



Student Media Group

Staff Handbook and Code of Ethics

2019 Revision

INTRODUCTION

Mission Statement

The primary purpose of The Breeze is to communicate to the JMU community news of import about the university, the region and the state and nation as it pertains to JMU students, faculty and staff. The Breeze is dedicated to maintaining the highest of professional standards of journalism. Its major responsibility is to serve as a training ground and lab for educating students in applying techniques of print journalism.

— The Breeze Charter, adopted 1977

The Breeze, the student-run newspaper of James Madison University, serves student and faculty readership by reporting news involving the campus and local community. The Breeze strives to be impartial and fair in its reporting and firmly believes in First Amendment rights.

— The Breeze Mission, published in each edition

Welcome to The Breeze

That statement from The Breeze's original 1977 charter offers a clear explanation for why we are here: to inform and to educate while maintaining high standards. This policy manual spells out some of the ways we achieve those goals.

The Breeze is unique because it is not only a learning lab where students learn to produce various media. Because we serve the public and have paying customers, we also function like a business. That's why professionalism is so important to our organization.

But professionalism shouldn't rule out having fun. While The Breeze is perhaps the best place on campus to learn how "real world" business operates, it's also a place where many friendships and memories have been formed.

So, yes, be professional and learn a lot — but enjoy the time you spend doing it.

Best wishes for a successful tenure at The Breeze,
Brad Jenkins
General Manager

History of *The Breeze*

Below is an updated excerpt from an article in the paper's 80th-anniversary supplement from May 1, 2003.

As students and faculty step onto campus on a warm, rainy afternoon, a pungent, distinctly JMU smell permeates the air. It is hard to imagine that the odor of dog food or chicken feed that sweeps through the Valley was once a crisp, clean mountain breeze. In fact, the smell was so refreshing that it inspired a 1922 English teacher to forever embody it in the name of the fledgling newspaper at the State Normal School for Women a Harrisonburg.

"Nothing here strikes a stranger quite so strongly as our mountain breeze," Elizabeth P. Cleveland wrote in her proposal... "It is both inspiring and stimulating. It is full of pep, but clean. It clears the cobwebs from the brain and sweeps morbidity from the heart."

And so The Breeze got its name.

As the winner of the contest to name the college's first regular student newspaper, Cleveland earned \$2 for her entry, which barely beat out The Campus Cat by a coin toss. Since its first publication on Dec. 2, 1922, The Breeze has weathered name and format changes, funding revocations and management upheavals, all the while endeavoring to provide students, faculty and staff and outlet for news and opinions for almost 90 years.

The Breeze has grown from a four-column, four-page weekly publication with few illustrations and fewer photos, to a 20-plus page broadsheet newspaper published twice weekly with full-color photos and graphics enhanced by the latest software technology. Whereas now the paper is distributed to more than 90 locations on and off campus, the paper originally was distributed to women on the way out of the dining hall, according to Bertha McCollum Moore, an assistant editor during The Breeze's first year.

Like its format, the content of JMU's student newspaper has changed dramatically over 80 years. The first issues were filled with informal, light-hearted, social news, from gossip reports to summaries of trips, dances and get-togethers. For example, a front-page brief May 9, 1947, began, "A surprise dinner party was given in honor of Miss Myrtle Wilson and Dr. Ruth Phillips on May 7 by the home economics and biology staffs."

By the 1970s, The Breeze's content became more sophisticated and controversial as Madison College expanded to become James Madison University. The paper covered perennial topics like parking, tuition and the administration, while keeping tabs on campus trends and opinions.

The Breeze Today

The Breeze has an annual budget of about \$260,000, which is raised through advertising revenue and also aided with student fees allocated by the Media Board. However, The Breeze maintains editorial independence. The Breeze, a broadsheet newspaper, is published Thursdays with a few special editions published on Thursdays. The circulation is 5,000 with a readership of about 20,000 students, faculty and staff.

The Breeze has been recognized many times over the years for its excellence in journalism. In 2014, the newspaper was one of the top 10 newspapers of its size when it won a Pacemaker from the Associated Collegiate Press. In 2013, 2014, 2017 and 2018, the paper won the Virginia Press Association's Grand Sweepstakes as the most-honored mid-sized non-daily in the state, competing against professional newspapers.

Since 2010, the newspaper has expanded more and more online. That year, the organization launched a redesigned website with a content management system run through TownNews.com, which was instrumental in making web management more streamlined. In 2016, The Breeze began publishing once per week on Thursdays to bring added focus to the online site.

The Breeze also publishes several special publications each year, with past topics including a football preview, alumni or homecoming weekend plans, graduation prepara-

tions and Best of the 'Burg awards.

Madison 101 is another publication that is associated with The Breeze. Though editorial content comes from a class in the School of Media Arts and Design, advertising is sold and coordinated through The Breeze advertising department.

In 2017, The Breeze added a new, exciting component to its operations. That year, in partnership with the School of Media Arts and Design, Breeze TV, a weekly newscast was launched. While The Breeze web and print versions have their own newsroom and The Breeze TV operates its newsroom, the two entities cooperate to provide content at BreezeJMU.org.

Breeze Offices

- The Breeze is located at 1598 South Main Street. An on-campus space is also available in Roop Hall, Rooms G08 and G18.

- Mailing Address: 1598 South Main Street, MSC 6805, Harrisonburg, VA 22807.

- Phone: (540) 568-6127.
- The Breeze offices are open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday except when the university is closed. Breeze offices remain open during the summer. Hours are the same except for Fridays, when the university closes at noon.

The permanent staff, student editors and student ads staff members have JAC card swipe access to the office. Others who desire swipe access to the office should request it through their student manager for general manager approval.

The Breeze offices are automatically locked between the hours of 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. During these hours, do not prop the door open or impede its locking for any reason.

A doorbell is installed at the front door and should be used for staffers without swipe access who need to enter for business purposes after regular business hours.

The Breeze TV studio is the Alison B. Parker Studio in the School of Media Arts and Design.

STAFF POLICIES

Position Descriptions

These position descriptions offer a general overview of positions at The Breeze. Specific duties may be changed by supervisors.

Editor-in-Chief

- The editor hires and manages The Breeze's editors. The editor is responsible for editorial content, supervising production, recruiting new staff writers and developing and executing a vision for The Breeze. The editor is part of the Editorial Board, which produces the House Editorial. He or she is also a member of the JMU Media Board.

Managing Editor - Print

- The Managing Editor for print serves as a manager of production, making sure the details of producing the newspaper go smoothly. The Managing Editor works with the Advertising Manager to develop a page budget for each issue, keeping track of where ads go and how much editorial content goes in each paper. The Managing Editor also oversees production of the online Breeze. The Managing Editor is a member of the newspaper's Editorial Board.

Managing Editor - Digital

- The Managing Editor for digital is the day-to-day manager of the website. This editor oversees content schedules and assures that the website is updated daily and includes fresh content each day of the week. This editor is responsible for coordinating with other editors about multimedia content or other online-only content. The editor also oversees the social media activity of The Breeze.

Section Editors

- Section editors and their assistants oversee each section of The Breeze. Those sections are: News, Opinion, Life and Sports. Editors assign stories, coach writers about those stories and edit the final product. They also design the pages and work with photographers and graphic designers to create art for the stories in their sections. The Opinion Editor also serves as a member of the Editorial Board.

Copy Editors

- Copy Editors ensure that The Breeze is grammatically and stylistically correct based on Associated Press and Breeze style. In addition to fact checking, they have an eye for detail and check each story and page for proper spelling, format, writing, structure, clarity and style.

Art Director

- The Design Editor works with section editors to maintain effective and consistent design throughout the newspaper, while also being responsible for the front-page design.

Photo Editors

- The Photo Editors manage all photography for The Breeze. They manage the photographers and makes assign-

ments. The editors also ensure that quality photographs are used in The Breeze. The editors edit photos for best appearance using computer software. They also create slideshows and oversee any photo contests.

Graphics Editor

- The Graphics Editor oversees the graphical elements of the newspaper. He or she coordinates with section editors to create and edit graphics to accompany stories, and also stays abreast of design trends and makes suggestions about effective design for The Breeze.

Video Editor

- The Video Editor plans video packages to accompany stories or as stand-alone pieces, maintains a staff of videographers and edits the video pieces.

Contributing staff

All volunteer are contributing staff members.

To assist in carrying out its mission to the JMU community, The Breeze has a long-standing tradition of accepting volunteer work from student contributors. In compliance with the Government Volunteer's Act, this information is intended to ensure that volunteers understand their duties and responsibilities, and their relationship to The Breeze.

There are a variety of volunteer positions available at The Breeze, which accepts regular-service volunteers (those with ongoing activities) and occasional-service volunteers (those performing a one-time or occasional service). Volunteers perform these services at their own free will, without any financial gain. Information about current positions is available from the Editor.

As defined, volunteers are exempt from all provisions of law regarding state employment, hours of work, rate of compensation, leave time and employee benefits except those specifically provided by state law. Volunteers may receive the same benefits as any paid staff member in regard to temporary lodging or food while on assignment, transportation, and coverage under The Breeze libel insurance policy.

There are many benefits to working for The Breeze. Volunteers gain additional skills, knowledge and abilities that should help in applying for positions as interns or paid workers in a variety of communications-related fields. Volunteers may participate in workshops and other training opportunities offered by The Breeze.

Contributors must comply with all Breeze policies.

All contributors must fill out a contributor agreement online (BreezeJMU.org/volunteer/form).

Advertising Designers

- Designers work with the Advertising & Marketing Coordinator to design advertisements for The Breeze. They also work with executives to design campaigns or proposed campaigns for potential clients. Designers also design house ads and ads for the online Breeze.

Breeze TV

- Breeze TV is a sister media organization and works

collaboratively with The Breeze. Breeze TV includes a news director, who oversees news operations of the weekly show and works with The Breeze editor and digital managing editor to maximize resources and talents of both staffs. Additionally, Breeze TV roles include producers, directors, anchors, technical staff and others who produce a weekly show.

First Rights of Publication

The Breeze maintains first rights of publication on any material assigned to any member of The Breeze, unless both parties have agreed on other specific arrangements. Stories, photography, videography, graphics, news packages and any other content produced for The Breeze is assigned ownership to The Breeze unless specified in writing between the content creator and the Editor.

Permanent Staff

General Manager

- The General Manager oversees all Breeze operations. The General Manager oversees The Breeze budget, approves all expenditures, supervises the advertising staff and coordinates technology upgrades. To the editorial staff, the General Manager serves in an advisory role and is available for consultation.
- The General Manager is a liaison between the editorial and advertising staffs.
- The General Manager also is the liaison between the university and The Breeze, making sure that The Breeze follows all university policies and procedures in financial, personnel and operations practices.
- The General Manager is a member of JMU's Media Board.

Advertising & Marketing Coordinator

- Oversees the advertising staff. He or she provides guidance and leadership to the Advertising Manager, who in turn supervises the student ads staff.
- Works with the General Manager on initiatives to market The Breeze.
- He or she also trains and advises the advertising staff on best practices of ad sales and design.
- The Advertising Manager reports to the Advertising Adviser.

Office Assistant

- The Office Assistant, a part-time position, assists both the Office Manager and Advertising Adviser. This person helps in filing, answering phones, record-keeping and other clerical items. The Office Assistant sends subscriptions and handles mail functions. The Office Assistant also works with the Advertising Adviser on day-to-day clerical tasks and marketing projects.

Advisers

As a student organization, The Breeze has several advisers.

- General Manager **Brad Jenkins** is for any needs that arise on the editorial side. The General Manager also is avail-

able to conduct any training sessions or critiques students request. He may hold regularly scheduled critiques to assist students in improving.

- Editorial Adviser **Ryan Parkhurst** is a faculty member in the School of Media Arts and Design. He advises the editorial staff and is available for training sessions and critiques.
- Legal Adviser **Roger Soenksen** also is a faculty member in the School of Media Arts and Design. He is available for legal questions and can assist with Freedom of Information requests. He is not an attorney and only offers advice based on research and current practices.

Hiring

Editor-in-Chief

- The JMU Media Board solicits applications for The Breeze Editor-in-Chief in early January through JMU's JobLink at joblink.jmu.edu. Applicants must have at least one semester's worth of experience on the editorial staff of The Breeze, have either taken or intend to take a mass communication law course, and have a 2.5 GPA or higher. Each candidate will then give a short presentation to the Media Board at a scheduled meeting. The members of the Media Board will discuss the applicants and vote. The new editor will be announced immediately once the decision is made; the yearlong term becomes effective on or around April 1.

Managing Editors

- Applications for the new managing editors are due at the same time as those for the Editor-in-Chief at joblink.jmu.edu. The Editor-in-Chief will interview all applicants soon after chosen by the Media Board. The Editor-in-Chief is encouraged to discuss the choice with advisers and the outgoing top two editors, but it is his or her final decision.

Advertising Department

- The Advertising and Marketing Coordinator hires the advertising designers as the need arises.

Breeze TV

- The News Director shall be selected by the Breeze TV adviser in consultation with The Breeze general manager no later than February for the next academic year. The News Director then hires other top leaders and the rest of the staff.

Training

Breeze editors and the Breeze TV news director should begin training with their new staffs in March, usually immediately after Spring Break. This allows for several weeks of shadowing prior to the end of the school year.

The outgoing staff should constantly be teaching the new editors about the different pieces of their jobs, encouraging them to ask questions and practice skills. While at the beginning of the period the new editors should mainly be looking on and absorbing the process, they should become more hands-on over time. Ultimately, at the end of the training period (the length of which can vary depending upon the timing of Spring Break), the outgoing staff should watch as the new staff assumes the roles.

The new editors and news director should help run meetings with the current and incoming staffs. They should also hold any separate trainings as needed with advisers, such as for editing, law and design.

Additional training is held in August. All top editors and section editors are required to return two weeks prior to the beginning of classes for Breeze Camp, which is the annual in-depth training for the new year.

Academic Requirements

All Breeze student staff must be enrolled at the university. All editors must be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours per semester. Additionally, all editors of The Breeze must maintain a 2.0 grade-point average to stay on staff. The Editor-in-Chief and Breeze TV News Director must have taken or be enrolled in a media law class. Exceptions to these policies are decided by the General Manager in consultation with student leaders.

Termination

Staff members contemplating resignation should meet with their immediate student supervisor to discuss options. Should he or she decide to leave The Breeze, a two-week notice is considered a courtesy but is not required. The supervisor should notify the General Manager of any resignations.

Any involuntary termination must be discussed with the General Manager. If a supervisor has concerns about a student employee, he or she should consult with the General Manager before taking action. For student staff, the following are grounds for immediate dismissal:

- Committing a felony or other serious misconduct
- Repeated unapproved absences
- Misuse and abuse of Breeze equipment
- Repeated violations of this policy manual
- Libel
- Plagiarism
- Falsifying information
- Sexual harassment or violence
- Other violations not listed are left to the discretion of the Editor or General Manager

In addition to termination, student supervisors or the General Manager reserve the right to report any criminal, Title IX, honor code or other violations to the appropriate university authority.

Attendance

Attendance at production on Wednesdays is expected of all section editors and any others who have deadlines on those days. Attendance at Breeze TV live shows is also expected. Any absence should be approved in advance by the supervisor. Section editors who miss production may not be paid for that edition. The Editor-in-Chief should notify the General Manager of such an absence for payroll purposes.

Supervisors may also require attendance at other meetings and may hold team members accountable for absences.

During inclement weather, the Editor-in-Chief will decide whether to postpone or cancel a print edition, while consulting with the General Manager, Advertising Manager and the

printer. Should a cancelation occur, the Editor will notify staff (including the permanent staff). It is strongly recommended that for safety reasons, The Breeze postpone activities when the university closes for inclement weather.

Staff Members and the Law

Employees of The Breeze represent the paper at all times, even on weekends and days off. They should try to balance their personal and professional lives accordingly, and be careful to represent themselves in a positive manner.

Being charged with a crime or judicial violation is grounds for suspension or termination at the discretion of the supervisor. If a staff member is involved in a newsworthy crime, as a victim, witness or the charged, the editors should follow the guidelines for reporting on police matters to cover such an instance. Staff members should not be treated differently for such a circumstance.

Staff members should immediately and accurately report any of these situations to a supervisor. They should not be involved in any reporting or editing related to the incident or follow-ups. The reporters and editors should still follow all fact-checking and -verification guidelines.

Editorial Board

The Breeze Editorial Board always consists of the Editor-in-Chief, Managing Editors and Opinion Editor. The Editor-in-Chief is permitted to add to the Editorial Board the following: two other staff members who apply to the position; outside students or faculty who apply or respond to queries; or rotating members among the staff and non-staff. There should be an odd number of members for voting purposes.

The Editorial Board should meet as needed — depending whether house editorials run in each issue or as otherwise deemed appropriate — to discuss relevant topics and opinions. If any of the members of the Editorial Board is writing a story about one of the topics, he should recuse himself from any discussion and writing.

Typically, board members agree upon an argument and main points for an editorial, and then appoint one person to draft the piece. The draft should then rotate among members to ensure all are in agreement. The Editor-in-Chief has the final say over manuscripts. If he or she is involved in covering any of the topics that the Editorial Board writes about, the final decision should be made by the Managing Editor for print.

Activities Outside of *The Breeze*

To maintain independence, student editors and reporters may not cover any organization, campus or otherwise, that they are affiliated with, no matter how minor their affiliation. They also may not take part in any business or editorial decisions pertaining to that organization. Staff members should report their involvement in outside organizations to their supervisor. The Breeze management should maintain updated records of contributors' memberships in clubs, sports, etc., and contributors should not withhold information about their affiliations with these organizations. While editorial staff members or contributors may suggest story ideas relating to their organization, they may not assign or produce such

stories.

Political involvement and service in community organizations should be carefully considered by The Breeze employees to avoid compromising both personal integrity and that of The Breeze. The notion of the journalist as an independent observer and fact-finder is important. A Breeze employee involved in a specific political action should not be assigned to cover that involvement. For example, if a reporter or editor regularly takes part in anti-abortion or abortion rights rallies, he or she should avoid covering issues surrounding abortion.

A general question to ask in case of doubt: "Could the newspaper publicly disclose the situation as a whole without fear or embarrassment or legitimate criticism?"

In the event that the top editor is a member of an organization on or off campus, decisions about coverage of that organization will be left to another designated leader.

Specific Organizations

- Members of JMU's Student Government Association may not serve as a leader at The Breeze or work for the News section. They may contribute to other sections unless there is a conflict of interest. SGA members may write for Opinion but they should refrain from writing about SGA matters, and their SGA affiliation must be included in the column end note.
- News and Opinion writers may not contribute to both sections.
- Varsity and club athletes may not work for the Sports section.
- Executive members of University Program Board may not work for the Culture section.
- Other conflicts will be left to the discretion of the supervisor.

Outside Employment

- The Breeze employees should report any outside jobs to their supervisors in order to avoid any conflicts of interest with assignments or other business decisions. Outside jobs should not interfere with work hours at The Breeze. At the time of application, outside employment should be discussed with the hiring manager to avoid time-management issues.

Other Journalism Work

- An editorial member may not work for a JMU public relations or marketing organization (such as University Communications and Marketing or Sports Communications). This is to maintain The Breeze's place as an independent news source.
- Participating in two student-media groups at the same time is acceptable, but conflicts and the nature of the position should be discussed with a supervisor.
- Approval of work for an off-campus news medium and freelance work should be sought in advance of the commitment. It is permissible only in a noncompetitive medium, on an editorial staff member's own time and should not conflict with obligations to The Breeze. Assignments should be for things not covered by The Breeze. For example, staff members could report on high school sports for the Daily News-Record but should not cover JMU sports.
- If a staff member or contributor submits a story origi-

nally intended for Breeze purposes to another publication or scoops The Breeze from a story that would be of the newspaper's interest, he or she may be reprimanded.

Travel

Any travel that involves Breeze business must be authorized by the General Manager, who will determine if funds are available. Travel that is not authorized will not be reimbursed.

Use of personal vehicle for Breeze travel is discouraged; rather, a JMU Motor Pool vehicle can be procured for such purposes.

While traveling, staffer is responsible for representing The Breeze in a professional manner.

Conferences and Conventions

Because The Breeze's primary goal is to educate, there are numerous opportunities for staffers to attend national, regional and state conventions/training sessions. The General Manager shall allocate the number of spots available for travel to major conventions such as the College Media Association fall and spring sessions and the College Media Business and Advertising Managers' sessions. Travel to other sessions may be proposed to the General Manager, who will determine if funds are available.

To attend a convention, those interested must complete a short application and sign the convention agreement, which requires the attendee to abide by Breeze regulations while on the trip and agree to file a convention report to the General Manager following the trip.

If a student needs to cancel his involvement, he should notify the General Manager at least three weeks prior to the scheduled departure. Failure to do so could result in the student being responsible for any nonrefundable charges.

Sports Game Travel

Travel for sports editors or reporters and/or photographers to cover games is included in a budget line separate from convention travel. Generally, the limit for travel is two to three staffers, but each must be fulfilling a different role (story, photo, video, for example). Travel for sports must be discussed with the General Manager with plenty of time in order to make appropriate hotel or other travel reservations.

Unacceptable Use

Travel funds are allocated based on James Madison University policies. Those policies set limits on how much can be spent on each item, such as for meal gratuities. Itemized receipts should be turned in to the General Manager. Additionally, no alcohol can be purchased as part of meals that are funded through The Breeze.

Press Passes

Sports Events

- The Sports editors should maintain a set of press passes for all JMU athletics events. They can be obtained through Athletics Communications at the beginning of the year. Editors and writers should maintain correspondence with the appropriate sports contacts in order to set up media oppor-

tunities. Editors should also request credentials early for any away games or tournaments, as needed. Credentials are to be used only for official Breeze business.

Police

- Contact the public information officer at the Harrisonburg Police Department in order to acquire police-specific press passes for crime scenes. News editors and writers on the police beat should maintain in contact throughout the year and update these passes.

JMU Public Affairs

- JMU's spokesperson and members of the Public Affairs Office typically email The Breeze editors before media events including press conferences. They may offer passes for reporters, photographers and videographers.

Other JMU Events

- For concerts and other performances, contact the public relations office of University Program Board and the Forbes Center for the Performing Arts. This should be done several days in advance, maybe even weeks depending on the event. Press passes to entertainment events are only for Breeze official business.

Office Policies

The Breeze provides many resources for staff members and operates like a small business. Therefore, professionalism, courtesy and cleanliness should be apparent in the office. Professionalism extends to how we answer the phone, greet visitors and treat coworkers. Profanity, sexual innuendo and any other unprofessional language or behavior is not acceptable in this work environment.

Dress Code

The Breeze is a student organization, so suits and ties are not expected. But you should keep in mind that members of the public visit our offices, and personal appearance can affect their impression of our organization. When representing The Breeze, use common sense and dress professionally and modestly. For example, business attire should be worn on appropriate occasions such as at Board of Visitors meetings.

Housekeeping

Keep your workspace free of clutter and debris. Keep conference areas clean, too. If you leave something there, it may be discarded.

Discard leftover food immediately. If you store items in the refrigerator or use the microwave, please clean up.

Any items you have hanging around your desk should be appropriate for public viewing. Therefore, do not display sexually suggestive images, signs with profanity and the like. These kinds of images will be removed without warning. Additionally, the posting of political statements should be carefully considered, as these kinds of messages can undermine credibility and independence.

Office Communication

- Outgoing mail should be placed in the mailbox near the entrance. The Breeze pays postage only for official correspondence. Consult the Office Manager for a stamp.
- If you receive a call at The Breeze and you are not here, the receptionist will relay that message through email. Respond to any messages in a timely manner.
- Use Breeze email accounts and social media accounts for professional purposes only and maintain professional standards within those communications.

Computers

The equipment provided to you for your job is the property of The Breeze and/or the School of Media Arts and Design. None of this equipment should be removed from The Breeze office (with the exception, of course, of photography/video equipment or equipment needed to perform your duties).

Editors should report any supply needs to the Office Assistant.

Computer security is very important. Therefore, no software should be downloaded to a Breeze computer without approval of the General Manager. Unauthorized installations can result in loss of privileges or termination. Additionally, viewing or downloading pornography on Breeze equipment is strictly prohibited. Downloading illegal content is also prohibited.

Work related to The Breeze is the priority for equipment. Use of machines is limited to Breeze staff members.

The Breeze permits the use of computers for academic-related use as long as that work does not hinder production. Personal work, however, should be saved to portable media. Material left on the hard drive may be erased without prior notice. Students should supply their own paper for academic projects; Breeze-purchased paper is for Breeze business.

Supplies

The Breeze has office supplies available for the staff that can be provided by contacting the Office Assistant.

Archives

Print archives are available in the archives room. Employees may take copies of papers from the current year, which are kept in the stacks. However, do not remove any papers that are filed in the file cabinets. Employees may look at them for reference, but they need to be replaced promptly to keep The Breeze's archives intact.

Bound copies of issues of The Breeze are available in the archive room, but should not be removed.

A comprehensive, digital archives also is maintained at breezejmu.org/archives.

Substances in the Newsroom

No illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco or vaping products are allowed in the newsroom or while on assignment for The Breeze; failure to comply will result in immediate dismissal from Breeze participation.

Equipment

The Breeze owns many pieces of equipment that staff and

contributors can check out. These include digital cameras, video cameras and recorders. Staff members should talk to their appropriate section, video or photo editors, and follow their guidelines for recording that the equipment is being borrowed. Editors should keep track of who has what equipment and ensure that it is returned in a timely manner.

Anyone with Breeze equipment is responsible for taking care of it. In the case that a piece of equipment breaks, the staff members and editors should immediately report it to the General Manager.

Role of the Media Board

The JMU Media Board serves in an advisory capacity to the Dean of the College of Arts and Letters and provides for review and recommendations pertinent to the publication of the *Bluestone*, *The Breeze* and *gardy loo!*, and to the operation of WXJM. Board members include the Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, several faculty and staff, students leading the media outlets and SGA and other students. The Board approves budgets for each organization and also selects their top managers.

For more information, go to www.jmu.edu/commisscommit/MediaBoard.shtml.

Role of the University

The Breeze is a student-run media organization and is not tied directly to the university. While the Media Board does allocate a certain amount of funding to The Breeze, the newspaper is not in any way obligated to be a voice of the university itself; that is the role of the university's public affairs offices. A strong working relationship with JMU's administration is encouraged, but The Breeze will cover stories as needed that may not present the university in the best light. The paper should be a watchdog, just as a professional newspaper watches governments and organizations.

Role of the Printer

The Breeze goes through a bidding process every five years to select the best printer in terms of price, deadline and quality.

Narrow Passages Press in Woodstock, Virginia, is the current printer.

Editors should meet the deadlines set by the printer for each issue in order to avoid problems with printing and to ensure that printing — including for other publications — stays on schedule.

PRODUCTION AND EDITORIAL ETHICS

The following codes of ethics and policies have been compiled by former editors from the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics (which can be found in the Appendix) and from policies from other college and professional newspapers.

What is "Newsworthiness"?

Editors must develop news judgment to determine what types of stories to publish in *The Breeze*. Newsworthiness can

also help decide what prominence to give stories. Several factors go into newsworthiness.

- **Impact:** How many people will the story affect? How deeply will it affect them? This can be the story that people don't realize is there, that doesn't fill the news hole, but is slowly developing.
- **Proximity:** Editors should strive to cover the areas around campus, and also to localize state or national news.
- **Timeliness:** Even if something seems like it could be "old news," editors and reporters can come up with new angles and questions to make a new report more compelling.
- **Prominence:** Who is most prominent on campus and in the community? (This also relates to headline names, which means that only names that are well known in a readership should be in a headline.)
- **Conflict:** Conflict indicates that there is likely news. This indicates an issue that people care about if they are intent on fighting for it. Reporters should talk to all sides in a conflict for a balanced story.
- **Novelty:** This raises the question of How is this different from any other event, person, situation, decision, etc.? Unusual things can be news.
- **Community Interest:** People may not need to know certain things, but they simply want to know; this can vary depending on a readership. This brings up another component of news judgment, how well the story is told.

List adapted from the textbook *The Editorial Eye*.

Budget, Pitch and Front-Page Meetings

Top editors will hold meetings each week to plan budgets for the upcoming issues and shows, critique published issues and shows and discuss other matters. All top leaders/section editors should attend, unless a class interferes, and also be prepared with a detailed coverage budget, including photo and video assignments.

For the print edition, the Print Managing Editor will work with the advertising department to create a page budget with enough space for both ads and editorial content. He or she will then send a production order to the printer and send a copy of the page budget to the entire staff.

Accuracy and Objectivity

- The Breeze staff shall be committed at all times to accuracy and objectivity in all factual reporting. The good faith of the James Madison University students, faculty and administration and the university community is integral to the success of The Breeze. The following rules (adapted from SPJ's Code of Ethics) are to be followed at all times:
 - Truth is our ultimate goal.
 - Objectivity and fairness in all reporting is another goal toward which every journalist at The Breeze should strive.
 - There is no excuse for inaccuracies due to a lack of thorough reporting.
 - Quotations should reflect the speaker's intended message. This means never changing one's words, in any shape or form. One must not purposefully use a quotation out of context with the story to further an agenda.
 - Headlines should be fully warranted by the contents of

the articles they accompany. Graphic elements should depict an event's happenings accurately. Photographs should never be altered other than standard prepress adjustments.

- News reports should be free of opinion or bias and represent all sides of an issue.
- Partisanship or dogmatism, which knowingly departs from the truth, in editorial comment is unacceptable.
- Student journalists recognize their responsibility to offer informed analysis, comment and editorial opinion on public events and issues in the university community, but this comment should be separate at all times from news reporting.
- News analysis, reviews, opinion columns, editorials and perspective pieces should be labeled as such, so as not to mislead.
- Every effort should be made to ensure each name appearing in The Breeze is spelled correctly.

Corrections and Clarifications

The Breeze is committed to accuracy and fairness. If a mistake is made in the reporting of information by The Breeze, the organization is obligated to correct it immediately.

If a reporter or editor realizes they made a mistake, instead of hoping no one notices, they should take steps to fix it and report it to their supervisor.

All corrections should be verified with sources or someone close to the story to avoid having a mistaken correction and having to run another correction.

Sources should also be informed that a correction will be run; reporters should not leave them waiting.

Corrections in print should appear on page two of the paper and labeled as such. Corrections should include the date of the issue, name of the article and corrected information. For example: "The Feb. 21 brief, 'Federal court date set for professor,' incorrectly stated that James Query is on administrative leave from the university. JMU no longer employs Query, according to university spokesman Joe Smith." Generally you do not need to restate the mistaken information (especially in cases where it may have been libelous), but it can be helpful in some situations to clarify.

For online, section editors should update the original online article as soon as they are aware of the mistake. The incorrect information should be corrected within the text of the article, and a line should appear at the top of the post in the format of this example: "This article was updated at 4:30 p.m. on April 2 to correct the spellings of Bridgeforth Stadium and coach Jim Durning."

On Breeze TV, a correction should be appended to the online story, and an announcement of the correction should be made on the next closest show during a block that makes the most sense for that newscast.

Similar to a correction is a clarification. Clarifications are not necessary when a mistake has been made, but rather when a fact or story is taken out of context or inappropriately presented.

Advertising for Stories

At no time should a Breeze contributor commit to doing a story, taking a photograph, etc. in return for paid advertise-

ments to appear in *The Breeze*. Writing a story in exchange for advertising is a violation of a journalist's ethics, and it is prohibited. If an advertiser or potential advertiser repeatedly approaches a *Breeze* employee (from either the advertising or editorial department) about writing a story in exchange for advertising, they should report it to upper management.

Gifts and Free Travel, Tickets, Discounts

Gifts provided to any *Breeze* employee are to be turned down as they may contribute to bias on the part of the reporter. Such acceptance of gifts is also discouraged as a safeguard to prevent *Breeze* staff from being solicited for favorable coverage based upon gifts received in the past.

Employees and contributors should also not accept free travel, accommodations or meals related to travel. This is to remain free from influence or obligation to report a story. For convenience, sports reporters can travel on team charters if allowed by the team, but *The Breeze* should pay the cost of transportation and related expenses. This same pay-as-you-go policy should apply to non-sports reporting as well, including coverage of businesses and governments.

In cases of free tickets, passes, discounts etc., if money is available, staffers assigned to cover a lecture, play, concert, movie or other entertainment event should pay for admission. They should save all receipts or tickets and present them to the section editors and the General Manager. Receipts must be itemized with all prices, and they should be dated.

Press facilities at events may only be used by members of *The Breeze* assigned to cover the event, not by *Breeze* members for personal use.

Free tickets, passes, etc. may be accepted by *Breeze* personnel for personal use only if the same tickets are available on the same complimentary basis to members of the public.

Being an Independent Press

To be an effective watchdog on other agencies, a publication must remain independent. The publication should not take over any of the duties of any outside agency; cooperation or involvement in the work of these agencies should be restricted to what is required by law. Staff members should know any freedom of information, open meetings and shield laws that apply to their work. (Consult *The Reporters' Guide to the Freedom of Information Act in Virginia*, published by the Virginia Press Association.) If a staff member thinks any public authority is interfering with his or her functions as a journalist, the incident should be reported to the Editor.

Controversial Content, Profanity, Obscenity

As a student newspaper, *The Breeze's* standards of decency may differ from those of other community newspapers. The themes, artworks and language in *The Breeze* should acknowledge the attitudes and lifestyles of its readers; however, *The Breeze* does not aim to offend its audience or use shock value. Writers and artists, however, should not have free reign to produce offensive material for the pages of *The Breeze*. Excessive or unnecessary use or depiction of violence, sex, vulgar language, bigotry, hateful and insulting language or prejudicial material will not be printed — unless integral to

the story.

Editors should use their best judgment in deciding what material is tasteful for *The Breeze's* readership. If there is any question, they should consult with the top editor.

Profanity is becoming increasingly prevalent in society as a form of verbal expression. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of *The Breeze* employees and contributors to curtail the use of profanity in stories and artwork appearing in the newspaper. This is not to enact a prohibition of such language; rather, it should be the editors' duty to encourage the omission of such language if it has no relevance to the story or piece of art.

If profanity provides an insight into the subject of an article, or is pertinent to the understanding of a comic strip, it is permissible. But profanity for profanity's sake is not allowed in *The Breeze*.

Certain words are also more popular and less offensive in society and the full word can be used in moderation if pertinent to the story, art or voice of the columnist. Other words should not be fully written out and should instead be typed with asterisks. These words are left to the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief.

Questions that should be discussed for controversial content and profanity:

- Does the language or image effectively communicate the intended message or is it distracting?
- Is this being used for shock value or for true journalistic purposes?
- Can the language or ideas be changed to less offensive forms?
- What do our advisers think about this use?

Obscenity is a legal term, and a three-part test must be applied to determine what material is obscene, under the Supreme Court's 1973 *Miller v. California* decision:

- Whether "a reasonable person applying contemporary community standards" would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to a prurient (lustful) interest.
- Whether the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined as obscene by the applicable state law.
- Whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific values.

A work that meets all three criteria is considered obscene.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is prohibited and is illegal if the material is copyright protected. Plagiarism is defined as the word-for-word duplication of another person's writing and shall be limited to passages that contain distinctively personal thoughts, uniquely stylized phraseology or exclusive facts.

Information obtained from a published work must be independently verified before it can be reported as a new, original story.

References to other publications in the form of "[news outlet] reported that [something happened]" are acceptable and needn't require much verification — this form only claims that the news outlet reported something, not that it is true. That being said, these references should be kept to a mini-

mum — all content should be original whenever possible, and the above form of referencing other outlets can be avoided by independently verifying events or facts reported on by other media outlets. In short, reporting in other papers, TV stations or other media outlets may not be taken for granted as true without independent verification from The Breeze, and nothing is ever assumed until facts are checked.

Another form of plagiarism with regards to artwork in The Breeze prohibits the facsimile of a copyrighted comic character, regardless of the appearance of that character within the pages of The Breeze. This policy also forbids lifting verbatim paragraphs from a wire service without attribution or from neglecting to include that wire stories were used in compiling the story.

A contributor who plagiarizes another's work will be terminated from The Breeze. Additionally, The Breeze will report on the plagiarism to its readers to maintain transparency. A contributor who plagiarizes also could be referred to the JMU Honor Council for violation of JMU's Honor Code.

Fabrication

The use of composite characters or imaginary situations or individuals is not allowed in the pages of The Breeze. A columnist may, occasionally, use this approach in developing a column. However, it must be made clear to the reader that the situation or individual is fictional.

The fabrication of sources is also prohibited, as is the use of friends or close acquaintances as sources for stories.

False Identity, Inappropriate Reporting

In the ordinary sense of reporting, no staff member shall misrepresent themselves as anything other than representatives of the publication. In extraordinary circumstances, and only when the Editor judges that the information cannot be obtained in any other way and the value of that information to the readers is important, the top editor may authorize undercover reporting. At no time will an editor authorize any misrepresentation which would violate the law (such as representing oneself as a law enforcement officer or some other government official).

Staff members may not steal or knowingly receive stolen materials.

Except in rare situations judged by the editor as extraordinary, a staff member shall not record an interview or meeting without the interviewee's permission or the obvious placement of a recording device (not hidden) at the start of the interview or meeting. Committing an illegal act to eavesdrop on a source is prohibited.

Privacy and Fair Play in Reporting

Journalists at The Breeze should show respect for the dignity, privacy, rights and well-being of people encountered in the course of gathering and presenting news. The following guidelines (adapted from SPJ) should be followed:

- The Breeze should not communicate unofficial charges affecting reputation or moral character without giving the accused a fair chance to comment.
- The Breeze must guard against invading a person's

privacy.

- The Breeze should not pander to morbid curiosity about details of vice and crime.
- The Breeze should make prompt and complete correction of its errors. (See Corrections and Clarifications.)
- Reporters and staff at The Breeze should be accountable to the university community for their reports. Readers should be encouraged to voice their grievances against the media group. Open dialogue with readers should be fostered.

Libel – The Basics

In short, libel is the defamation of someone's character. Specifically, it is a false statement of fact that damages the reputation of an individual or a business. To constitute libel, the individual must be identified by name, pictures, description, location, etc., and it must be published.

Libel is a serious offense, and one that could put The Breeze in serious jeopardy if committed. The greatest care must be taken when producing content to ensure fair and accurate reporting of individuals and groups. If libel does occur, editors should handle complaints professionally and immediately write retractions or corrections.

All staff members are required to attend an annual libel seminar by The Breeze's legal adviser, who is also available for questions at any time. Editors are also urged to enroll in Mass Communications Law; the top editor is required to take this.

Elements to prove in a libel suit:

- Publication
- Identification: Naming the individual, describing in detail the person or business, identifying a small group (each member may sue)
- Defamation: Must prove damage to reputation of an individual, organization or business; harm can be quantified as a price tag or emotional distress.
- Falsity: In matters of public concern, the plaintiff must prove the material false.
- Fault: Public officials and public figures (all-purpose of vortex) must prove "actual malice or reckless disregard for the truth." Private person must prove negligence.

There are a number of defenses for libel:

- Truth: The information published about the individual must be true.
- Fair comment: This category covers opinion columns, reviews of restaurants, plays, etc.
- Reporter's privilege: Accurate account of statements made during a public meeting, or in court information and public records.
- Statue of limitations: One year and one day from the time of publication.

Covering Crime and Police

Telling stories based on police reports provides a valuable service to the readers of The Breeze. Through these stories, readers are made aware of the environment around them and can be alerted to any safety hazards or trends in crime that may affect their lives. Due to the nature of these stories and

the effects they have on individuals mentioned in them, police reports must always be handled in a uniform and precise way. This ensures fair and equal treatment for all involved. The following guidelines should be followed when reporting on such stories:

- Editors should regularly look through all the daily reports and arrest reports from the Harrisonburg Police Department, and through the JMU Daily Police Crime Log online.
- Victims' names will not be printed unless they make the story important or unless the victim has given his or her express permission. Victims should be identified by gender, and if appropriate, their block address, occupation and class standing. Police will not identify names to media, and in certain situations, police may urge media not to publish names of victims or witnesses for their own safety, such as if a gang suspect is still at large after an incident. Editors should take such requests into consideration in their stories.
- Addresses of locations where a crime occurred should be referred to by block only unless the location is a business.
- At least two attempts should be made to contact persons identified in police reports as victims or suspects to allow those parties to comment and respond to the story. Every reasonable attempt should be made to contact any person or business named in the story before publication. If an individual named in the story could not be reached for comment, it must be stated in the story.
- If the crime reported is deemed relevant to The Breeze readership, no story should be blocked from being published, regardless of the parties' relationships to the newspaper, university or their political or social standing in the community. Some guidelines to determine relevance include but are not limited to: the crime occurred in or around the university; JMU students were named as suspects, victims or as other people involved; the crime involved JMU property; the crime involved a business or other public location frequented by students.
- Persons under the age of 16 listed as suspects are generally not to be identified by name, in accordance with applicable privacy laws, unless editors determine there is an extraordinary reason to do so.
- If an error is reported in The Breeze due to an error made by police when filing a report, a correction will still be printed to clarify the information for readers, but it should be labeled that the error came from police. Corrections will also be printed if an error is due to a reporting mistake by The Breeze. (See Corrections and Clarifications)
- Individuals named as suspects in arrest reports or who have given written statements confessing to the charges leveled against them will always be named in the story. Suspects objecting to having their names printed in connection with a story based upon police reports should be advised by The Breeze that the media organization has a right to print a suspect's name because it is a matter of public record.
- The Breeze does not judge all police reports to be relevant to its readership. Noise ordinance violations will normally not be reported in the police reports. Also, most attempted suicides, domestic violence incidents, switched license plates, found property and lost property reports will not be covered by The Breeze in police report stories. However, if a large vol-

ume of these crimes are occurring, they may warrant further coverage.

- Because of the delicate nature of stories based on police reports and the high risk of libel, any editors or writers working on such stories should always be prepared to confirm facts with the police department involved.

Press Releases

Press releases are public relations, and though they may offer substantial information, this information must be verified through staff reporting. As part of The Breeze's duty to fairly and accurately cover news and events, press releases from both government and private sources, student organizations or university officials, should never be published without substantiation of their claims and evaluation of their news value.

No department should rely solely on press releases for its source of relevant news and information for The Breeze readers. Student journalists should seek news that serves the university's interest, despite the obstacles.

Sources

Anonymous Sources

The use of unnamed sources in stories is discouraged and ideally should never be used. Reporters should always strive to find another source who may be willing to talk to the press with their name attached. However, in the likely chance that anonymous sources will appear in articles, these guidelines should be followed.

Before promising anonymity, a reporter should explain the situation to their section editor and to the top news manager, who must approve anonymity before the reporter makes that promise to a source.

Anonymous sources should sign a form to identify themselves and to pledge that the information they give is true and accurate.

Situations that could merit the need of an anonymous source include:

- To protect the source from legal ramifications (ex. students who willingly discussed Adderall abuse).
- To protect the source in case of safety concerns (ex. witnesses to a crime where there is no named suspect or charged).
- To protect the source from undue harassment from readers or emotional strain (ex. victim of a crime, especially a rape).
- To protect a source who is not authorized to release information.

The source should be identified generally as one associated with an agency, department or other connection to the situation to give credibility to the information. If a student, their year should be given. The hazards of using anonymous sources exists in that the reader may not believe the information provided by a source if their name is not given; the credibility of The Breeze suffers; information obtained later from a named source and verified may disprove information given earlier by the unnamed or unknown sources.

Employees as Sources

No employee or contributor of The Breeze may be used as a source in a story, or appear in a photograph, except in cases in which the story is about The Breeze or in cases in which it is absolutely necessary. In such cases, every other possible source should be explored first, and the employee must be referenced as a Breeze employee.

Former employees or contributors may be used as sources but must be identified as such. After three semesters of not participating in the production of the newspaper, they may be referenced without being cited as an ex-Breeze staffer.

It is the responsibility of the content producer to determine whether sources or subjects have an affiliation with the paper.

Non-objective sources

Reporters should not interview roommates, friends or relatives for a story. Other sources should be pursued whenever possible, or the reporter should pass the story and contacts off to another Breeze contributor. Staff members must declare conflicts and avoid involvement in stories dealing with members of their families, their friends, roommates or significant others. Staff members must not cover — in words, photographs, videos or artwork — or make news judgment about family members or persons with whom they have a financial, adversarial or close relationship.

Quotes, Dialect

Quotes are sacred. Don't clean them up to hide poor grammar, slang or broken English. If we're afraid that a direct quote will embarrass a speaker - particularly if the speaker is someone not accustomed to talking to the newspaper - paraphrase the information.

Never change dialect in quotes unless the person being quoted immediately corrected himself/herself during the quote. Changing someone's dialect changes their identity and often the way they wish to be quoted. If a quote is completely unmanageable, don't use it — find another source. If the source is absolutely vital, carefully paraphrase the person, so as to not change the meaning of their words.

Prepublication review

Reporters and editors should not let a source see a story before publication. However, having a source review parts of a story can ensure accuracy, especially for stories with scientific, technical, or specific nature. Reporters should check with his or her editor if a source asks to read a story before it is printed. If the editor agrees, the source will be given pieces of the story that include their information, and they may be permitted to check facts and quotes. Editors should not allow any arbitrary editing or rewriting of sentences or quotes.

Photographers should not show photos to sources before publication, except in the case of helping to identify subjects in a photo.

Exceptions should be discussed with editors.

Race and Sexual Orientation

Unless it is relevant to the story, avoid identifying a person's race, ethnic background or sexual orientation.

For appropriate uses of racial or ethnic terms, as well as those dealing with sexual orientation, consult the Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual, unless The Breeze Stylebook (a separate document) conflicts with it. The Breeze stylebook takes precedent over the AP Stylebook.

Suicides

The Breeze will follow this policy, adapted from The Roanoke Times:

"Generally, our policy on reporting suicides is intended to protect privacy. If a person takes his or her own life, in a private way and a private place, we normally do not write a story. However, if the person is or has been a public figure - someone who has been in the public eye and whose death would be considered newsworthy and thus warrant a news obituary - we will write the story and report suicide as the cause of death when we confirm it through official or family sources.

We also report suicides that occur in a public setting, whether or not the person was a public figure.

In all cases, we will be sensitive to the family and friends of the dead person, but we will follow our established standards on reporting causes of death."

Sexism

Writing with a sexist tone should be avoided. Reporters should write with a sense of equality and appropriateness and dignity for both genders.

Writers should avoid stereotyping jobs and careers. Do not report marital status unless it is relevant to the story. In news writing, use gender-free terms for roles of general groups of people, unless such use would be awkward or artificial or the wording appears in a quote.

Columnists are exempt from this policy only to the extent of using titles such as Mr. or Miss, or to use the gender specific forms of "he" or "she" when creating hypothetical examples in writing. Columnists may examine gender issues in their writing, but again, sexism in any writing published in The Breeze is not acceptable.

For more information, consult The Breeze and Associated Press stylebooks.

Sexual Assault

The Breeze will not report the names of sexual assault victims. In rare instances where these crimes may have happened in the public eye or to prominent people in the community, or when the victim allows their name to be used, the editor may make an exception.

Darts & Pats

Darts & Pats are anonymously submitted through The Breeze's website and printed on a space-available basis. Submissions creatively depict a given situation, person or event and do not necessarily reflect the truth.

They are chosen at the discretion of the Opinion Editor.

Darts should not be directed toward an identifiable person, group or business. For example, instead of directing a "Hellhole" dart toward a specific business, the Opinion Editor should edit it to broadly say an "apartment complex."

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor are the responsibility of the Opinion Editor. They can be submitted either via email, through the form on The Breeze's website, by mail or in person. The decision on which letters will run and which will not is at the discretion of the Opinion editor. Any questions should be brought up with the Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor.

Letters should not exceed 250 words. If they are longer, the Opinion Editor has the option of working with the author to edit them down, or may give the author the option of rewriting the letter.

No letter is to appear in The Breeze unless the Opinion Editor receives permission, either by phone, email or in person, from the letter writer. Letter writers must be contacted before publishing the letter to verify their identity and consent.

Letters authored by students must include the writer's name, year and major. Letters authored by faculty, staff, alumni or other members of the community, must include the writer's name, title and graduation year, if alumni.

In general, The Breeze has a policy of not responding to comments or criticism brought up in letters unless there exist factual errors, in which case there could be an editor's reply below the letter. Certain letters, columns or articles may elicit more feedback from readers through the form of letters. The Opinion Editor may choose to continue running back and forth responses to the extent that the letter provides something new for readers and does not rehash the same points others may have made.

The Breeze does not publish any responses from the staff. No staff members, with the exception of the Opinion Editor, should respond to criticism in a letter unless given permission by the Editor-in-Chief. Doing so would not only possibly misrepresent The Breeze, but it would also have the potential to discourage a necessary dialogue between The Breeze and its readers.

Best of the 'Burg

The Best of the 'Burg special section typically comes out in the spring semester and is a joint project involving the advertising and editorial staffs, though it should be indicated to readers which parts were done by which part of The Breeze staff to maintain transparency.

The Advertising and Marketing Coordinator leads the survey process. The survey should use write-ins for all the chosen categories to remain unbiased. Winners will be reported to the editorial staff, who can then choose how to cover them. As with all special sections, the Editor-in-Chief should assign its production to section editors who will assign reviews and/or short stories to writers.

Reviews of Alcohol

Any restaurant reviews that include information about alcoholic drink choices must be written by someone 21 and older.

Ownership of Content

The Breeze owns all content produced for it or any of its

publications. Once content has been published, it will not be removed from Breeze archives unless under extraordinary circumstances such as plagiarism, libel or extreme factual errors that go beyond a correction. Content creators may request that their content be reprinted elsewhere; permission should be granted by the top news manager, and the reprinted content should carry a credit to the creator and The Breeze.

ONLINE POLICIES

Breeze Accounts

The Breeze owns all of its online accounts, including email accounts, social media and website usernames. Staff members are given access to accounts to fulfill their Breeze responsibilities, and these should not be used any for personal reasons.

Supervisors should maintain a copy of all passwords on accounts. If someone leaves the staff for any reason, any passwords to the accounts they have used should be immediately changed.

Any inappropriate posts, use or harm directly to any of these accounts or using any of these accounts will not be tolerated, and could result in termination.

Comments on the Website

The Breeze requires users to log in to leave comments on any posts on the website. A valid email address or Facebook account must be provided to create an account. Other than this, the content of comments should not be moderated by any Breeze staff members.

Under the Safe Harbor of the Communications Decency Act, by not moderating comments, the provider of the website is exempt from being responsible for text provided by a non-staff user, except in cases of copyright infringement, according to the Student Press Law Center.

The website has a profanity filter that automatically blocks comments containing specified words. This is a default list of words that can be added to, changed or deleted by website administrators.

Users can also flag comments that may fall in many categories: inappropriate content, foul language, off topic, liability concern, duplicate post, spam, flaming, privacy concern, security concern, site policy violation, discrimination or unspecified. Website administrators will receive a message in this case. Website administrators can also deny any posts after they have been published, but should do so only in rare cases or to avoid libelous situations.

Staff members, including all editors and writers, should not comment with their opinions on any articles on the website, whether it is on a piece with their byline or not. Such posts are not protected under the safe harbor and could create liability issues for The Breeze.

Why We Don't Remove Online Articles

Editors may receive requests from a former student or someone quoted in a story asking for the story to be removed. However, just as it is with print, content published online is part of a community's archive and the public record. In general, The Breeze will not remove postings from its website. In order to maintain the trust of readers and sources, we

cannot undo history by deleting stories; if we were to do this with print, archives would be unusable.

If there is an error in a story, then editors should clarify that piece of a story immediately and also make it clear on the page what has been changed from the original version.

As the Student Press Law Center puts it: "If the material is lawful — that is, it is not defamatory nor an invasion of the individual's privacy — the fact that someone finds it embarrassing or bothersome does not obligate you to take it down. Additionally, it is important to remember that material that was lawful at the time of its original publication does not become improper with the passage of time — a publication cannot be held liable for its failure to update a past news article."

Top editors may discuss making exceptions to this policy, but the final decision rests with them.

Social Media

The Breeze Online Presence

Any posts on social media sites should follow the same journalistic ethics as the print and online versions of The Breeze.

Blogs

The Breeze should maintain blogs on its website as another less-formal type of communication. Blog content may be more relaxed in style, but should nonetheless be strongly reported, fair and accurate as all journalistic content should be.

Personal Use

Employees of The Breeze have individual First Amendment rights for free expression, so The Breeze cannot tell employees how to behave on personal social media sites. However, staff members should remember that they represent The Breeze at all times, even online. Activity that could negatively affect The Breeze or have other harmful consequences could result in disciplinary action.

- As young adults, staff members should strive to balance their fun with professionalism. Ask yourself, do you want your posts to be found by others, just as you may search for other people for stories? Try to keep the highest level of privacy settings on your pages, though this does not guarantee complete privacy.

- Do not publish anything unprofessional about The Breeze, including comments about your work, sources or co-workers. Complaints and rants reflect negatively on the newspaper.

Appendix

Where to Go For Information

Student Press Law Center

- <http://www.splc.org/>
- The Breeze has contacts with Executive Director Frank LoMonte and Attorney Advocate Adam Goldstein.
- 703-807-1904 and splc@splc.org

Society of Professional Journalists

- JMU Chapter
- SPJ.org
- Holds annual contests.

College Media Advisers

- CollegeMedia.org
- Holds two conferences each year for students and advisers.

Virginia Press Association

- VPA.org
- Holds annual contests.

The Reporters' Guide to the Freedom of Information Act in Virginia in 2010

- Published by the Virginia Press Association.

"Managing the College Newsroom"

Written and edited by Mark Witherspoon
Copyright © 2009 Associated Collegiate Press
Digital copy available on The Breeze server

Roanoke Times Standards and Policies

Available online at:
<http://www.roanoke.com/newsservices/wb/xp-59614>

The Daily Tar Heel

<http://www.dailytarheel.com/index.php/page/policies>

The Cavalier Daily Book of Policies and Procedures

Digital copy available on The Breeze server

SPJ's Code of Ethics

Available at: <http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>

Preamble

Members of the Society of Professional Journalists believe that public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy. The duty of the journalist is to further those ends by seeking truth and providing a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues. Conscientious journalists from all media and specialties strive to serve the public with thoroughness and honesty. Professional integrity is the cornerstone of a journalist's credibility. Members of the Society share a dedication to ethical behavior and adopt this code to declare the Society's principles and standards of practice.

- Seek Truth and
- Report It
- Journalists should be honest, fair and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.

Journalists should:

— Test the accuracy of information from all sources and exercise care to avoid inadvertent error. Deliberate distortion is never permissible.

— Diligently seek out subjects of news stories to give them the opportunity to respond to allegations of wrongdoing.

— Identify sources whenever feasible. The public is entitled to as much information as possible on sources' reliability.

— Always question sources' motives before promising anonymity. Clarify conditions attached to any promise made in exchange for information. Keep promises.

— Make certain that headlines, news teases and promotional material, photos, video, audio, graphics, sound bites and quotations do not misrepresent. They should not oversimplify or highlight incidents out of context.

— Never distort the content of news photos or video. Image enhancement for technical clarity is always permissible. Label montages and photo illustrations.

— Avoid misleading re-enactments or staged news events. If re-enactment is necessary to tell a story, label it.

— Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information except when traditional open methods will not yield information vital to the public. Use of such methods should be explained as part of the story

— Never plagiarize.

— Tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, even when it is unpopular to do so.

— Examine their own cultural values and avoid imposing those values on others.

— Avoid stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance or social status.

— Support the open exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.

— Give voice to the voiceless; official and unofficial sources of information can be equally valid.

— Distinguish between advocacy and news reporting. Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresent fact or context.

— Distinguish news from advertising and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two.

— Recognize a special obligation to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open and that government records are open to inspection.

Minimize Harm

Ethical journalists treat sources, subjects and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect.

Journalists should:

— Show compassion for those who may be affected adversely by news coverage. Use special sensitivity when

dealing with children and inexperienced sources or subjects.

- Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or grief.

- Recognize that gathering and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance.

- Recognize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than do public officials and others who seek power, influence or attention. Only an overriding public need can justify intrusion into anyone's privacy.

- Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity.

- Be cautious about identifying juvenile suspects or victims of sex crimes.

- Be judicious about naming criminal suspects before the formal filing of charges.

- Balance a criminal suspect's fair trial rights with the public's right to be informed.

Act Independently

Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know.

Journalists should:

- Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived.

- Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility.

- Refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel and special treatment, and shun secondary employment, political involvement, public office and service in community organizations if they compromise journalistic integrity.

- Disclose unavoidable conflicts.

- Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable.

- Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests and resist their pressure to influence news coverage.

- Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money; avoid bidding for news.

Be Accountable

Journalists are accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers and each other.

Journalists should:

- Clarify and explain news coverage and invite dialogue with the public over journalistic conduct.

- Encourage the public to voice grievances against the news media.

- Admit mistakes and correct them promptly.

- Expose unethical practices of journalists and the news media.

- Abide by the same high standards to which they hold others.

Now that you have read The Breeze's policy statements, you should go online and fill out our contributor's form to get started working on student media.

BreezeJMU.org/volunteer/form