

The Red & Black®

2025

ANNUAL REPORT

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On the cover: The 2025 Red & Black Spring Banquet honors the top students and scholarship recipients in that year's program. The event also brings together alumni, faculty and community supporters.
Credit: Kaleb Tatum



Jake Westing, photo contributor and EXTRA Creative Agency account manager on the sidelines at a Georgia Football game in Sanford Stadium in Fall 2025.
Credit: Mady Mertens

2025

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

The Red & Black is more than a student newspaper.

It is a launchpad. It shapes journalists, media innovators and civic leaders. It is part of the University of Georgia's history and an institution rooted in the state's story.

I chose to serve as Chair of the Board of Directors in 2025 for one purpose: to elevate the importance of what The Red & Black represents.

When I was a student, our Jackson Street office was my home base. I covered stories about campus history, economic development, public safety and cultural moments ranging from protests to new technology transforming student life. Working in that newsroom gave me the confidence to find my voice as a writer and set the foundation for my path as a civic leader.

This publication changes trajectories.

It gives students a real opportunity to influence public dialogue. It teaches them how to uncover truth, tell stories that matter and speak on behalf of people who may not otherwise be heard.

That is why I serve this organization and give annually. Our growing network of giving partners ensures The Red & Black remains independent, fearless and accessible to every student who needs a place to grow into the voice they are meant to become. Together, we are investing in the next generation of storytellers and leaders.

Their voices will shape the future. We simply make sure they have the platform. Thank you for supporting us in 2025 and beyond.

Mark Anthony Thomas

Chair, Red & Black Board of Directors, 2025

Editor in Chief, 1999



2025 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

In 2025, we engaged in a three-year strategic plan to set The Red & Black up for a sustainable future.

To do so, we engaged in a rigorous tightening of the belt, consolidating our student and professional workforce by more than 35%, while testing various revenue growth strategies across the organization, including in our advertising and fundraising departments.

By having a clear direction for addressing our fiscal health and a commitment to longevity, we have already seen necessary improvements to our bottom line and to a renewed focus on our mission.

Note: Our current annual deficit is supported through an endowment fund, though we cannot continue to withdraw at the rate of years past. Our goal is to reduce our reliance on this fund for general operations.

Operating Income

Print Ads	\$238,073
National Ads	\$16,640
Digital Ads	\$96,610
Donations and Grants	\$116,919
Ancillary & Events	\$135,686
Total	\$603,928

Operating Expenses

Payroll and Related	\$512,538
Printing	\$132,260
Building Management	\$79,487
Office	\$121,371
Bank Fees	\$8,805
Total	\$854,461

2025 MAJOR SUPPORTERS

Charles Smithgall
\$10,000

2025 FOUNDATIONS

Alex and Betty Smith Donor-Advised Fund
Google News Initiative
James M. Cox Jr. Institute for Journalism
Innovation, Management and Leadership
Don E. Carter and Carolyn McKenzie Carter
Endowment for Journalism Excellence
The Miami Foundation (NewsMatch)

We appreciate and rely on the generous support of alumni, friends and readers. Our policy is to disclose gifts of \$5,000 and above. To review more disclosures, our annual 990s or to make a contribution, visit redandblack.com/donate.

A WORLD IN WHICH

At The Red & Black, we have been a professional training ground for the future of the free press for more than 130 years. All the while, we have served as a consistent source of reliable news to the University of Georgia and Athens communities.

Our two-fold vision for this organization is evergreen, but in the process of developing a strategic plan that would launch us into a successful future, our vision and mission statements were in need of a refresh. The tradition of excellence at The Red & Black has no expiration – for with each new academic year brings an opportunity for hundreds of students to start their careers with us. To set our sights on a sustainable and innovative path forward, we have refined our approach.

MISSION

The Red & Black's mission is to serve the Athens and University of Georgia communities with reliable, independent news, while training the future of the free press.

VISION

The Red & Black's vision is a world in which independent student journalists are at the core of an informed and engaged community.

redandblack.com



COMMITTED TO SERVING YOU



Katie Guenther at the Back to Campus Breakfast, hosted annually with UGA administration, President and Red & Black staff.

As we reflect on the successes and challenges of 2025, I want to thank everyone who has helped support the vital work we do here at The Red & Black. Readers and supporters alike are what make our work worth doing, and I'm so grateful for all of you.

This support has enabled us to be present for some of our community's most important events this year, from Porchfest and local government meetings to multiple "No Kings" protests.

And, because we understand that it's our job to keep all of our community informed, we've rapidly expanded our Spanish coverage, publishing hundreds of translated articles and establishing a permanent Spanish-language page in our paper this year.

We engaged our community beyond our coverage, offering community listening sessions in our newsroom, coffee chats throughout local Athens businesses and hosted a ticketed pre-football

season fundraiser event to preview our season-long coverage of the Georgia Bulldogs.

This year, we covered every angle, we put boots on the ground for every story and we did it out of genuine care for our audience and our Athens and UGA communities.

The Red & Black is a completely independent, student-run news organization, and our mission is to serve our audience and train the next generation of journalists.

Now, it's more important than ever to support independent student news media, as we fill gaps in coverage that professional local news organizations are no longer able to fill. On behalf of everyone here at The Red & Black, thank you for your support. We could not do a single aspect of our work without it.

— Katie Guenther
Fall 2025 – Spring 2026
Editor in Chief

PROGRAM WINS



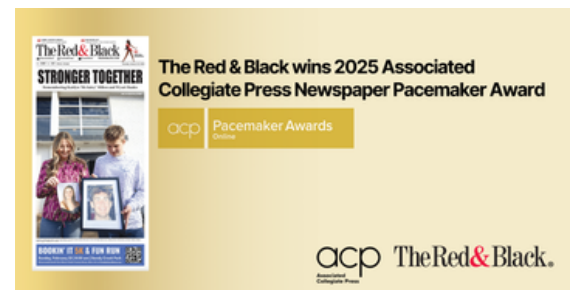
Tom Johnson (left) hosted a book talk at UGA for his memoir *Driven*, which details his journalism origins at The Red & Black, in October, moderated by Executive Director Charlotte Varnum.



The Red & Black completed our annual service day this fall where we volunteered at three different service sites in Athens.



The Red & Black hosted its first-ever Countdown to Kickoff event in August alongside Georgia sports greats Mark Schlabach (board member), Tony Barnhart, Brandon Adams and former Georgia football player David Pollack. The event raised more than \$5,000 for the organization.



Among The Red & Black's top honors we received last year, the national Pacemaker award from the Associated Collegiate Press for excellence in online media was a major win.

A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE



VISIBILITY

“The ongoing publication of the DEI report should serve as a testament to the progress we’ve made and as a tool to hold future generations accountable for continuing this work. We hope that by pursuing the goals and recommendations outlined here, The Red & Black will become an even more welcoming and inspiring space for all who wish to be part of it.”

Gabby Gruszynski, Deputy Editor for Standards & Practices 2025-2026 in the 2025 DEI Report



MOMENTUM

“I’ve been all around the newsroom, starting as a culture contributor, then being involved in diversity and inclusion, switching over to editorial to be the news editor for a tumultuous year, then editor in chief last fall. It’s hard for me to describe what these last four years at The Red & Black mean to me. I owe it all to this organization, and I love all these people so deeply.”

Libby Hobbs, 2025 Traugher Scholarship Recipient

ACCESSIBILITY

As our audience continues to grow and diversify, so does our responsibility to provide accessible, equitable coverage. This year, we began taking an essential step toward that mission by expanding our Spanish Language Desk, producing bilingual multimedia content that reflects the experiences and priorities of Hispanic and Latino residents.

These efforts have already strengthened our connection with younger audiences and families who rely on Spanish-language resources. However, the continued growth of the work requires sustainable support.

The
**Red &
Black**
EN ESPAÑOL

MISSION MILESTONES

142,000

average monthly
site users

5.1 MILLION

pageviews at
redandblack.com

14,045

articles, photos,
podcasts and
videos published

161,500

total print run,
including
newspaper &
magazines

48

students
received paid
staff positions

250

students received
newsroom
training

EXTRAORDINARY



AN AGENCY WITH FLAIR

The Red & Black's in-house creative agency saw tremendous growth in 2025 thanks to the work of our team of talented students. The agency provides creative branding and marketing solutions for local and statewide businesses ranging from academic industries to food, fitness, festivals, clothing and more.

INNOVATION

"EXTRA has truly grown into a team of bright, creative and passionate students who consistently deliver outstanding work. In 2025, EXTRA welcomed seven interns who quickly became pivotal members of our team and partnered with nine clients, achieving an impressive 42% retention rate as we head into 2026. I have no doubt that EXTRA will continue to thrive, and the future of the agency is nothing short of EXTRA-ordinary."
Riley Mason, 2025 Creative Agency Manager



— BECOME A TORCHBEARER



Carry the light for independent student news

The Red & Black Torchbearers are a collection of giving partners committed to lighting the path forward for our newsroom and democracy's next generation. With a monthly contribution, Torchbearers will help secure this future while receiving exclusive, members-only benefits throughout the year.

OPPORTUNITY TIERS

The Ally — \$10/month

- Exclusive Red & Black Torchbearer decal
- Red & Black holiday card
- Monthly membership newsletter

The Advocate — \$30/month

- All of the above
- Coupon code for The Red & Black Store

The Guardian — \$50/month

- All of the above
- Discounted admission to Red & Black events, including our spring banquet
- Receive special editions of The Red & Black newspaper, including football title papers such as the National Championship Edition

The Visionary — \$100/month

- All of the above
- VIP seating at Red & Black events
- Induction into The Ampersand Legacy Society
- Quarterly check-in call with Executive Director

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES *Where does your support go?*

The Red & Black's fundraising efforts are especially focused on costs associated with sustaining our newsroom: paying students while they train at The Red & Black, equipment needs and publishing expenses both in print and online.

Student Stipends

- Your support firstly goes to funding our student staff payroll, easily our biggest expense.
- We believe in paying our students for the professional work and service they provide to our community, but with our limited budget, we have not been able to expand roles or increase stipends in years. With your help, we can change this!

Equipment & Software Needs

- The Red & Black is constantly refurbishing our equipment so that our students can do their jobs, from editing pages on inDesign to photographing the Georgia Bulldogs using our cameras.
- We have increasing need for equipment and software upgrades and expanding our arsenal.

Publishing Expenses

- Outside of students, the "cost of doing business" is our next highest program expense, from the cost of maintaining redandblack.com to the cost of printing and distributing our legacy print products, which still see an 85% pick-up rate in our community.
- Funding this program can keep this important resource visible in our community as well as provide crucial professional development to our students.

For specific project growth and naming opportunities, please reach out to publisher@randb.com.

Ready to join? Scan here:

