

**BP 4500 STUDENT NEWS MEDIA**

**Reference:**

Education Code Section 66301

The District supports the availability of a comprehensive writing experience for its students. An integral part of this experience shall be the establishment of a Board of Publications which shall function as a review board for all student produced publications. The detailed functions of the Board of Publications shall be as outlined in the related administrative procedure.

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**Date Adopted:** March 17, 2009 (Replaces RCCD Policy 6000)

**Date Revised:** December 14, 2021

**Formerly:** 4600

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**Institutional Advancement &  
Economic Development**

**AP 4500 STUDENT NEWS MEDIA**

**Reference:**

Education Code Section 66301

**Philosophy**

College news media are any news/feature publications issued under the name of the college, funded by the District, and produced by students as an integral part of instruction in areas such as English, Communications, Applied Digital Media, and Journalism. It may include, but is not limited to, student newspaper reporting, broadcast news journalism, and internet news journalism. The term "editorial" refers to all content other than advertising.

College news media, as public forum student publications related to a department and/or program's curriculum, shall provide vehicles for student expression of news and opinion and train students for careers in mass communication. College news media serve the 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 and state law.

College news media are valuable aids in establishing and maintaining an atmosphere of free and responsible discussion. College news media shall exercise editorial freedom in order to maintain their integrity as vehicles for free inquiry and free expression in the college community. At the same time, the editorial freedom of college news media shall entail corollary responsibilities.

College newspaper(s) or other news media are published to provide forums for student expression of news and opinion and as learning experiences. The editorial and advertising materials published in each news medium, including any opinions expressed, are the responsibility of the student staff. An editorial board should be formed for the news media involved. Under appropriate state and federal court decisions, these materials are free from prior restraint by virtue of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and state law. These procedures are adopted so as to encourage a responsible exercise of such freedom.

Whenever the term "college newspaper" appears in this document it is intended to refer to the college newspaper published on each campus of the District.

## **Journalism Grievance Procedures**

Definition of a Grievance – A grievance is a complaint that alleges facts which, if true, would demonstrate a violation of the grievant's right to free inquiry, free speech, or fair treatment; contains allegations that appear to be substantially credible; and is not frivolous.

Informal Grievance Proceedings – Describe a procedure that includes a written complaint to those with direct responsibility for the program and their responsibilities to respond in a timely manner.

Formal Grievance Proceedings – More formal grievance procedures may include a grievance hearing committee and appeal to the Chancellor or designee in a timely fashion. The procedures should include how grievance hearings should be conducted, access to and maintenance of related records, and the responsibility of the authorities to respond to the grievance in a timely fashion.

## **BOARD OF PUBLICATIONS**

### **I. Organization**

- A. The membership of the Board of Publications shall be as follows:
  - 1. Advisor of college Newspaper
  - 2. Chair of department related to college newspaper (e.g. English, Communications, etc.)
  - 3. Dean of Instruction or designee
  - 4. Executive Director, External Relations and Strategic Communications and Relations, or designee
  - 5. Vice President/Dean, Student Services, or designee
  - 6. Student Editor of college newspaper
  - 7. Student member of college newspaper, selected by Student Editor of college newspaper
  - 8. Associated Student Vice President
  - 9. Student-at-large, selected by Associated Student Executive Cabinet
  
- B. The Vice President/Dean of Student Services or designee serves as the chairman of the Board of Publications. The Board of Publications will meet only when there has been a substantially credible allegation of a violation of Board Policy or Administrative Procedure 4500, or for grievances that appear to be substantially credible filed against the college newspaper and the complaint has not been resolved after attempting to discuss the complaint with the student newspaper editor-in- chief.

### **II. Functions**

- A. The Board of Publications shall act as a review board for substantially credible allegations of violations of Board Policy 4500 and Administrative

Procedure 4500, and for substantially credible grievances filed against college newspapers.

- B. The Board shall mediate and/or settle disputes arising from conflicting interpretations of existing policies, while recognizing and protecting the First Amendment rights and state rights of student journalists. Should the Board of Publications find itself unable to resolve disagreements, these matters shall be referred to the Vice President of Student Services and, where class related publications are involved, to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.
- C. Publications reviewed by the Board are the student newspapers at each campus within the District.
- D. Unresolved grievances will be channeled through the Board of Publications.

### III. **College Newspaper Editorial Regulations**

- A. The college newspaper is published under the sponsorship of the Riverside Community College Board of Trustees. The functions of the paper are:
  - 1. To provide journalism students with instruction and practical experience in applying skills necessary for publishing a newspaper.
  - 2. To provide students, faculty and administrators with information about the college and its activities, to inform readers about issues of importance to them (whether on-campus or off-campus), to provide opportunities for student journalists to comment on those issues and to provide a forum for reader discussion and opinion.
- B. The obligations of the college newspaper staff are to report as accurately, objectively, and fairly as possible, considering the stress of deadlines.
- C. Realizing that the college newspaper is a student newspaper and a vital means of communication for the District and colleges, the staff will give greater emphasis to activities and issues originating within the colleges, although this will not preclude printing news and opinions about off-campus activities and issues that will affect the students and/or the colleges.
- D. At no time will the college newspaper print matter that is libelous or obscene or that contains ethnic, religious or racial slurs.
- E. College newspaper editorials are the opinions of the editorial board, which is composed of student. All other editorial page material, such as columns and commentaries, is the opinion of the individual writer, not of the college newspaper.

- F. The college newspaper is entitled to the rights accorded the press in a free society, and therefore has the right to criticize and point out shortcomings in any phase of school life or in any situation which affects students or the college. However, freedom without responsibility is merely license; therefore, the newspaper staff is encouraged to consider the following responsibilities:
1. Controversial editorials, columns and commentaries shall be based on the issues. Although individuals and organizations may be named, comment should focus on their activities, policies and stated opinions regarding the issue under discussion.
  2. The student newspaper editor is encouraged to consider providing to any individual or group criticized in the college newspaper's editorials or columns space for a reply. To be considered for publication, replies must reach the college newspaper's editorial board by no later than eight (8) days prior to publication of the following issue. The student newspaper editor reserves the First Amendment right to reject any reply the same as any other story in the student newspaper.
  3. Statements made "in public" shall be defined as those made in any meeting or gathering officially sanctioned by the college and open to the student, faculty or public. When such statements contain material unfavorable to any individual or group, the quoting or paraphrasing of the statements in the news columns of the college newspaper shall be construed as reporting the news, not as attacks emanating from the college newspaper. The same shall apply to interviews. However, the staff writer covering the story is encouraged to give the criticized or accused person or group the opportunity to reply in the same story. Failure to reply shall not be grounds for delaying publication.
- G. The college newspaper editorials shall not endorse any political candidates. However, columnists will be free to take any position on any candidate, party or issue because columns are only the opinions of the individual writers.
- H. Letters to the editor, guest columns and guest editorials are encouraged. However, columns and editorials from non-staff writers must meet the same standards required of student journalists. Letters to the editor need not meet journalistic standards, but may be edited to correct mechanical errors or to fit available space. When space is limited, letters dealing with on-campus issues will be given first priority. Letters must be signed and will be printed bearing the complete name of the writer.

#### IV. **Advertising Regulations**

- A. The following rules are provided as a guide for acceptance in college newspapers. In cases where the policy does not provide clear guidance, the advertising manager and faculty adviser can make the ad hoc decisions as to whether a timely ad is acceptable. These decisions will be reviewed by the Publications Board in terms of future policy making.
- B. The college newspaper has the right to refuse any ad.
- C. Advertising decision criteria include:
  - 1. The probable effect of the product on the health, safety and well-being of the college community.
  - 2. College District policies.
  - 3. Community standards of taste and decency as reflected in the content of local daily newspapers with general distribution (Riverside Press-Enterprise, etc.)
- D. The college newspaper will not accept ads for:
  - 1. Abortion/contraception information from any organization other than a recognized, non-profit group.
  - 2. Sexual liaisons.
  - 3. The promotion of hard liquor consumption, although beer and wine will be accepted.
  - 4. X-rated movies from establishments which predominantly show x-rated movies.
  - 5. Term paper research.
  - 6. Tobacco.
  - 7. Religious teachings, scriptural citations, faith healing, prayers.
- V. **Special Considerations:**
  - 1. Political advertising must be paid for in advance and will be limited to 15 column inches per subject per issue. This limitation applies to both candidates and propositions.
  - 2. In areas of employment and quasi-medical services, the advertising manager will try to make sure these are legitimate.

**Office of Responsibility:** Vice Chancellor, Institutional Advancement & Economic Development

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