

CAMPUS STUDENT PUBLICATIONS BOARDS

Constitution

I. Mission

The Campus Student Publications Boards, hereafter referred to as the “Publications Boards,” shall be the governing bodies which directly oversee the student publications on each campus, including the student newspapers, the literary magazines and any other publications approved by the Board of Directors of the Suffolk Community College Association, Inc. The role of the Publications Boards are to (1) promote excellence in student publications, (2) assist the publications in their efforts to meet the needs of the campus community, (3) provide opportunities for personal and professional growth and development for students, (4) serve as a grievance/appeals board, (5) approve editors-in-chief, and (6) recommend policies and procedures to the College Student Publications Board.

This document defines the scope and duties of the Publications Boards and has been developed to assist the student publications staff and advisors in effectively conducting business and overall operations.

II. Authority

The Publications Boards are established by the Board of Directors of the Suffolk Community College Association, Inc. Responsibility for the operation of the student newspapers and the literary magazines is delegated to the College Student Publications Board and the Campus Student Publications Boards from the Board of Directors. The Campus Student Publications Boards are charged with the general supervision and operation of the student publications. The College Student Publications Board is charged with the policy making authority for student publications, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors.

III. Purpose of Student Publications

Collectively, student publications provide students with learning opportunities through the exploration and expression of issues and ideas. The publications provide the campus community with a student perspective of events, issues and activities at the campus, the college, the local community and the nation. In addition, the publications provide students with unique opportunities for personal and professional growth and development. Students are encouraged to practice and apply skills learned in the classroom while taking responsibility for the management of the publication program. Students learn to work cooperatively toward a common goal in service to the campus community.

IV. Statement of Policy: Freedom of Speech and Corollary Responsibilities

It is undeniable that students are protected in their exercise of freedom of expression by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Accordingly, college officials are responsible for ensuring freedom of expression for all students.

It is the policy of the Board of Directors of the Suffolk Community College Association, Inc. that the student newspapers and the literary magazines, the official Association-sponsored student publications of the College, have been established as forums for student expression and as voices in the uninhibited, robust, free and open discussion of issues. Each publication should provide a full opportunity for students to inquire, question and exchange ideas. Content should reflect all areas of student interest, including topics about which there may be dissent or controversy.

It is the policy of the Board of Directors of the Suffolk Community College Association, Inc. that student journalists, as editors, shall have the right to determine the content of official student publications. The student publications are free of censorship and advance approval of copy. Editors and managers are free to develop their own editorial policies and news coverage or content, within the bounds of approved codes of ethics. Accordingly, these guidelines and policies relate only to establishing grounds for disciplinary actions subsequent to publication.

Along with the above freedoms come responsibilities. All publications are expected to adhere to journalistic standards, to exercise good judgment and to be accurate, fair, truthful, and impartial in their reporting. Student publications are expected to conform to journalistic and literary standards and all approved codes of ethics.

V. Board Composition and Terms of Membership

The Publications Boards shall be chaired by the Director of Student Activities of each campus, who shall serve as a non-voting member of the Board.

The voting membership shall be:

one representative appointed by the Executive Dean of the campus (two-year term);

one faculty member appointed by the faculty governance body (one-year term);

one faculty member appointed by the Dean of Faculty (two-year term);

one academic administrator appointed by the Dean of Faculty (one-year term);

one Student Affairs representative appointed by the Dean/Associate Dean of Student Services (two-year term);

one student appointed by the Student Government, or the Office of Campus Activities if no student government is functioning (one-year term);

the current faculty/staff advisor from each member publication; and the current editor-in chief from each member publication.

VI. Relationship of Board to Administration

The Publications Boards are the duly appointed and designated representative of the administration in all matters pertaining to its responsibilities. The Publications Boards shall report all actions and recommendations to the Dean/Associate Dean of Student Services of the campus as the designated contact for all appropriate matters.

VII. Responsibilities of the Board¹

The functions of the Publications Boards are:

- a. to encourage member organizations to reflect the highest standards of quality;
- b. to review and approve annual budget proposals prepared by the student publications for submission to the Association Advisory Councils;
- c. to review member publication's policies and procedures in order to promote consistency with college policies and procedures and approved ethical standards and guidelines;
- d. to approve editors-in-chief upon recommendation by the publication's adviser;
- e. to safeguard editorial freedom by advising students of their rights and freedoms as well as their corollary responsibilities;
- f. to consider proposals for any new student media organizations and to make recommendations to the Dean/Associate Dean of Student Services as to the feasibility and/or advisability of approval of such charters;
- g. to act as a grievance and/or appeals board to hear any internal or external disputes and make recommendations to resolve issues to the Dean/Associate Dean of Student Services. Any appeal of the Dean/Associate Dean's decisions will be made to the College Student Publications Board. Recommendations from the College Student Publications Board will be forwarded to the appropriate campus Executive Dean, whose decision is final;
- h. to make recommendations to College Student Publications Board as appropriate and necessary;
- i. to encourage student publications to be responsive to all segments of the college community without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation or disability;
- j. to review the constitutions for student publications, and any proposed revisions, in order to make recommendations regarding adoption or amendment to the Dean of Student Services.

¹ Note that in the event of a conflict of interest, members shall recuse themselves from the Board's deliberations and actions.

VIII. Vacancies and Removal of Board Members

The Publications Boards may recommend that a member be removed for just cause by a majority vote. Recommendations for removal shall be forwarded to the appropriate individual or organization responsible for the initial appointment. Should a vacancy occur due to resignation or other circumstances, the chair shall notify the appropriate individual and/or organization to request a replacement.

IX. Meetings

The Publications Boards shall meet as often as necessary, with a minimum of one meeting each semester (i.e., fall and spring). Meetings shall be called by the Director of Student Activities as deemed necessary. Board members can make a request to the Director of Student Activities that a meeting be called to address specific issues and concerns. A quorum shall consist of more than 50% of the voting membership. Motions need a simple majority of those present to pass.

X. Relationship of Advisor to Board and Publication

Advisors to member publications shall be appointed by the Dean/Associate Dean of Student_Services after consulting with the Director of Student Activities. The Director shall have the responsibility for consulting with campus student editors and advisors to student publications, among others, in order to receive input on advisor selection prior to making a recommendation to the Dean/Associate Dean. The Director of Student Activities and/or the Publications Boards can recommend removal of an advisor to the Dean/Associate Dean for just cause.

Advisors serve as voting members of the Publications Boards and share the responsibility for encouraging the production of high-quality publications that provide students with opportunities for growth and development.

The advisor should not be identified with the content of the individual student publication. An advisor has the responsibility to help students make considered judgments on the content of the publication, especially in cases which could concern personal reputation, unproved rumor or good taste. The advisor has fulfilled his/her role by the application of moral persuasion. Sole responsibility for the content of the publication rests with the editor and student contributors; however, advisors do have a responsibility to educate and train editors regarding ethical behavior and proper journalistic and literary standards.

XI. Removal of Editor-in-Chief

The publication's advisor shall have the authority to remove an editor-in-chief for just cause. This includes, but is not limited to, failure to fulfill the duties of the position, violation of approved codes of ethics and/or college policies, or gross negligence in the performance of his/her responsibilities. Appeals of removal from office shall be made to the Campus Publications Board, which shall make a recommendation to the Dean/Associate Dean of Student_Services. The decision of the Dean/Associate Dean is final.

XII. Removal of Advisor

The Dean/Associate Dean of Student Services shall have the authority to remove an advisor for just cause. This includes, but is not limited to, failure to fulfill the duties of the position, violation of approved codes of ethics, professional standards, or college policies, misuse of funds, or gross negligence in the performance of his/her responsibilities as advisor. Appeals of removal from office shall be made to the College Student Publications Board, which shall make a recommendation to the campus Executive Dean. The decision of the Executive Dean shall be final.

XIII. Funding of Student Publications

Student publications are funded by the College Fee, which is allocated by the Association Advisory Council on each campus and approved by the Association's Board of Directors.

XIV. Amendments

Campus Student Publications Boards may propose revisions to this document to the College Student Publications Board. Provisions of this document may be amended by two-thirds vote of the membership of the College Student Publications Board. Such amendments shall be effective upon approval of the Board of Directors of the Suffolk Community College Association, Inc.