



Student Publications

Purpose

Student publications and the student press are integral in establishing and maintaining an informed community in which free inquiry and responsible discussion are encouraged. They inform members of the campus community about news and information important to them; bring student concerns to the attention of the faculty, staff, and administration; and provide a public forum for the discussion of on- and off-campus issues of importance to the community. Student publications also provide valuable experience for students working toward careers in mass media and related fields. The purpose of this policy is to outline the university's relationship with and to set forth rules for the establishment, administration, and operation of SFA's official student publications, The Pine Log newspaper and Stone Fort yearbook.

Persons Affected

This policy applies to all university employees and students who work with student publications.

Definitions

Advisers: Professionally qualified staff members of the Department of Student Publications who provide student staff members with non-binding advice concerning journalistic ethics and practices, as well as applicable legal issues.

Department of Student Publications: SFA department within the Division of Student Affairs, which governs the operation of official student publications.

Director of Student Publications and Divisional Media: Adviser to The Pine Log newspaper; reports to the executive director of student life.

Division of Student Affairs: SFA division encompassing the Department of Student Publications.

Editorial Board: Student group that includes The Pine Log editor-in-chief and other student newspaper editors responsible for implementing the newspaper's approach to editorials and other opinion pieces.

Editors: Student leaders for The Pine Log and Stone Fort comprising the editorial board.

Editors-in-Chief: Highest-ranking student staff members of The Pine Log and Stone Fort; recommended for hire by the Student Publications Advisory Committee.

Executive Director of Student Life: Supervisor to the director of student publications and divisional media; reports to the vice president of student affairs.

Mass Communication Department: Academic department within SFA's College of Liberal and Applied Arts, offering areas of study in advertising and public relations, broadcast journalism, mass communication, and social media.



Newspaper: The Pine Log.

Stone Fort: SFA's student-produced yearbook, established in 1924.

Stone Fort Adviser: Coordinator of student publications; provides non-binding advice concerning journalistic ethics and practices, applicable legal issues, and the yearbook printing process related to the production of the Stone Fort yearbook.

Student Journalists/Staff Members: Enrolled students working to produce the newspaper and/or yearbook (both paid and unpaid positions), including, but not limited to: editors-in-chief, editors, coordinators, writers, designers, photographers, videographers, translators, and advertising representatives; appointed by the respective editor-in-chief.

Student Publications: Department of Student Publications; also a reference to The Pine Log and Stone Fort, collectively.

Student Publications Advisory Committee: Nine-member advisory body to student publications appointed by the vice president of student affairs.

Student Publications Coordinator: Adviser to the Stone Fort yearbook; reports to the director of student publications and divisional media.

Student Publications Manual: Internal document created and edited by student editors that delineates the various procedures and best practices by which The Pine Log and Stone Fort operate and serves as a handbook for new student staff members; reviewed and updated annually by the editorial board and made available to all student staff members and the Student Publications Advisory Committee.

The Pine Log: SFA's student-produced newspaper, established in 1924.

The Pine Log Adviser: Director of student publications and divisional media; provides non-binding advice concerning journalistic ethics and practices and applicable legal issues related to the production of The Pine Log newspaper.

University Marketing Communications: University division responsible for promoting the university and a cohesive brand image and offering writing, editing, photography, videography, web design, social media, graphic design, and related services to the campus community.

Policy

Student journalists have the right to determine the content of student publications. This substantial editorial freedom requires a corresponding responsibility for student journalists to be governed by professional standards, avoiding illegal speech (such as libel) and pursuing accuracy, truth, and fairness in the strongest possible way. University officials are not permitted to review content prior to distribution; nor may they remove editors or advisers because of disapproval of editorial decisions.

The Department of Student Publications, housed in the Office of Student Life within the Division



of Student Affairs, is the unit which governs the operation of both The Pine Log and Stone Fort. The director of student publications and divisional media is the administrative leader of the department and reports to the executive director of student life. The director shall be responsible for all managerial aspects of student publications. This includes fiscal management, office staff management, and student staff management.

The Student Publications Advisory Committee, appointed by the vice president of student affairs, shall serve as an advisory body to student publications. The committee shall recommend editorial policy and provide advice in the appointment of The Pine Log and Stone Fort editors-in-chief. In addition, the committee shall: 1.) promote, support, and defend the First-Amendment and free-press rights of student journalists; 2.) act as an appeals body on personnel, editorial and advertising matters related to student publications; and 3.) require compliance with applicable laws in such areas as libel, obscenity, privacy, and false and misleading advertising.

Procedures

A. Student Publications Advisers

1. Student Publications advisers serve as full-time staff members of the Division of Student Affairs and the Department of Student Publications.
2. The director also serves as adviser to The Pine Log, providing non-binding advice concerning journalistic ethics and practices and applicable legal issues to the student newspaper staff.
3. The coordinator of student publications serves as the adviser to the Stone Fort, providing the student yearbook staff with non-binding advice concerning journalistic ethics and practices and applicable legal issues, as well as the yearbook printing process.
4. Both advisers shall subscribe to the Adviser's Professional and Personal Codes adopted by the College Media Association.
5. Neither adviser shall dictate, censor, edit, or control content.
6. Neither adviser shall participate in prior review of student work, except when expressly requested by a student(s) seeking guidance regarding a specific legal question or other ethical concern.
7. Advisers shall have no direct involvement in the appointment, removal or discipline of student staff members other than the editors-in-chief.

B. Student Publications Manual

1. The Student Publications Manual is a student-produced document comprising expectations for student staff members and day-to-day procedures by which The Pine Log and Stone Fort operate.
2. The manual is reviewed and updated annually by the editorial board.
3. Any member of the student staff may recommend changes to the manual, but only the editorial board may implement final changes to the document.

C. Editorial Board

1. The make-up of the newspaper's editorial board shall be determined by the editor-in-chief, in consultation with the director and coordinator, before the start of each fall and spring semester.
2. The editorial board shall develop editorial positions and determine coverage based on news value and professional standards for responsible journalism with a major emphasis on accuracy and fairness.
3. Published editorials will represent the collective opinion of the editorial board.



4. The editorial board is responsible for reviewing, updating, and signing the Student Publications Manual at the beginning of each fall semester.
 5. The editorial board ensures the student staff's compliance with the manual throughout the academic year, including adherence to the student publications student employee disciplinary procedure.
- D. Student Publications Advisory Committee
1. The Student Publications Advisory Committee shall consist of nine voting members: The current director of student publications and divisional media (chair); one Mass Communication Department faculty representative; three at-large faculty representatives; one University Marketing Communications staff representative; and three at-large student representatives not currently involved with student publications.
 2. All faculty and staff representatives other than the current director of student publications and divisional media shall be appointed to three-year terms by the vice president of student affairs.
 3. Student representatives shall be recommended on an annual basis by the executive director of student life.
 4. The Committee shall meet annually in late April or early May to interview newspaper and yearbook editor-in-chief candidates and provide advice to concerning editor-in-chief appointments for the following academic year.
 5. Special meetings may be required in unusual circumstances such as considering the removal of an editor-in-chief, addressing an unexpected editor-in-chief vacancy, hearing an appeal concerning a student staff personnel decision made by the editorial board, or settling other matters related to student publications.
 6. Removal of an editor-in-chief shall require a two-thirds vote of the Student Publications Advisory Committee.
 7. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of all filled board positions.

Related Statutes or Regulations, Rules, Policies, or Standards

N/A

Responsible Executive

Executive Director of Student Life

Forms

None

Revision History

September 1, 2023 (original)