and yearbook. No advisers reported advising only yearbook. At the largest institutions, with an enrollment of 10,001 or more, 93 percent of advisers reported advising only newspapers, with only 7 percent reporting that they advise both yearbook and newspaper. One adviser in this category advised yearbook only.

Benefits of for-credit publication classes for small programs

One of the most important aspects of this survey was a question that asked respondents to comment on the benefits and/or drawbacks of offering for-credit publication courses. There were 68 responses to this question, with 55, or 80

“(If the course were for credit), students’ expression [would be] limited due to the possibility of getting a bad grade”
– teacher/adviser at a small institution

percent, from advisers at schools with less than 10,000 students. This is not surprising, since, as noted earlier, the smaller schools are more likely to have for-credit courses housed in academic departments than larger institutions, which are more likely to have the student publications housed in the Office of Student Affairs or to be housed completely independently of the institution. This analysis of responses will include only the responses from schools with smaller programs, i.e., responses from advisers from institu-

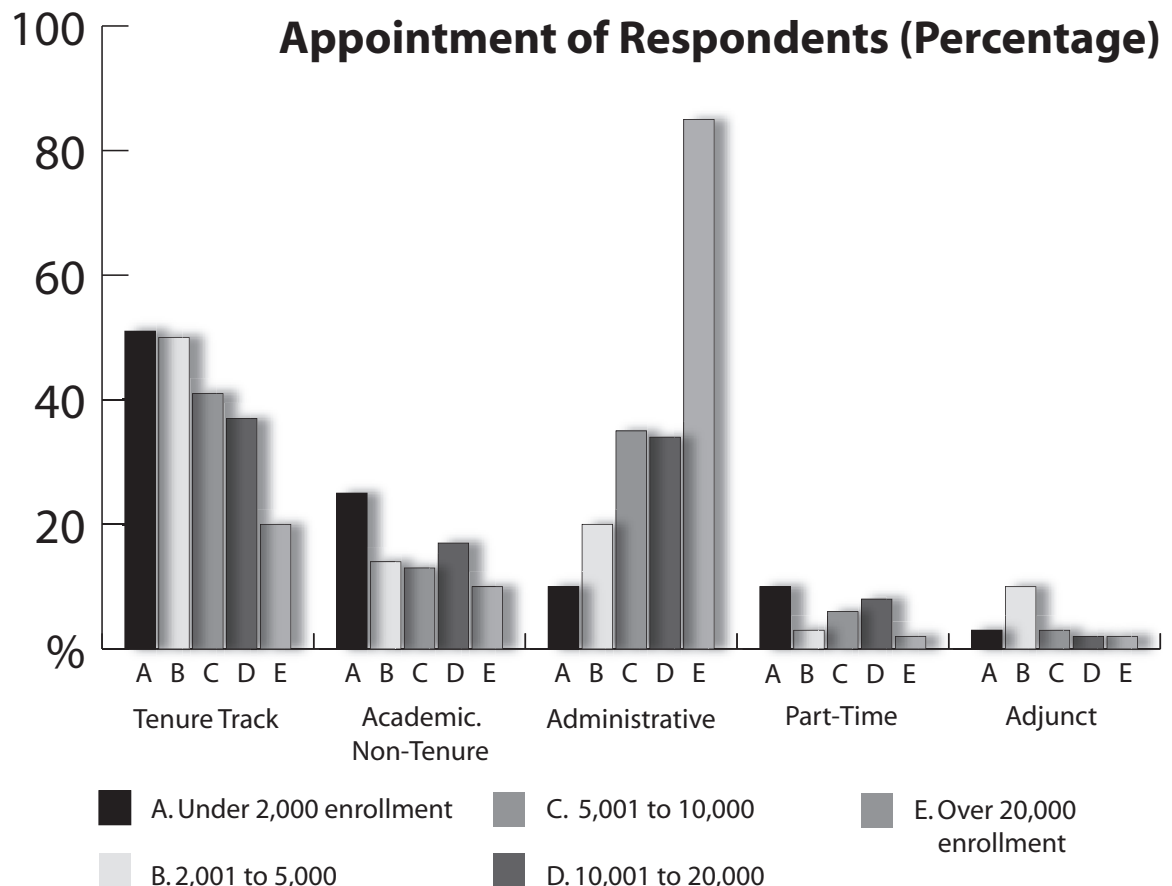
tions with 10,000 or fewer students.

Of the 55 responses by advisers at small programs, 25 (45 percent) of responses focused solely on the positive aspects of having for-credit workshop classes, 12 (22 percent) noted both positive and negative aspects, and only four (7 percent) focused on solely negative aspects. The remaining 10 (18 percent) were comments about for-

credit courses that were neither positive nor negative.

The most common benefit respondents noted (eight responses, or 14 percent) was that grades and credit make the students accountable for their performance in the class. Advisers in all three categories of small programs noted this benefit. “Students take it more seriously [because] it helps/hurts their GPAs,” wrote one adviser at an institution of 2,001 to 5,000. Or, in the words of an adviser from a school with less than 2,000,

TABLE 4



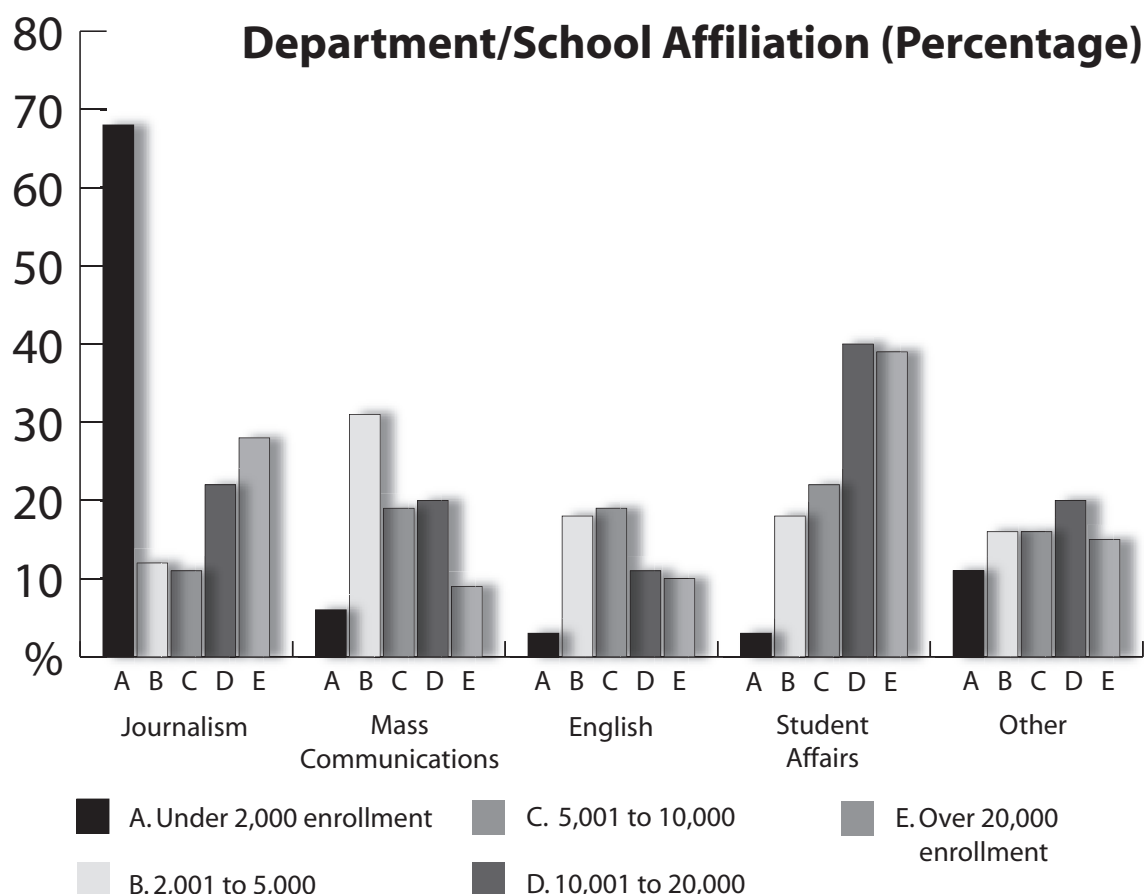


TABLE 5

“[It] holds students responsible.” From an adviser at an institution of 5,001 to 10,000 came this: “Some hold on getting information on time.” Or, from another at a school the same size: “Students look at it as a class and take it a bit more seriously.” One adviser noted simply, “Benefits: Accountability.” Accountability, then, was the leading response, which would suggest that this – not supplying a staff – is considered the greatest benefit.

However, the second most common benefit noted (seven responses, 12 percent) was that offering credit for the classes provides the student enrollment to fill them. This comment was most prevalent among the smallest schools. One adviser from a school with less than 2,000 commented, “This is our staff. Otherwise we would likely not have a paper or a yearbook – or [it would be] of very poor quality.” Another adviser from a school under 2,000 noted, “Required courses means there will be workers.” But even advisers at schools with 5,001 to 10,000 found that the number of students generated by

having for-credit publications classes was important: “Helps me recruit writers,” wrote one. An adviser at an institution in the mid-range wrote, “Without it, we would not produce the quantity or quality we do.”

The third most common benefit given by respondents was that by giving credit hours, students received recognition for work they do. “Gives them credit for doing a good job,” wrote one respondent from a school of less than 2,000. From an adviser at an institution with 2,001 to 5,000 students: “A for-credit course recognizes the hours of work students put in so it is reflected in their loads.” An adviser at an institution of 5,001 to 10,000 said, “Students earn credit towards a degree.”

In many of the comments, motivating the students was tied to the issue of recognition and receiving credit. Five respondents (9 percent) cited motivating the students as an important benefit. “Students are motivated by the grade,” wrote one adviser at a school with enrollment less than 2,000. Another adviser

from a school of 5,001- to 10,000 noted, “Encourages students to participate in newspaper activity.”

Five (9 percent) of the respondents also noted the importance of the workshop class in giving credit for work that is different from work done in a traditional classroom. “Gives students experience beyond basic classes,” wrote an adviser from an institution with 2,001 to 10,000. “Practical experience is important,” said an adviser from a school with less than 2,000. “This gives an appropriate reward for those who work.” Added one adviser from an institution with an enrollment of 5,001 to 10,000: “A required-for-credit course motivates students to get the experience they need later to seek internships and jobs.”

Another benefit advisers cited (three responses, 5 percent) was the opportunity for the adviser to work more closely with students. As one adviser from an institution with 5,001 to 10,000 students noted, “Gives me a chance to ‘help.’” Another adviser, from an institution of 2,001



to 5,000 commented, “[It provides] more opportunity to instruct one-on-one.”

Drawbacks of for-credit publication courses at small institutions

The most frequently mentioned drawback was grading. Seven (12 percent) respondents from all categories of small programs cited it as a problem. “Grading is difficult as I do not practice prior review,” wrote one adviser at a school of less than 2,000. In explaining the problem further, another adviser from a school of the same size wrote, “The problem of grading is that the work of the students is at so many levels of learning. Our workshop is lab only – not connected to a class, so it is difficult to teach, especially at a two-year situation, where baptism by fire is the norm, and students must essentially publish as they learn. I am always amazed at how quickly they learn, but I would prefer not to grade the process.” An adviser from an institution with 5,000-10,000 students notes, “[It is] difficult to attach a fair letter grade for students just learning; students seem extra competitive with these grades. I’ve had to handle grade appeals.”

Other drawbacks mentioned are free speech issues and adviser control of the publications. Each was noted in two responses (3 percent of responses). The comments reflect concern about advisers’ roles. “Adviser may be seen by campus community as having ‘control,’” noted an adviser from a school with an enrollment of 5,001 to 10,000. An adviser from a school with an enrollment of less than 2,000 commented that the adviser would be expected to take control “if the paper were ever to take on a truly controversial topic.” The small number of respondents mentioning the limitations may be due to the high percentage of small programs that are private institutions and therefore do not have the same free speech protection as public institutions, whether or not the publication is in a classroom.

The other drawbacks mentioned are primarily those of faculty compensation when the adviser was asked to take on the workshop class as overload without overload compensation.

Overall, though, at institutions with 10,000 or fewer students where for-credit

“Perceived attitude” as a change agent is synonymous with an editor’s hunch . . . confirmation of the hunch’s validity will need to be confirmed through readership surveys to maximize effectiveness.

classes were offered, respondents mentioned many more benefits than drawbacks, suggesting, as one respondent noted, “Benefits outweigh drawbacks.”

Small programs without for-credit publication workshops

One of the questions on the survey asked respondents at institutions without for-credit publication workshops to state the advantages or disadvantages of *not* having such a class. Overall, 45 respondents answered this question. Of those, 17 (38 percent) were from small programs and 28 (62 percent) from larger institutions. This roughly is in proportion to the breakdown of schools that did not offer for-credit workshop classes. Only two (12 percent) respondents from schools with enrollments of less than 10,000 cited independence and editorial control as benefits of not having workshop classes. One respondent from a school of less than 2,000 noted that not having a for-credit course gave students “independence from faculty approval that students fear could affect grade,” and a respondent from an institution with 5,001 to 10,000 commented that if the course were for credit, “Students’ expression [would be] limited due to the possibility of getting a bad grade.” At schools greater than 10,001, 10 respondents (36 percent) noted independence as the most important benefit of not offering a for-credit workshop class. Again, this may be simply because larger institutions have the luxury of great funding and student resources, making this an easier decision, or it may be that smaller institutions are far more likely to be private rather than public.

Other advantages mentioned (none of which received more than one comment) were that all majors are welcome when the course is not for credit, that students are not forced to add a student publica-

tion to their already heavy load, and that if the staff is all volunteer, they are “doing it for the love!”

The problem of recruiting students without such a program was mentioned by two (12 percent) respondents from schools with enrollments of less than 10,001. One respondent at an institution of 5,000-10,000 suggested, “The practical journalism skills of many of our students would improve with the benefit of a practicum/workshop course.” Another respondent at the same size institution noted, “I’m not sure there are benefits.”

Many respondents at schools with enrollments of under 10,000 noted that the reasons for not having for-credit publication courses were not based either on the advantages or disadvantages of such a program, but simply that it did not seem to fit with their particular curriculum. For instance, one respondent said, “I am reluctant to offer workshops because those credits will not transfer in this state,” and another said, “I understand the credit aspect would conflict with existing curriculum.” Other respondents were concerned about the cost of the program. One respondent at an institution with an enrollment of 2,001 to 5,000 noted that it would require hiring another faculty member.

Finally, one survey question simply asked for additional comments. In this section, one respondent from an institution with an enrollment of 2,001 to 5,000 wrote, “The thought of giving academic credit for a yearbook workshop class has not been considered due to lack of interest and cost to add it to the academic program.” Another respondent from an institution with an enrollment of 5,001 to 10,000 wrote, “Fear of newspaper not being considered a ‘public forum,’ re: part of academic curriculum, has kept us from the idea.”

Conclusions

Student publication programs at schools with enrollments less than 10,000 are more likely to be housed in academic departments, the advisers are more likely to have academic appointments, and the publication is more likely to offer credit for students who take the publication

course in multiple semesters. In general, the higher the number of students enrolled at an institution, the less likely it is to offer for-credit publication courses. Programs at smaller institutions are more likely than those at larger institutions to include yearbook publication as a for-credit course.

Advisers who responded to this survey from small-school programs where for-credit courses are offered often perceive those courses as primarily beneficial. Benefits they cite include making students feel responsible and accountable for the work they do on a publication, ensuring adequate enrollment and thus promoting overall quality of the publication, and giving students credit for the large amount of work required by a student publication. They also noted that the publication workshop courses get students out of the classroom, into a hands-on learning environment that can be important in finding jobs and internships. Several respondents felt that there were advantages for them as teachers as well, such as a closer working relationship with students and more of a chance to instruct one-on-one. Several advisers noted that they either received overload pay – an advantage, or did not receive overload pay – a disadvantage.

The respondents cited a number of other disadvantages; the most commonly voiced concern was the difficulty in grading. Grading a practicum course requires different approaches from assessing traditional classroom assignments, and many of the advisers/teachers found this their most difficult task, particularly because of the range of skills students bring to the course. Others were concerned about issues of free speech. For some this was a matter of the misperception by administrators that they controlled what the students wrote about, and others that the students might not take on controversial issues because they felt they were limited in what they could say. This accounted for only 3 percent of the comments, though, possibly because such a high percentage of the schools with enrollments under 10,000 are private institutions where free speech issues are different from those at public institutions.

Responses from those at institutions with enrollments of less than 10,000 that did not offer for-credit workshop classes

were mixed. Several noted the benefits of independence, while another respondent mentioned the advantage of having students who were there because they loved it. The lack of credit as a factor in recruiting students was the most frequently mentioned drawback of not having a for-credit course. Other disadvantages included lack of training for journalism students and the problem of integrating a for-credit program into an existing curriculum.

Finally, then, our initial hypotheses are at least in part supported by this study. Although recruitment was an important issue for respondents at small institutions, they perceived motivating students to provide quality work as a more important benefit. It is true that student publications and their advisers are more commonly housed in academic departments in smaller schools than in larger schools. However, although this study does not provide a full explanation of why this occurs, one reason may be that many smaller institutions are more commonly private schools, and therefore less concerned with the independence of the student press since the free speech issues are already different. This would seem to be indicated by the low priority editorial independence received in the comments from respondents at smaller institutions. Our third supposition – that given the larger schools' resources, editorial and financial independence receives greater attention – seems to be supported. Certainly more respondents from larger schools put a higher priority in their comments on editorial independence than did respondents from small programs. Again, this may be due to the higher percentage of the smaller institutions being private colleges or universities.

Further research

Grading and assessment were clearly the strongest concern of these respondents and certainly worthy of follow-up study. We plan to examine how advisers/teachers of these practicum courses currently assess their students and explore what strategies might be most effective.

Another area in which we would like to do further research is in evaluating publication workshop classes as applied learning. Many of the advisers/teachers noted the practical skills students used

in these courses, and the ease with which these skills can be transferred to professional work. We would like to examine that role more closely.

Finally, this study addresses only student newspapers and yearbooks in small programs. Many of these programs also offer radio, television, literary magazines, or other media. These, too, would be valuable to study.

References

- Bergland, R., Thorne, A. and Rosenauer, K. (2004, November). The publication workshop course and the independence of the campus newspaper. Paper presented at the meeting of College Media Advisers, Nashville, TN.
- Bergland, R., Thorne, A. and Rosenauer, K. (2004). The student publication workshop course: What is the nature of the beast? *College Media Review* 42 (3 and 4), 26-34.
- Bodle, J.V. (1997). The instructional independence of daily student newspaper. *Journalism and Mass Communication Editor* 51 (4), 17-26.
- Deaver, F. (1977). Independence for college newspapers? *College Press Review* 16 (2), 20.
- Ingelhart, L.E. (1979). The campus press in America. *College Press Review* 18, 50-51.
- Kopenhaver, L.L. (1983). Assistance: What journalism units provide student publications. *College Press Review* 22 (3), 2-3, 9.
- Kopenhaver, L.L., & Spielberger, R. (1993). Nearly 70 percent of top student editors of newspapers receive salaries. *College Media Review* 32 (1 and 2), 27-31.
- Kopenhaver, L.L., & Spielberger, R. (2000). Increasing number of student newspaper editors, managers receive higher salaries. *College Media Review* 38 (2), 4-11, 30.
- Rampal, Kuldeep R. (1982). Department-run campus newspaper has definite educational advantages. *Journalism Educator* 36: 1 (spring), 2.
- Reuss, C. (1975). College credit for student editors? *College Press Review* 15 (1), 8-10.
- Spevak, J.E. (1977). Most ACEJ schools are not connected with campus papers. *Journalism Educator* 32 (2), 52.
- Stewart, G.H., & Atkins, P.A. (1970). J-schools work more closely with commercial newspapers, sever ties with campus press. *Journalism Educator* 25 (3), 2-5.



Funding cuts as censorship: The intersection of student newspapers and student fees

Kimberly Wilmot Voss

Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville

In 2004, the student newspaper, the *Mirror*, at the University of Northern Colorado ran articles about the student government engaging in illegal closed meetings and the arrest of a student senator for drunken driving. The newspaper was performing its watchdog role – covering those in power and making sure that open meeting laws were being followed. Following the publication of the stories, the same student government that the newspaper was covering cut its funding. This scenario – a newspaper having to request funding from the student government that it also reports on – is a problem on many campuses.

The Student Press Law Center cites several cases annually in which a student government or university administration has cut funding due to content. In a report, it said “most student newspapers receive at least some funding from the university, often through mandatory student activity fees paid by all students and dispensed by the student government. The student government funding system can heighten any already existing conflict between the two groups” (SPLC, Fall 2000, p. 20). This paper will examine the problem of content-based funding cuts to public-school student newspapers and address possible solutions. It looks at the application of case law to public community colleges and universities. It should be noted that private schools do not have the same First Amendment protections; however, state statutes may give private school students some free press defenses.

Defining the Problem

Since 1999, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education has intervened in hundreds of cases involving

Some student newspapers that receive some form of financial support from the university are required to appeal to student government for those funds.

First Amendment freedoms at more than 200 colleges and universities. Several of these cases involve the silencing of student newspapers, which continues to be a problem at campuses across the country (Bankes, 2001, p. 1). Censorship comes in many forms. In recent years, student newspapers have been stolen (Paxton, 2003, p. 5), advisers have been removed due to newspaper content (SPLC, July 21, 2004, p. 1) and newspapers have had their university funding cut in retaliation for coverage (Adam Goldstein, Student Press Law Center, e-mail correspondence, October 19, 2004).

Most student newspapers are funded through several sources, including advertising revenues, subscription fees, student fees (which are typically part of a campus fees package) or general university funds (Tenhoff, 1991, p. 516). In several cases, campus administrators and other student government bodies have tried to punish or control student newspapers by reducing the availability of student fees (Paxton, 2001, p. 10).

Some student newspapers that receive some form of financial support from the university are required to appeal to student government for those funds. In a 2001 study, College Media Advisers found that 45 percent of publications at four-year public colleges and 33 percent at four-year private colleges are under the umbrella of student affairs, including student government. According to James

Tidwell, former CMA media law committee chairman and a journalism professor at Eastern Illinois University, “The worst situation is where the student government or some sort of student fee budgetary committee determines the budget every year” (SPLC, 2001-02, p. 26).

The decision to cut funding-- possibly preventing publication -- is a form of government-sponsored prior restraint. According to a lawyer with the Student Press Law Center, the courts have made it clear that “any action taken with respect to a student newspaper’s state-provided funding, if motivated by a desire to control or punish the content, is unconstitutional” (Adam Goldstein, Student Press Law Center, e-mail correspondence, October 19, 2004).

Precedent Application

When content-based funding-cut cases have reached the courts, the protections of the First Amendment have been repeatedly applied to student newspapers. In *Antonelli v. Hammond* (1969),

Kimberly Wilmot Voss is an assistant professor in the Department of Mass Communications at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville.

After earning her doctorate at the University of Maryland, she has taught at nine colleges and universities. She has been a reporter and editor at several newspapers, magazines and wire services including the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Baltimore Business Journal* and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.



the District Court for Massachusetts ruled that the president of Fitchburg State College violated student journalists' First Amendment rights when he refused funding for an issue of the campus newspaper, *The Cycle*, deciding that the content was obscene. The Court ruled that by refusing funding for the issue, the college president was censoring content. It stressed that administrators cannot limit student newspapers by a one-time restriction of funding.

In *Joyner v. Whiting* (1973), the student newspaper at North Carolina Central University published an editorial that upset the university's president. The president then withheld student fees that usually supported the publication because he said the newspaper did not meet "standard journalistic criteria" nor did it reflect "the full spectrum of views on this campus." When he was advised that this action was against the First Amendment, he withheld all funding. The newspaper editors filed a lawsuit against the university. In this case, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit ruled, "Censorship of constitutionally protected expression cannot be imposed by withdrawing financial support, or asserting any other form of censorship oversight based on an institution's power of the purse. ... If a college has a student newspaper, its publication cannot be suppressed because college officials dislike its editorial content."

In *Stanley v. Magrath* (1983), the University of Minnesota attempted to change the funding policy of the student newspaper in response to a controversial cartoon. The university's Board of Regents moved to allow students to request a refund of the portion of the student fee that went to fund the newspaper. The federal Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that this action was a violation of the First Amendment rights of the student journalists. The Court established a test for determining when university action against a student newspaper is censorship. In these cases, the newspaper must show that the university's action caused harm to the publication and that the decision was "substantially motivated by the content" of the newspaper.

In *Kanla v. Fordham* (1983), University of North Carolina students sued over mandatory student fees which helped support the student newspaper. They claimed that they were being forced to subsidize a publication whose editorial stances they did not agree with and it was a violation of their First and Fourth Amendment rights. The Fourth Circuit court ruled that the students' constitutional rights were indirectly restricted by the funding policy and that the newspaper's role as an information forum was important on campus. The court also stated that the university could not compel the newspaper to provide equal access to all opinions in its editorial page.

In a related case, in *State Board for Community Colleges v. Olson* (1984), the Pikes Peak Community College student government cut funding to the student newspaper, *Pikes Peak News*. Ultimately that cut was upheld as being based in a failure to follow school policies, but the court noted in its decision that if there had been a reason to believe the cut was based on content, it would be illegal.

The idea of students individually removing their portion of their student fees has also been ruled a violation of the First Amendment. The courts have rejected at least five lawsuits by individual students who did not want a portion of their student fee to go toward a newspaper that contained editorial content they disagreed with. The courts ruled in their rejection of the lawsuits that "it was permissible for a school to provide a forum through which students could express themselves as long as schools were not attempting to impose their views on the student editors" (SPLC, 1994, p. 59).

The Fourth Circuit court ruled that the students' constitutional rights were indirectly restricted by the funding policy and that the newspaper's role as an information forum was important on campus.

Instances of Funding Censorship

There are numerous examples of funding censorship at schools across the country, many of which never make it to court. Below are several cases from 1995 to 2004, in which student journalists turned to the Student Press Law Center, well-known advocates for the First Amendment rights of college and university journalists. They are explained here in order to demonstrate the depth of the problem, as many cases do not make it to the courtroom.

In 1995, the student senate at St. John's College in Minnesota cut the newspaper's budget by one-third. The senate claimed that it made the move because of the editors' wasteful spending habits. However, prior to the cuts, the newspaper had run a story about the school's investigation into senate spending. The controversy led the administration to consider separating newspaper funding from the student-government-based process but the initiative was not approved (SPLC, 1996, p. 23).

In 1996, the Old Dominion University student government cut its campus newspaper funding by more than 96 percent amid allegations that it was a political action. Its funding went from \$2,500 in 1995-96 to \$100 in 1996-1997. Student government leaders said the action was taken to fund other groups that would offer more diverse options for student involvement. However, prior to the funding cut, the newspaper supported an impeachment effort against the then-senate president whose grade point average was lower than that required for government officers. In the student government budget that reduced the newspaper's funding, 26 new groups were funded and two-thirds of existing groups received increased funding (SPLC, 1996, p. 23).

Also in 1996, the student government at Pennsylvania State University in Harrisburg cut newspaper funding after government leaders objected to being quoted directly in stories, according to newspaper adviser Jody Jacobs. The newspaper continued to operate. Later, a new government was voted in and changes to the funding mecha-



nism were made so that the newspaper would receive funds directly from student fees (SPLC, 1996, p. 23).

In 1997, the student government at the State University of New York at Plattsburg took a very visual step in preventing funding over student newspaper content. Just after midnight on October 9, the student government attempted to stop publication of a story it did not like by halting payment to the local newspaper that printed the student newspaper. The local paper printed the campus newspaper without pay, citing the student journalists' First Amendment rights. The student newspaper's funding was reinstated on October 10 on the condition that it would become independent by fall 1998. It planned to gain its revenue through advertising and subscription fees (SPLC, 1997-98, p. 5).

In 1997, the student government at Kean University cut the student newspaper's funding and took control of the publication. The student government president said it was lack of quality that led to the cut, which followed the newspaper's publication of an editorial critical of the government's spending. The student government then began publishing its own newsletter to replace the student newspaper as it was reworked (SPLC, 1997-98, p. 5).

Funds for the student newspaper at the University of Rhode Island were temporarily frozen in 1998 when a controversial cartoon was published. A campus journalism professor and the Rhode Island Press Association donated the funds to keep the newspaper running for five days until university funding was reinstated. According to university student senate member Anna Zielinski, who was quoted in the *Providence Journal*, "Too many people have been hurt. Are we going to hide behind this freedom-of-speech crap?" (SPLC, 1998-99, p. 31).

Also in 1998, the student senate at the George Mason University introduced a resolution criticizing the student newspaper and recommended that the school's activity fees be taken away. (SPLC, 1998, p. 7) According to Stephanie Ogilvie, the newspaper's managing editor, "It's ironic that this school is named after George

Many people are unappreciative of the First Amendment. According to the most recent First Amendment Center study, 30 percent of respondents said the First Amendment goes too far.

Mason, who is responsible for the Bill of Rights, and they're threatening to take the First Amendment away from us" (SPLC, 1998, p. 7).

In 2000, student newspaper adviser Ron Johnson said that the student newspaper at Kansas State University had regularly run into funding controversies with the student government. He said: "When student government students have frustrations with the student newspaper, then, quite naturally, they're going to see student fees as their avenue to try and assert control" (SPLC, 2000, p. 20).

At the University of Missouri-Kansas City, the student newspaper, *U News*, had its funding cut in 2003 by the student government which had been critical of news coverage. The student government also funded a competing student newspaper, is proposing to cut funding to *U News* further and has proposed a resolution mandating news coverage in the *U News* (SPJ, 2004, p. 1).

The student newspaper at the University of Northern Colorado lost its funding in 2003 in what it said was retaliation for its coverage of the student government. The newspaper, *The Mirror*, filed suit in federal court in Denver. The plaintiffs' complaint stated, "With knowledge of the allegations and evidence of viewpoint discrimination, the board of trustees failed to articulate a rationale for the funding cut, failed to address accusations of viewpoint discrimination, and failed to modify or nullify the retaliatory funding cut proposed by the SRC." The plaintiffs contended that the board cut the newspaper's budget as "a warning to *The Mirror* on how to style its future content" (SPLC, July 16, 2004, p. 1). This case was settled in fall 2004 to the benefit of the newspaper, as will be addressed below.

Also in 2004, editors at the University of Buffalo student newspaper had their funding reduced by 13 percent, or \$34,000, by the student government. This

was after a move four years prior in which the undergraduate student body voted to allocate \$1 to the student newspaper as part of a subscription fee that is charged per student. The student newspaper editor, Erin Shultz, said that she believed the cuts were in retaliation for a series of articles about the spending habits of the student government (SPLC, Fall 2004, p. 6).

The newspaper has appealed the decision to the student government judiciary council and has had mixed support from school administrators. Schultz said, "We've had several administrators who had come to us with positive support, but at the same point, there isn't a hand to step in and fix it" (SPLC, Fall 2004, p. 6).

Solutions

Establish Independent Newspapers

Student newspapers that are financially independent from their universities are the ideal situation. The best scenario is a newspaper that is self-supporting through advertising revenue, because government oversight is taken out of the equation. Yet, independent papers are more the exception than the rule, according to the Student Press Law Center. This is because of the need for free space, access to the university's payroll system and other financial benefits. As College Media Advisers Executive Director Ron Spielberger said, "Independent is wonderful but it is not within the scope of the vast majority of student news operations. They just can't do it" (SPLC, Winter 2001-02, p. 26).

Institute Subscription Fees

As part of the settlement in the University of Northern Colorado case, the student newspaper, *The Mirror*, will receive \$37,500 per year from student subscription fees. This process will make it exempt from the annual funding allocation process, which is controlled by the student government that originally cut its funding. Students will pay \$3.17 in subscription fees each year to make up the newspaper's budget. Previously, the newspaper had to present an annual budget request to the student government, which then made a recommendation to the school's Board of Trustees (SPLC, October 14, 2004, p. 1). The State Univer-

sity of New York at Plattsburg also implemented a subscription plan following the student government's halt to funding over a content decision. With this method, the opportunity for government control of content is reduced.

Improve Administrative Understanding

Many people are unappreciative of the First Amendment. According to the most recent First Amendment Center study, 30 percent of respondents said the First Amendment goes too far. For this reason and for the future of journalism, it is imperative that the university community understands the power of the student press. The student association at the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh threatened to strip the student newspaper, the *Advance-Titan*, of its funding. According to the student association, the student newspaper was lacking in coverage of student issues and it lacked standards for the length of editorials. It was the chancellor, Richard Wells, who stepped in and reinstated funding. He said: "There was no way that under my watch I was going to allow the student press not to exist. .. The University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh does not, has not and will not ever tolerate any form of censorship in our community" (SPLC, Winter 2002, p. 9). In 2004, the University of Missouri-St. Louis student newspaper also had its funding temporarily reinstated by the school administration after the student government cut funding from \$38,000 to \$18,000 (Taylor, 2004, p. 1).

The support of the local newspapers and press association can help in that educational mission. When the funding for the student newspaper was cut at the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 2003, the Kansas City Press Club held a meeting and issued a statement saying that it "strongly supports the mission of the *U News* to operate without intimidation or fear of retribution from the student government, any other governing body, or employees at UMKC" (p. 1).

Conclusion

Content-based funding cuts are a form of censorship that needs to be understood and eliminated. Universities need to be proactive to prevent instances of censorship. According to the latest First Amendment Center's study, just 28 per-

cent of those polled rated America's education system as doing an "excellent" or "good" job of teaching students about the First Amendment. It is also likely that the sometimes volatile relationship between student government and the student press is a breeding ground for problems.

The only way to truly prevent the rights of student journalists from being violated is to educate the campus about the First Amendment and to create a funding system that removes newspaper funding decisions from student government control. As former College Media Advisers President Mark Witherspoon said, "The closer you can get to a real world situation, the better" (SPLC, Winter 2001-02, p. 26). With this concept in mind, it is imperative that student leaders and student journalists understand that the government should have no power to silence the media. The courts have made it clear that the First Amendment applies to student newspapers at public colleges and universities, yet more needs to be done to educate campus leaders about that fact.

References

- Antonelli v. Hammond, 308 F. Supp. 1329 (D. Mass 1970)
- Bankes, P. (2001). Censorship and restraint: Lessons learned from the catalyst. *College Student Journal*.
- First Amendment Center. (2004). State of the First Amendment 2004 survey. www.firstamendment.org.
- Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, www.thefire.org.
- Joyner v. Whiting, 447 F.2d 456 (4th Cir. 1973)
- Kanla v. Fordham, 702 F.2d 475 (4th Cir. 1983)
- Paxton, M. (2004, Winter) Unprosecuted newspaper thefts: Are they censorship? *College Media Review*, 5-9.
- Paxton, M. (2001, Summer). Freedom of expression and the college press – Part 1. *Community College Journalist*. www.ccaonline.org.
- Society of Professional Journalists, Kansas City. (Sept. 17, 2004). Freedom of the student press. <http://www.spj.org/KCpress/>
- Stanley v. Magrath, 719 F.2d 279, 9 Media L. Rep. (BNA) 2352 (8th Cir. 1983)
- State Board for Community Colleges v. Olson, 687 P.2d 429 (Colo. 1984), *appeal after remand*, 759 P.2d 829 (Colo. Ct.App. 1988)
- Student Press Law Center. (2004, Fall). After conflict, senators cut funding to paper. *College Censorship*, 6.
- Student Press Law Center. (2002, Winter). Chancellor protects campus paper's funding: Publication survives student government's threats to cut budget." *College Censorship*, 9.
- Student Press Law Center. 1998, Spring). Could George Mason be rolling in his grave? Virginia school's student newspaper attacked by school officials and student government. *College Censorship*, 7.
- Student Press Law Center. (1994). *Law of the Student Press*, 2nd edition.
- Student Press Law Center. (1996, Winter). Politics squeeze newspapers' funding: across the country editors face government pressure, harassment. *College Censorship*, 23.
- Student Press Law Center. (1997-98, Winter). Students censor students: Campus leaders use funds to attack the campus press." *College Censorship*, 5.
- Student Press Law Center. (2004, July 16). Student paper sues Colo. university board for approving cut in student-fee allocation: Editors allege decision to reduce paper's funding by 40 percent was motivated by objections to its content. www.splc.org.
- Student Press Law Center. (2004, October 14). Student paper settles lawsuit, gains control of publication board: Colo. paper will no longer submit budget requests to Board of Trustees, student government council. www.splc.org.
- Student Press Law Center. (1998-99, Winter). Student senate at University of Rhode Island freezes funds. *College Censorship*, 31.
- Student Press Law Center. (2004, July 21). SPLC condemns Kansas State's 'bizarre' interpretation of First Amendment. www.splc.org.
- Student Press Law Center. (2000, Fall). The struggle for control: What happens when SGA dreams become a student newspaper's nightmare?" *College Censorship*, 20.
- Student Press Law Center. (2001-02 Winter). Who controls the purse strings at your newspaper? *College Censorship*, 26.
- Taylor, S. (2004, June 7). The Current has funding reinstated for '04-'05. *The Current*.
- Tenhoff, G.C. (1991). Censoring the public university press: A constitutional challenge. *Southern California Law Review* 64, 511-547.



A comparative study of assessment and change practices at collegiate newspapers in the United States

Robert F. Stevenson
Lander University

Nature of the Study

While working on a college newspaper... carries a lot of weight in getting entry-level newspaper jobs," (ASNE, 2004) student journalists may well be under a false impression that they are gaining the most relevant, practical experience possible for an ever-changing industry molded by reader feedback.

There has been a tremendous increase in professional newspaper audience research since the early 1960s (Lynn & Banks, 1981). Supporters of this research say it is essential to the survival of the U.S. newspaper industry. They argue that readership research helps journalists serve readers better because it provides insight into what readers like and don't like about their newspapers. (Beam, 1995, p. 28)

Yet a review of the literature has uncovered no evidence that reader feedback research has been conducted at the collegiate student newspaper level. Furthermore, change dictated by reader feedback, inherent in the professional press, is uncommon at best at college student newspapers (Arwood, 1993). As the schism between college press and professional press widens, collegiate journalists, frequently unfamiliar with assessment practices, grow increasingly unprepared for work as professional journalists.

Statement of Purpose

The primary purpose of this comparative study was to explore collegiate newspaper assessment and change practices and compare the findings between public

Changes made to college newspapers solely due to changes in staff leadership (10%) or staff demographics (31%) imply arbitrary changes made to reflect individual preferences of student editors and their staff.

and private, large and small schools, and newspapers by publication frequency at 4-year, public institutions of higher education across the United States. This nationwide study also compared the extent of changes, if any, prompted by reader feedback and other "external" stimuli.

The Professional Press and Feedback

Over the past decade or so, the culture of newsrooms has fundamentally changed... a vastly stepped-up sensitivity to reader tastes and concerns, is one big indicator among many observed by AJR [American Journalism Review] during a cross-country tour of newsrooms. (Stepp, 2000, p. 15)

Since the inception of the information age in the late 1960s, professional newspapers have competed with other mass media outlets for the media consumer. "A newspaper that fails to maintain good relations with the public may lose credibility as a source of information, which in turn could trigger declining circulation and revenue" (Nemeth & Sanders, 1999, p. 30). Thus regular, formal methods of reader feedback have been implemented

and the results have been utilized, to various degrees, in the professional press across America for decades.

Historically the professional press strived to read the readers' pulse. In an excerpt from his speech titled "What the Press Can Do to Meet Public Expectations," H. E. Martin stated, "The essence of a good newspaper is its capacity to respond to the needs of its readers. We

must have accountability, credibility and respectability. All of these virtues depend on our relationship with the public. With public support we are safe -- without it we are doomed" (Martin, 1989, p. 70).

Sandy Rowe, editor of *The Oregonian*, considers "... failure to meet the readers' needs the biggest weakness of newspapers" (Palser, 2002, p. 69).

The Collegiate Press and Feedback

Writing with relevance and impact for the reader, but without specific knowledge of the reader, is difficult for journalists. Yet no literature currently exists on the type and frequency of feedback research conducted by the college press.

"The college press needs research even more than the professional press because of the unique campus audience and the equally unique management structure

Robert F. Stevenson is director of student publications and assistant professor of journalism at Lander University, where he was named Lander University Young Faculty Scholar for 2005. His doctorate is from the University of South Carolina. E-mail: rstevenson@lander.edu.

of the college press" (Stempel, 1979, p. 4). "Student newspapers are put out by persons with very little experience -- amateurs, some would call them" (Duscha & Fischer, 1973, p. 13). The college newspaper audience is amorphous, as well. The campus community is constantly changing as new students arrive and others leave. Young people are showing less interest in reading newspapers (Lipschultz & Hilt, 1999). These facts make the value of readership surveys for collegiate press obvious.

Professional newspaper editors want college journalists to prepare for newspaper changes responsive to the marketplace. "At a time when newspapers face declining market penetration, many editors said students should learn to think of a newspaper as a product that must be marketed to its audience" (Arwood, 1993, p. 17).

"Newspapers should use all the reader feedback tools at their disposal to stay well-tuned to the public mood so they can emphasize the most relevant mix of different kinds of news, how it is presented, its tone, and the overall impression it creates" (Johnson, 2001, p. 23).

Similar advice was offered in "Piercing the Fog of Personal Concern," published in the Poynter Institute's 20th annual *Best Newspaper Writing*. Professional journalist trainer Christopher Scanlan advised journalists to "connect with readers' fun-

"Perceived attitude" as a change agent is synonymous with an editor's hunch... confirmation of the hunch's validity will need to be confirmed through readership surveys to maximize effectiveness.

damental concerns" (Scanlan, 2000, p. 116). Furthermore, "Membership on a college student newspaper staff seeking reader feedback should lead to the establishment of habit of interaction with readers while editing a newspaper in a community" (Norton, 1978, p. 72).

Despite years of warnings from the professional press, the call for assessment has, in large part, gone unanswered. Some studies place the blame on educators. "Many professors arrogantly ignore the real concerns of news media about the way students are being prepared to enter the field" (Hachten, 1998).

The captive nature of the college student newspaper audience has also had a problematic effect on college journalists. Unlike the professional press in which displeased readers often cause loss of revenue, college newspapers often suffer no financial loss when its readers are unhappy with the newspaper. Because most college student newspapers are free, student journalists often fail to recognize

and respond to their readers' wants and needs. Professional newspaper editors are concerned this might lead to complacency.

Without reader feedback, accuracy and credibility may suffer. According to the University of Tennessee's director of student publications, "Too many staffs have preconceived notions about the types of articles preferred by their readers. And all too often, these preconceptions color their objectivity." (Lynn & Banks, 1981)

The Professional Press and Change

Change is inherent in the professional press. As times change, so do different aspects of the newspaper. "Change in American newspapers is inevitable, but it cannot be superficial. Making the paper prettier is not enough... We need to make newspapers true changing organizations which have a fundamental respect for its customer, the reader." (McGuire, 1994)

Changes made by newspapers to accommodate readers' changing wants and needs increase readership. To gauge the readers' feedback, professional newspaper editors regularly use a variety of research methods, including: surveys disseminated in their newspapers, focus groups, and outside consultants hired to collect reader feedback. "Survey results indicate that readership research at pro-

Number of Institutions in Sample by Carnegie Classification

TABLE 1

Category	Number of Institutions		Percentage Distribution	
	Population	Sample	Population	Sample
Total	1,451	250	100.0	100.0
Doctoral/Research Univ.—Extensive	151	27	10.4	10.8
Doctoral/Research Univ.—Intensive	108	22	7.4	8.8
Master's Colleges and Universities I	495	76	34.1	30.4
Master's Colleges and Universities II	108	25	7.4	10.0
Baccalaureate Colleges—Liberal Arts	228	43	15.7	17.2
Baccalaureate Colleges—General	316	51	21.8	20.4
Baccalaureate/Associates Colleges	45	6	3.1	2.4



Sampling Plan

Region	Number of Colleges	Size % by Region	Sample by Region
MS ¹ (middle states)	283	20%	49
NC ² (north central)	484	33%	83
NE ³ (north east)	125	9%	22
NW ⁴ (north west)	68	5%	12
SO ⁵ (south)	395	27%	68
WE ⁶ (west)	96	7%	17
TOTAL	1451	100%	250

1. Middle States (MS): Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania.
2. North Central (NC): Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming.
3. North East (NE): Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.
4. Northwest (NW): Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.
5. Southern (SO): Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.
6. Western (WE): California, and Hawaii.

TABLE 2

fessional newspapers is common. About 85% of newspapers surveyed reported having contracted for research with an outside consultant.” (Beam, 1985, p. 29)

Readership surveys point out the need for change on a regular basis. *The New York Times*, for example, “constantly redefined and reinvented, is very different nowadays, and at the same time much the same” (McFadden, 2001, p. 22).

The New York Times is... widely regarded as America's most influential newspaper. The Times's evolution is a complex and paradoxical story, of steadfastness and willingness to change... while evolving their ideas of who the readers are and what they want and need... and in redefining fundamental concepts of the news and how to present it. Indeed, The Times has redefined and reinvented itself many times. There is something for everyone. (McFadden, 2001, p. 24)

Of course, not all feedback advocating change results in immediate action or in any action at all. It is important to remember that every newspaper audience is made up of countless smaller communities or cultural groups. One day a group might be satisfied with the content of a particular newspaper, and the next day

they might call for increased coverage of an issue of particular importance to them. Newspaper executives understand they cannot satisfy all of their readers every day.

The Collegiate Press and Change

While it appears that college student newspapers have lagged behind professional newspapers in establishing and maintaining reader feedback systems, college newspapers do share an important characteristic with the professionals -- ongoing change. “Like a fast forward film of a flower in bloom, the campus press has passed rapidly through an antiwar phase, a drug phase, an apathetic phase, a lingering sex and pornography phase, and a revolutionary phase” (Rubin, 1976, p. 34). By the early 1970s, college student newspapers began to focus on professionalism and respectability (Rubin, 1976). A significant trend in the last few years is the growth of the conservative collegiate press.

There are, however, no hard data on change as a result of reader feedback at the collegiate press level. The literature also provides only a scant glimpse into other change catalysts. This study seeks to fill this void.

Research Questions

The specific research questions which guided the study are:

1. To what extent does reader feedback affect changes at student newspapers?
2. To what extent do events and circumstances other than reader feedback motivate those changes?
3. How does the relationship between feedback and change vary among type of institution, size of institution and category of collegiate student newspaper?

Methodology

In this study, the basic methodology was empirical and inductive. In consultation with the assistant manager of the University of South Carolina Statistics Laboratory, the sample size of 250 with an expected survey-return rate of 30% was determined to be statistically large enough to generalize to the population (M. Nichols, personal communication, July 16, 2002).

The sample was selected by dividing the country into geographic regions using categories established by the regional

institutional accrediting agencies and recommended by College Media Advisers Inc. The number of colleges surveyed by region was determined by spreading the 250 total sample size by the proportional representation of each region. To ensure validity a random selection of colleges was then generated from each region.

Thus, in middle states (MS) region there are 283 colleges, which represent 20% of the total (1,451). Twenty percent of the total sample of 250 colleges, or a sample of 49, needs to be from the MS Region (see table 1).

Eighty-five institutions (34%) responded. In terms of frequency of publication, the largest number of respondents (47%, or 40) were colleges whose newspaper is published weekly. Thirty-three percent of respondents (28) published less than weekly, and 20% of respondents (17) published more than weekly. In terms of enrollment size of responding institutions, 43% of respondents (37) were from colleges with fewer than 8,000 students. Thirty-five percent of respondents (30) represented colleges with enrollments of between 8,000 and 19,999 students. Colleges with enrollments of more than 19,000 accounted for 22% of the returned surveys (19).

College newspapers do share an important characteristic with the professionals — ongoing change.

The sampling plan is shown in table 2. PHStat Add-in for Microsoft Excel was used to generate a random selection of colleges from each region.

The survey was conducted with college newspaper advisers nationwide. Information from this source was valuable due to the nature of the position.

A pilot study was conducted to test the appropriateness, clarity and comprehensiveness of the survey instrument. Both the adviser and editor of the student newspaper at Erskine College completed the survey and commented in a positive way on the effectiveness of the instrument. In addition, four professors from the University of South Carolina and one marketing professor from Lander University concurred on the instrument's effectiveness.

An initial letter of contact was mailed April 2, 2002, to all participants at those colleges and universities identified in the

sample. One week later, the questionnaire was mailed. A follow-up letter was mailed April 23, subsequent to the questionnaire mailing, to those subjects yet to respond. Three weeks later on May 14, a second follow-up letter was sent to advisers yet to respond. This letter instructed respondents to return the

survey in the self-addressed envelope or access the researcher's web site and to complete the identical online version of the survey. Once submitted, the results were automatically e-mailed to the researcher. By July 8, the response rate from the three survey mailings totaled 20.4%.

With a goal of a 30% return rate, the researcher conducted a systematic random phone request. Between August 13 and August 16, 2002, student newspaper advisers from every fourth college in the sample were called. Due to anonymous responses it was not possible to determine the identity of the non-respondents. The advisers were reminded about the survey and instructed to complete either the printed copy of the questionnaire or the electronic online version. Of the 250 advisers surveyed, 85 responded (34% of the sample). At the conclusion of the survey-collecting phase, which lasted

Changes Due to Reader Feedback

TABLE 3

37 Additions of features ¹	10 New positions ⁴
12 Reductions of features ²	6 New drop spots
12 Layout changes ³	7 Miscellaneous ⁵

1. These changes included additions of the following: sports columns (5), opinions (3), in-depth news (4), Q&A columns (2), student activity news (4), puzzles (2), expanded coverage area (4), events calendars (2), concert calendars (4), Greek sections (2), science features (3), health column (1) and alternative lifestyles (1).
2. These changes included reduction of the following: previews (1), Greeks column (1), movie reviews (1), Student Government Association column (1) and length of features (4).
3. These changes included: improvements to layout (4), additions of pages (3), additions of infographics (3) and more color (2).
4. New positions added due to reader feedback: copy editors (6), managing editor (1), photo adviser (1) and circulation managers (2).
5. Miscellaneous changes included: improved timeliness in reporting (3), one new policy for handling the school mascot (1), adjustments to the advertising rates (2) and call to distribute newspapers free of charge (1).



Frequency of Change Agents at College Newspapers

Reader feedback	27%	Staff leadership	7%
Staff composition	22%	Perceived attitude	7%
Observed trends	11%	Budget	6%
Technology	9%	Unsolicited advice	2%
Convention	8%	Other	1%

TABLE 4

more than four months and included three mailings, a phone request and both a print and electronic survey format, the sample size produced a confidence level of 95% and margin of error of 10%. While the margin of error was higher than desirable, the Lander University professor and USC professors and statistician, consulted earlier in the methodology phase, concurred it was satisfactory for this exploratory study.

The survey data were analyzed using Chi Square analysis on the resulting data. A level of statistical significance was set at .05.

Overall Feedback Results

Sixty-four percent of respondents did not have a formal system for collecting reader feedback. Of these, only 10 respondents answered the open-ended question, "Why not?" Six respondents indicated a lack of time to be proactive. Four of the 10 indicated interest in initiating formal reader feedback collection eventually. Four reported satisfaction with the reader feedback they received informally, such as letters to the editor, messages on the answering machine, e-mails, and general talk around the campus.

Of the colleges that have a formal methodology for collecting reader feedback (36%), three-fourths publish weekly or more often. This finding indicates college newspapers published more often operate more like the professional press than college newspapers published less often.

Results by Size of Institution

This study found in general that the greater a college's enrollment, the greater the frequency of publication of its student newspaper. For example, most of the smaller schools with enrollments under 8,000 (36) reported their student newspapers published less than weekly. No student newspapers at schools under 8,000 enrollment were published more than weekly. For colleges with enrollments between 8,000 and 19,000 (29), most of the student newspapers were published weekly or more often. For larger colleges with enrollments of 20,000 or greater (18), all of the respondents' student newspapers published weekly or more often.

Colleges with higher enrollments tend to have newspapers with larger staffs, enabling them to publish more often. The larger enrollment provides a larger "captive audience" for advertisers interested in reaching the largest possible target audience. This finding means more revenue for the student newspaper because newspapers with higher circulation are able to charge higher advertising rates

than colleges with lower circulation. It can be inferred, therefore, that colleges with higher enrollments have newspapers with more money to operate, resulting in more computers, cutting-edge technology, staff stipends. More resources contribute to their ability to publish more often than college newspapers with fewer resources.

This study found colleges with higher enrollment use broadsheet format most often (39%, or 11). Therefore, college newspapers at big schools publish weekly or more often, and are more typical of the professional press than smaller colleges that publish less often.

Results by Frequency of Publication

In terms of sources of income, college newspapers published more frequently received most of their funding from advertising fees. College newspapers published less than weekly receive most of their money from student activity fees. This finding implies that college newspapers published more often earn more money and are less dependent on activity fees.

This finding also suggests that college newspapers published at least weekly behave more like the professional press, with dependence on advertising for survival.

Similarly, this study found most college newspapers that average less than 10 pages per issue (67%, or 20) publish less than weekly. Most college newspapers that average 12 to 18 pages per issue (58%, or 19) publish at least weekly. Most

Changes are made to college newspapers as a result of both external catalysts and reader feedback. Student newspapers made 227 changes due to external catalysts and 84 changes due to feedback

college newspapers that average 20 pages or more per issue (21) publish weekly or more often.

Change due to Feedback Results

In terms of changes made to college student newspapers resulting from reader feedback (see table 3), most of the changes (81%) were made by college newspapers published weekly or more often. This finding supports the implication that college newspapers published weekly or more often behave more like their professional counterparts than college newspapers published less frequently.

Of college student newspapers that collect reader feedback, almost half reported the reader feedback data was very useful. Sixty-two percent of the college newspapers represented colleges with enrollments over 8,000 students, and 63% of the college newspapers were printed at least weekly. These college newspapers, that published more frequently and that are from colleges with the highest enrollments, conducted reader feedback research more frequently. This finding suggests that those student newspapers that conduct reader feedback research most often find the data to be most useful.

In general, the finding that student newspapers that conduct such research the most find the feedback data to be the most useful is not surprising. This is

Of the colleges that have a formal methodology for collecting reader feedback (36%), three-fourths publish weekly or more often.

consistent with the finding that colleges with larger enrollments, with newspapers published more frequently, behaved more like the professional press than newspapers published less than weekly at smaller campuses.

Change due to External Catalysts Results

Changes made to college newspapers due to external catalysts follow the same trend as changes made due to reader feedback. Newspapers with the fewest changes due to external catalysts were college newspapers which publish least often.

Changes in staff composition were the most popular external catalyst for change (see table 4).

Changes made to college student newspapers due to external factors may or may not be effective in meeting the readers' wants and needs. To gauge the level of effectiveness, the impact of these changes must be assessed to determine relevance to the readers.

Changes made to college newspapers solely due to changes in staff leadership (10%) or staff demographics (31%) im-

ply arbitrary changes made to reflect individual preferences of student editors and their staff.

The effectiveness of changes made due to observed trends in other newspapers depends on the similarities in enrollment size, type of college and frequency

of publication of newspapers observed. Similarities in newspapers may increase the relevance of data generated by observed trends. Nevertheless, each campus community is unique, and the only way to confirm relevance is to survey readers.

"Perceived attitude" as a change agent is synonymous with an editor's hunch. The significance of the factors leading to this hunch notwithstanding, perceived attitude is still just a hunch, and confirmation of the hunch's validity will need to be confirmed through readership surveys to maximize effectiveness.

Sometimes changes are made to college newspapers due to increases or decreases in budgets or because of improvements in technology. Some of these changes have a clear impact on the readers such as employing new software to create infographics, using digital photography to increase the quality and timeliness of photos used, or reducing the number of pages published to offset rising newsprint costs. Nevertheless, while technology can be used to increase the efficiency of a newsroom, and while budgets can

Changes (and Corresponding Frequency) due to External Catalysts

TABLE 5

Improved coverage	(21%)	Reduction of various features	(10%)
Increased use of graphics	(14%)	Increased/improved use of photos	(8%)
Improved layout and design	(13%)	Frequency change	(7%)
Addition of sections	(12%)	Miscellaneous	(4%).
Improved content	(11%)		



create or hinder opportunities for growth, strategies for newspaper improvements should incorporate the wants and needs of the readers. Without reader feedback data, money, time and effort may be in vain because changes made solely in response to budget and technology may be superfluous and erroneous without knowledge of reader preferences.

Unsolicited advice may be valid; however, it may not be representative of a significant portion of the readership. Changes made to a student newspaper due to unsolicited advice may be productive or counterproductive. Such advice is useful in forming research questions to generate important feedback such as the extent of a problem or the pervasiveness of a certain opinion.

Conventions are more useful than other external change agents because they often offer critical analyses of college newspapers. Furthermore, by bringing the professional press and collegiate journalist together, they create awareness often related to preparing collegiate journalists for careers in the professional press.

Conclusion

Changes are made to college newspapers as a result of both external catalysts and reader feedback. Student newspapers made 227 changes due to external catalysts and 84 changes due to feedback. Feedback was the most frequent single catalyst for change despite the fact that

Changes in staff composition were the most popular external catalyst for change.

only 36% of college newspapers formally collected reader feedback (see table 5).

The findings of this study support the concept that there is a level of enrollment and publication frequency in which college newspapers begin to operate more like professional newspapers. At this level, the college newspaper collects and uses reader feedback to tailor the newspaper package (layout, design, news, opinions, photos, coverage areas, etc.) to its readers.

This study concludes that, in general, student journalists at institutions with less than 8,000 students, publishing less frequently than weekly, are not as likely to have experience formally collecting reader feedback.

Recommendations

It is the recommendation of this researcher that all relevant resources be utilized to convey the example of the professional press regarding the importance of collecting feedback and subsequent change. It is especially important to emphasize this assessment to newspapers published less often than weekly serving colleges with fewer than 8,000

students. Educators, college press advisers, professional journalism associations, college media advisory boards, collegiate workshops, and professional conferences and conventions should all be used to create awareness regarding the importance of reader feedback among collegiate and high school publications.

Further research could make a distinction between "profit" driven press and "subsidized" press with a focus on their guiding mission statements, i.e. to provide co-curricular experience, to make a profit or to accomplish both. Additional studies might also explore the role accreditation plays in guiding assessment practices at college newspapers.

References

- Arwood, J. (1993, August). What Editors and Educators say about News-Editorial Education: Toward a Curriculum that responds to change. *Change*.
- American Society of Newspaper Editors. (2004, July 23) A Career in Newspapers.
- Barnhurst, K. (1992, September). Legibility Science and the Visual Design of Newspapers. *Art Science and Visual Literacy*.
- Beam, R. A. (1995, Spring). How newspapers use readership research. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 16.
- Duscha, J. & Fischer, T. C. (1973, April). *The Campus Press*. A publication of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.
- Hachten, W.A. (1998). *The Troubles of Journalism*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Johnson, P. (2001, November 9). What Readers Want. *Report from the Readership Institute, Part 2*, Poynter.org.

Lipschultz, J. H. and Hilt, M. L. (1999). Predicting Newspaper Readership on the Campus Community, *Psychological Reports* 84: 1051.

Lynn, J. R. & Banks, M. J. (1981). How well does the college newspaper staff know its audience. *College Press Review*, 20 (3): 6 - 9.

Martin, H. E. (1989). What the Press Can Do to Meet Public Expectations. Excerpt from Speech, Mass Media in an Urban Setting Conference, Memphis, Tennessee.

Martin, J. (2003, June 29). Conservative college papers rising in numbers. Trends in College Media, Associated Collegiate Press.

McGuire, T. (1994, Fall) Change, respect and great journalism. *Nieman Reports* 48: 72.

McFadden, R.D. (2001, November 14). 150 and Counting: The Story So Far, *The New York Times*, One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary section.

Nemeth, Sanders. (1999, Winter) Ombudsmen's interaction with public. *Newspaper Research Journal* 20.

Norton, W. Jr. (1978, April). Student newspaper editors learn values of feedback. *Journalism Educator*.

Palser, B. (2002, January 24) What Do Newspapers Need To Prove? *Poynter.org Centerpiece*.

Rubin, D. (1976, April). The Campus Press: Slouching Toward Respectability. *Change*.

Scanlan, R. (2000, June). Piercing the Fog of Personal Concern. *Best Newspaper Writing*. The Poynter Institute.

Stempel, G.H. (1979, Summer). Research Needs of the College Press, *College Press Review* 18: 4 - 6.

Stepp, C.S. (2002, July) *Reader Friendly*. American Journalism Review, University of Maryland 22: 22.

White, D. (2001, October 5) On the Homefront, Covering the Attack, *Poynter.org*.

college media REVIEW



College Media Review is the flagship journal of College Media Advisers, Inc. It is the leading academic journal on advising collegiate media, both print and electronic. It is an all-encompassing journal that serves collegiate media advisers.

- It educates and informs advisers on how to teach, advise and produce collegiate media.
- Its refereed section quantifies trends, documents theories, identifies characteristics and disseminates research and information for and about collegiate media and advising.
- Its non-refereed section offers essential information on all facets of collegiate media advising - teaching, training, recruiting, diversifying, motivating and challenging students to media excellence.

GUIDELINES

- Our audience is primarily faculty and staff engaged in college media advising. Content is tightly focused to the concerns of college media; articles on general media or academic topics and articles addressing what students need to know are not accepted.
- Length limit is 5,000 words.
- Style: Text follows AP style. Use single space after periods. For citations, use parenthetical references in text to author, year and page number. Include at the end of the article a complete reference in the reference list, in alphabetical order by author's name and following APA style.
- Art: Black-and-white photography or graphics may be submitted in digital format. Please provide credit/copyright information for all art submitted.

Non-refereed section:

- College Media Review will consider articles for publication; a query is suggested. CMR prints first-time material, unless the material has been specifically requested from another publication.
- CMR seeks authoritative articles rather than anecdotal.
- For all articles for which it is appropriate, a "service journalism" approach is encouraged.
- CMR prefers articles written in third person; exceptions may be made under extenuating circumstances.
- Articles must be submitted electronically, in either Microsoft Word or basic text format. E-mail as an attachment to pparish@lsu.edu. Include a 60-word biography that includes current position, media advised, and key prior experience.

Refereed manuscripts:

- Submit to Associate Editor Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver two copies of each manuscript, which should be typed and double-spaced and submitted both in hard copy and on disk. Refereed articles that are rejected may be resubmitted for the non-refereed section of CMR and will be considered if appropriate.
- Contributing writers will be notified within 90 days in most cases. Once an article is published, the author will receive two complimentary copies of that issue by first class mail, prior to regular second-class mailings. College Media Review will gladly comply with any requests for verification letters confirming acceptance of an article.

ADV