



Editor and Reporter Handbook

The Scout | Fall 2019

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“We shall be Conservative, in all cases where we think Conservatism essential to the public good; —and we shall be Radical in everything which may seem to us to require radical treatment and radical reform. We do not believe that everything in Society is either exactly right or exactly wrong; —what is good we desire to preserve and improve; —what is evil, to exterminate, or reform.”

— *The New York Times in 1851*

THE SCOUT STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE

For over 120 years, generations of student journalists of The Scout worked tirelessly to bring news and information to the Bradley community. These young men and women witnessed and documented the almost the entire history and transformation of Bradley University. We, student journalists, have gone to great length – and, often, made sacrifices – to uphold our responsibilities as agents of the truth.

From pens and paper to online and social media, we, too, have transformed over time. Although in the 21st century, information transmits faster than ever, and in many forms that never existed a decade ago. Regardless of the forms, we insist on the highest standard of integrity and ethical behavior as we gather and deliver the news. That means we report quickly, accurately and honestly, in a balanced and impartial way.

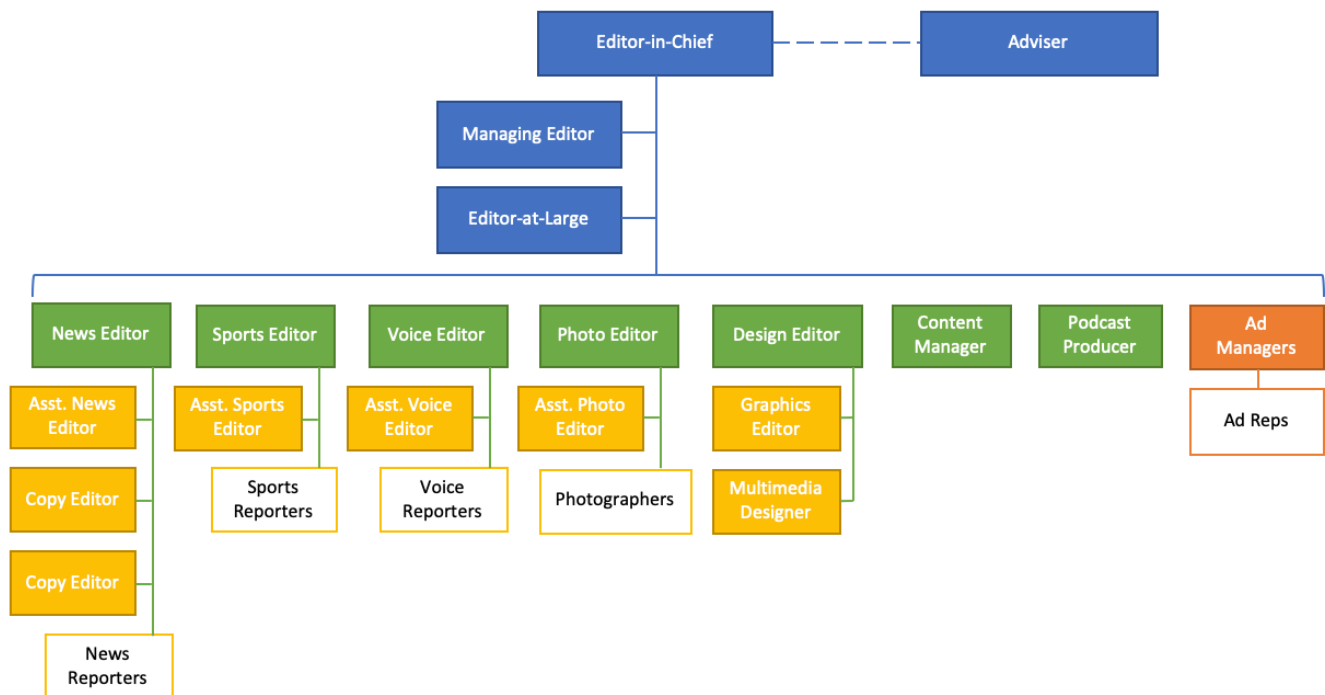
These efforts have been and will be rewarded with the trust of our community. With such responsibility, we abhor inaccuracies, carelessness, bias or distortions. We will never knowingly introduce rumor or false information into publications of any forms. We verify the sources of all information.

We preserve the appropriate professional distance from those we cover. We clearly identify advertising on our platforms and keep out commercial activities separated from our newsroom. We must be fair. Whenever we portray someone in a negative light, we must make an extra effort to make sure that person is being represented fairly, that includes obtain a response from that person.

When mistakes are made, they must be corrected – fully, quickly, transparently and ungrudgingly.

This handbook is based on The Associated Press Stylebook, 2017. In situation that is not covered in this handbook, editors may use the Stylebook as a reference.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



EMPLOYMENT

The Scout offers employment and internship opportunities to undergraduate students of Bradley University. The Scout also provide unpaid opportunities for many entry-level positions such as reporters and photographers.

_____ On-staff employees are required to performs his or her regular duties on time defined by the job description. All on-staff employees must perform some other mandatory duties, such as distribution and attend all staff meetings. Failure of performing stated duties may results payroll withhold, payroll deduction or termination. When registered as an internship, failure to perform stated duties may also lead to a failed grade for registered internship credit.

_____ Off-staff positions require applicants to perform assigned tasks promptly. When having trouble to perform assigned tasks or can no longer perform a task, he or she must notify his or her section editor immediately. All off-staff positions must attend all staff meeting, but not required to perform distribution. Failure to perform assigned tasks may result in termination.

All reporters and editors must comply with all federal and local laws, as well as Bradley University's student conduct. Any violation may result in internal review or termination.

NEWS-GATHERING GUIDELINE

The internet and social media have changed reporting dramatically nowadays. The easier to communicate, the faster the information travels. A timely reporting may be able to bring all the clicks we want, and the timeliness is, without a doubt, very important; but the quality of the news is the foundation and the lifeline of the Scout. We must always treat the quality prior to the speed.

A successful news-gathering requires thorough **background research**. Be prepared and have a fair amount of understanding, without opinionated perceptions, on the subject before going into the field and interview any news sources.

We do not misidentify or misrepresent ourselves to get a story. When we peruse a story, we always identify ourselves as Scout journalist. We balance the newsworthiness of a story with respect for people's privacy, and do not engage in paparazzi-style news or image-gathering.

When **recording an interview**, including phone interviews, we ask consents of all participating interviewees. Although the federal law only requires the consent of at least one participant to record a conversation, the state of Illinois requires consent from all participants who are being recorded.

It is wise to verify the name, includes spelling and pronunciation, and the official title of the interviewee at the beginning of the interview.

When gathering images, photojournalists or photographer should identify him or herself and notify the event organizer, or police officer at the scene, before start gathering images. Some event may have specific rules on using flashlights.

In many cases, the interviewee may require to be "off the record" for some reason. It is important to understand the definition of both terms and clearly identify what part of the information will be "on the record" or "off the record."

On the record: The information can be used with no caveats, quotes the source by name.

Off the record: The information cannot be used for publication. Often times, off-the-record information can help the reporter to understand the scope of the situation.

Transparency is critical to our credibility. Whenever possible, Scout reporters should pursue information on the record. Therefore, Scout reporters should try to persuade the source to put a minimum amount of information off the record and maximum amount of information on the record. For some off-the-record information that is essential to the story, the reporter may ask the permission of Editor-in-Chief or Managing Editor and try to persuade the source to put the information as background, the information that can be published under certain conditions or without attribution.

When Editor-in-Chief or Managing Editor approves the use of an anonymous source, the editor must carefully examine the situation with guidelines below. We only use a source anonymously when:

1. The material is information and not opinion or speculation, and is vital to the report.
2. The information is not available except under the condition of anonymity imposed by the source.
3. The source is reliable, and in a position to have direct knowledge of the information.

When an anonymous source is used, we must explain why the source required anonymity. And, when it's relevant, we must describe the source's motive for disclosing the information. If the story hinges on documents were obtained, at least to the extent possible. **Simply quoting "a source" is not allowed.**

The Scout routinely seeks and requires more than one source, both sides of opinions should be presented fairly when relevant.

Quotation must not be taken out of context in any situation. We do not alter quotations, even to correct grammatical errors or word usage. If a quotation is flawed because of grammar or lack of clarity, it may be paraphrased in a way that is completely true to the original quote. When a quote's meaning is too murky to be paraphrased accurately, it should not be used. Ellipses should be used rarely and must not alter the speaker's meaning.

We must make significant efforts to reach anyone who may be portrayed in a negative way in our content, and we must give them a reasonable amount of time to get back to us with his or her **response** before any forms publication. In situation that the involved personals cannot be reached or did not respond our offer, we must explain in the story what efforts were made to offer the fair opportunities of responding.

With the transparency efforts, we also have the responsibility to protect the **privacy of victims**. In general, we do not identify any sexual assault victim, or victim of any other extreme abuses. We may identify victims of sexual assault or extreme abuse when victims publicly identify themselves.

We also do not identify minors who are accused of crimes or who are witnesses to them. Identify such minors must be approved by the Editor-in-Chief with consultations of the adviser.

When we have to use **non-original content**, such as an image from a student who is not related to the Scout, we must ask for permission to publish in a written form and note the credit properly. This rule excludes contents that were submitted to the Scout, includes but not limited to – phone calls, letters, emails, online submission, social media interaction or direct messages.

Last but not least, we strictly prohibit any kind of fabrications or plagiarism with zero tolerance, nor will tolerant submitting knowingly-false information or misleading information on purpose.

EDITING GUIDELINE

Editors are gatekeepers of the publication. Editing process should start immediately after story submission. Stories should be edited to comply with Scout publication style and to correct grammar errors. Editors should also perform fact-checking during the editing process, and mark out any inaccurate information and correct it. Section editors should report to Managing Editor and notify the reporter if a story contains a significant amount of inaccurate information.

All the story must be edited for three different rounds, and will be edited by at least three editorial editors each round. Final rounds must continue to be reviewed by either the Editor-in-Chief or Managing Editor.

Section editors and section assistant editors (copy editors for the News section) are also responsible to facilitate and documenting the editing process, which includes to print out the story, update digital files and achieve edits from each round. **Use editing marks below.**

H HONG KONG (AP) — The organization	indent for paragraph
said Thursday. It was the first and last	paragraph
attempts.	no paragraph
With this the president tried	
the Jones Smith company is not	transpose
over a period of sixty or more years	use figures
there were in the group.	spell it out
former Governor Rothwell attended	abbreviate
The Ga. man was the guest of	don't abbreviate
prince edward said it was his	uppercase
as a result This will be	lowercase
the ac cuser pointed to them	remove space
In these times it is necessary	insert space
The order for the later devices	retain
The ruling a fine example	insert word
according to the this source	delete
By DONALD AMES	boldface, center
J.P. Slavens	flush right
J.P. Slavens	flush left
^	insert comma
✓	insert apostrophe
“ ”	insert quotation marks
⊗ or ⊙	insert period
=	hyphen
—	dash

BYLINE

Byline provides proper credit to whom wrote the story. In general, bylines may only be used only if the journalist was at the location to gather information. If a reporter in the field work with another staffer and both deserve bylines, the name of the staffer in the field normally goes first. For stories that do not require information gathering, credit goes to the writer. The Scout reserves full rights of any content produced by its employee.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

While the Scout encourages all reporters and editors to be involved in the community, we must avoid behavior or activities that could create a conflict of interest or compromise our ability to report the news fairly and accurately, uninfluenced by any person or action.

Favors & financial interest

Journalists often are sent or offered gifts by sources, public relations agencies, corporations and others. Sometimes these are designed to encourage or influence the Scout news coverage or business. All employees must not offer any personal favors, such as offer coverages to an event out of personal interest, or accept any financial benefits as a Scout employee. Financial benefits include, but not limited to, cash, check, gift card, free tickets, exclusive discount, free meals, merchandise or any other forms of gift.

Official scorers

A Scout employee must not serve as official scorers at sports events.

Personal involvement

All personals who is, or was, associated with the Scout must not be interviewed as a news source. A reporter or an editor can only interview a news source who is, or was, associated with the Scout if: 1. That is the only news source, and 2. Approved by the Editor-in-Chief.

A reporter or an editor must actively avoid to cover an organization or an event that he or she is involved with. A Scout employee must avoid any political activity, such as running for student senate positions.

Inside information

All reporters or editors must not release any information gained as a Scout report or editor, unless the information is published from the Scout. All reporters and editors must not release and maintain the security of any confidential information, personal information or financial information obtained through the course of Scout employment.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINE

The Scout highly encourages all reporters and editors to share and promote Scout's content on various social media platform. Reporters and editors must keep in mind at all time that their expression of personal opinions may contradict with the Scout's reputation as an unbiased source of news. They should refrain from declaring their views on contentious public issues in any public forum, whether through blogs, social networks, comments pages, petitions, bumper stickers or lapel buttons.

CORRECTIONS

When mistakes are made, they must be corrected – fully, quickly, transparently and ungrudgingly.

In the form of **print publication**, the correction must be made in the earliest print publication after mistake is noticed. The correction must include the identify information of the original story, such as date of publication and page number. It should also identify the incorrect information along with the detailed correct information. A correction should be placed in the second or third page of the publication. A correction should only be placed on the front cover page when the mistake involves significant information or determine by the Editor-in-Chief.

In the form of **digital publication**, a correction to the original story must be made at the earliest possible after a mistake has been noticed. A remark must be added at the end of the story. The remark should describe the original information, what was corrected and when the correction was made.

When a mistake has caused negative impact on an individual or an organization, when appropriate and necessary, an apology may be issued with the approval of Editor-in-Chief.

ACCOUNTABILITY

While the Scout obtain its editorial control, it is ultimately held accountable to the University administration, just as it is to its readers and its advertisers. It's editors and reporters should acknowledge that Scout's content has the potential to impact the University, just as to any other organization or personals involved in a news. Scout should ensure appropriate caution is taken when publish potentially controversial contents, using the accountability structure below: *Editor-in-Chief -> Adviser -> Vice President for Student Affairs -> University President -> Board of Trustees.*