



ALLAN HANCOCK COLLEGE STUDENT NEWSPAPER POLICY

A college newspaper is a vehicle for students to receive education and experience in mass communications. A college newspaper serves the entire college community by reporting the news, including college events and activities, providing a forum for comment and criticism, and encouraging free expression as guaranteed in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

The First Amendment and the public's right to know guarantees the right to a free press at Allan Hancock College. The advisor, editor, and newspaper staff are fully responsible for generating the content of the paper. All others should recognize the right of the advisor, editor, and newspaper staff to operate a free and responsible press.

The Allan Hancock Joint Community College District Board of Trustees recognizes that a college newspaper is a valuable aid in establishing and maintaining an atmosphere of free and responsible discussion. The college newspaper shall exercise editorial freedom in order to maintain its integrity as a vehicle for free inquiry and free expression in the college community.

At the same time, the editorial freedom of the college newspaper shall entail corollary responsibilities as detailed in these policies; the code of ethics of the Society of Professional Journalists, SOJ, as adopted by the Society at its 1973 convention; and the Journalism Association of Community Colleges Canons of Journalism. These canons hold that "Under appropriate state and federal court decisions, all contents of college student publications are to be free of prior restraint by virtue of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution."

The responsibilities of the instructors and advisors of the college newspaper will be to counsel and instruct the students in the professional standards of journalism and English and the provisions of the Allan Hancock College Canons of Journalism.

PROCEDURES FOR ALLAN HANCOCK COLLEGE CANONS OF JOURNALISM

I. CANONS

A. FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

In an organized society based upon the precepts of democracy, freedom of the press should be guarded as an inalienable right of the people. It becomes, therefore, the inherent right and duty of the press to discuss any issue which is not explicitly forbidden by law, including the wisdom of any law or statute, in order that the people may freely exercise their right to know the truth. To perform this duty, however, a free press must also be a responsible press, disciplined by the principle of truth and fair, accurate presentation.

B. INDEPENDENCE

Public welfare will be the only restriction on the right of this newspaper to attract and hold readers.

The Oracle is free from all obligations save those vital to community interests. The Hancock community consists of the student body, faculty, classified staff and administration.

C. RESPONSIBILITY/ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Objectivity

News reports will be free from opinion of personal bias and all expressions of opinion will be distinguished as such. There will be no excuse for lack of thoroughness or accuracy within this newspaper's control.

Headlines will be fully warranted by the contents of the articles they present.

Editorials which violate the principles of The Oracle damage the spirit of journalism. Such material will not be published until the discrepancy is corrected. The Oracle staff members writing editorials on complex or controversial issues are expected to research the "pros and cons" of the issue thoroughly in preparation for writing any such editorial.

Promotion of private interests is contrary to honest journalism and is not compatible with The Oracle's standards. Any Oracle staff member who uses his/her power for personal reason and self aggrandizement violates a high trust with the general public to perform with intelligence, objectivity, accuracy and fairness.

2. Fair Play

This newspaper will not publish information impugning reputation or moral character until the affected party has had the opportunity to be fully heard.

The right to privacy will not be invaded without warrant of a public right to know (as distinguished from mere curiosity).

Any mistake of fact will receive a prompt and complete correction.

3. Decency

In the interest of good journalism and good faith with the reader, The Oracle at all times is constrained to be truthful. The process of communicating truth to the general public is not to be confused with sensationalism or pandering to morbid curiosity with published details of crime and vice. In the same context, obscenity (for obscenity's sake) will not be tolerated.

II PROCEDURES

A. READER CONTRIBUTIONS

To maintain communication between all segments of the academic community, guest articles, expressions of opinion, and letters to the editor will be actively solicited and published to the extent that space allows.

The letters to the editor column is always open to reasonable expression of opinion in good taste. Brief, legible letters will receive preference. All letters to the editor will be subject to condensation and editing. All letters to the editor must be signed and writers must include an address, telephone number and major. Letters from students and faculty at Allan Hancock College will be given preference.

Art and literary contributions will be selected for content and should be consistent with The Oracle's principles.

B. ADVERTISING

Advertising appearing in The Oracle is solely for informational purposes and does not represent an endorsement by the Hancock community.

The Oracle is bound by the same legal responsibilities imposed on commercial newspapers with regard to advertising. Selling advertising space is an important source of income. Commercial advertising will be printed, but items and/or services that are illegal because of age restrictions will not be advertised. Advertising copy must meet the same standards of good taste as the rest of the newspaper. Since commercial advertising is published in The Oracle, ads of a political or religious nature may not be legally prohibited. All political advertising must be paid for in advance of its publication.

C. CONTENT

The Oracle is the voice of the students whose opinions, issues, discussion and articles when published are not to be construed as those representing the publication's advisor, college administration, or the college board of trustees. Accordingly, the responsibility for the contents of The Oracle shall be that of the student staff and not the administration or college district.

D. JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Advisor

With full realization that the many students associated with community college journalism lack the perspective of experience, expert assistance from qualified faculty advisors is essential. The responsibility of instructor and advisors of college newspapers will be to counsel and instruct the student staff in the professional standards of journalism and English and the provisions of the Allan Hancock Joint Community College District's newspaper policy.

The newspaper advisor should be a teacher who should explain, demonstrate, and give competent advice. The advisor should instill a determination to make the publication as professional as possible. The advisor must be a guide rather than a censor.

Journalism faculty members have the obligation to instruct and advise their students to ensure the publication meets the highest standards of responsible journalism. Student journalists will make mistakes, but not knowingly, not without benefitting from those mistakes and not without full realization that they are responsible for those mistakes. The student publication is properly a learning experience. This is especially true when publishing classroom work.

2. Editor

The responsibilities of the Editor of The Oracle are as follows:

The Editor is responsible for the overall content of the newspaper. The Editor is in charge of the newspaper's office and should make sure that it runs smoothly.

The Editor will hold regular meetings with the rest of the newspaper staff to discuss progress on the next issue of the newspaper. The Editor will hold regular meetings with the Advertising Manager to discuss ad sales.

The Editor should attempt to solve any problems that arise at the newspaper according to rules set forth by the Publisher's Board. The Editor will make sure that deadlines are met by the staff.

The Editor should be available in the newspaper office to meet with staff members and discuss any problems that might arise.

3. The Advertising Manager

The Advertising Manager is responsible for soliciting advertising and coordinating the efforts of others who sell both classified and display space in The Oracle.

The Advertising Manager is responsible for assigning advertising space on The Oracle's master dummy pages prior to publication.

The Oracle's Advertising Manager is also responsible for the distribution by mail of tearsheets and other proof of publication as many be required by clients. Notices of past due receipts, logging all bills paid and issuance of receipts for purchase of advertising are also part of the job.

The Advertising Manager will oversee distribution of the newspaper including the mailing of individual issues to the newspaper's list of subscribers.