

The Red & Black

2022-2023

ANNUAL REPORT



540 Baxter Street
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2022-2023

GIVING BACK TO SUPPORT OUR FUTURE

For student journalists, there's no experience quite like working at The Red & Black, and I'm fortunate enough to say that I've lived that testimony. As a University of Georgia student from 1998-2002, my time at The Red & Black — from when I walked through those doors on North Jackson Street for the first time in 1999 and was assigned my first article as a "stringer", to wrapping up my tenure as associate news editor in 2002 — was valuable and memorable for multiple reasons. Chief among them, I received invaluable real-world training in journalism and I was able to give back to the UGA and Athens communities by helping to provide reliable, independent news.

I look back on those days fondly, and I want future generations of journalists and alumni of The Red & Black to be able to do the same. For that to happen, we must ensure the organization's sustainability. Though we've operated successfully to date, The Red & Black cannot escape the effects of the digital transformation shaping all newsrooms nationwide, so we need to adapt.

After years of operating in the red and with more expected revenue losses on the horizon, we're making fundraising, grants and donations central aspects of our operating model to serve as pillars to supplement traditional advertising and event revenue. And we've already made tremendous progress in this direction.

Along with fundraising campaigns throughout each year, we're currently raising capital to establish a foundation, and the board of directors is now a giving board. Each member commits to personally support The Red & Black each year. These steps will hopefully help us meet our big-picture goal of achieving financial sustainability by 2030.

I thank each and every one of you for supporting our student journalists, whether it's reading The Red & Black for quality news coverage or making a financial donation. You'll continue to hear more about our progress toward our goals in the coming years, but please remember that everything we do today will determine our success tomorrow. Join me in giving back now to support our future.

Jamar Laster

Chair, Red & Black Board of Directors, 2022-2023



2022-2023 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

In 2022, we adjusted our print frequency to include monthly editions of The Red & Black along with special issues for G-Day, football home games and graduation. This schedule adjustment increased pick-up rates and managed printing expenses. In 2023, we invested in improved training, new computers and photo equipment.

We also hired an ad director and new newsroom adviser. Charlotte Norsworthy Varnum replaced Rebecca Burns as executive director following Burns' retirement.

Looking ahead, we are planting seeds for bolstered digital ad sales, donations and other miscellaneous income to narrow our deficit. Our current deficit is covered by our reserves, but as we plan for the future, we are building systems to minimize the reliance on those funds.

Note: Due to the change in our financial reporting from a fiscal year to a calendar year, this snapshot includes data from June-December 2022 and all of 2023.

Operating Income

Print (newspaper)	\$152,443
Print (books, magazines, guides)	\$237,978
Digital	\$237,318
Donations and Grants	\$142,830
Ancillary (includes merchandise)	\$195,997
Total	\$966,566

Operating Expenses

Payroll and Related	\$1,061,390
Printing	\$267,347
Building Management	\$116,257
Office (includes merchandise)	\$214,125
Fundraising	\$5,954
Total	\$1,665,073

Disclosure: In a commitment to transparency, our 990s and other disclosures are posted on our website. Visit redandblack.com/donate for details.

A VISION REDEFINED

At The Red & Black, we have been a professional training ground for the future of the free press for 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. 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 write their first lead, make their first photo, make their first sale or see their first byline. With each new academic year brings the bittersweet turning of tassels as we send off fresh Red & Black alumni into the workforce to change the media landscape for the better.

Generations of professionals owe their start to The Red & Black, and you, reader, may be among them. As we celebrate 130 years this year and 44 years of independence, The Red & Black faces a difficult reality that threatens our future. We are grappling with many of the same challenges of newsrooms all over the world, including revenue uncertainty. However, we are on the right path to continued sustainability for our organization so that we may continue doing what we do best: journalistic excellence.

To preserve our future, we are adapting our vision to sustain our mission of serving students and our audience. And we need your help. You can help us guarantee the opportunity for future students to get their start at The Red & Black. You can help us continue to supply award-winning reporting to a community where local news is sparse.

Please consider making a monthly gift to The Red & Black. Sustained support will give us the structure we need to adapt to the future of nonprofit news.

redandblack.com/donate 



NEW LEADERSHIP, OLD TIES

I got my start at The Red & Black as a crime reporter my freshman year at the University of Georgia. I had no idea what it meant to be a journalist nor whether I wanted to be one.

Not only did The Red & Black give me the opportunity to figure that out, it gave me a community on a campus of thousands.

When I earned my first byline in the newspaper,



Me, at 18, with my first front page.

my editors cheered me on, later giving me the coveted “rookie of the year” award.

The next year as news editor, my car was broken into and my camera was stolen.

Unable to afford a replacement, fellow students in the newsroom chipped in to buy me a new one, surprising me at a desk meeting. It meant the world to me, and still does.

My time at The Red & Black was defined by more than just career readiness and reporter training. It was also defined by the lasting relationships I forged in the process.

In January 2023, I stepped into the executive director role. It has been an honor to serve the organization that gave me so much at such a crucial time in my life. And I know my story is not unique.

Since The Red & Black served as a constant for me and I am sure for you, we all have to work together to ensure it remains a constant for those in the years to come. I hope you’ll join me in this commitment.

— Charlotte Varnum
Executive Director

PROGRAM WINS



Juanita Cousins Traughber presenting her inaugural diversity scholarship to Dawn Sawyer with Board Member Tracie Powell in April 2023.



Red & Black leadership at the Athens Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting for our new creative agency, EXTRA, in October 2023.



Spring 2023 Sports Editor Stuart Steele and Assistant Editor John James pose with their copies of “Undeclared,” our Georgia Football book published after the second-straight national title win.

MISSION MILESTONES

250,000
average monthly
site users

7 MILLION
pageviews at
redandblack.com

12,000
articles, photos,
podcasts, and
videos published

282
students received
newsroom
training

74
students
received paid
staff positions

6
students
received
scholarships

A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

*Times may be a-changing, but our commitment to journalistic excellence has never wavered.
Here are dispatches from the newsroom.*

GROWTH

“We find that our print audience has changed and our readers spend more time with our newspapers, and prefer the deep-dive approach into our print stories because our audience for breaking news events and latest updates are on digital. I think the best parts of this model is watching how a story evolves from the first pitch to the final draft, and pushing our photographers and writers to spend time with the story, each other and their sources.”

Liz Rymarev, EIC 2023-2024



ORIGINS

“The Red & Black has given me amazing experience in journalism that enhanced and supplemented my classwork. It has given me a genuine connection to and awareness of the Athens community. It's given me a network, a platform, a career path and life-long friends!”

Lilly Kersh, Print Managing Editor 2023-2024

VISIBILITY

“Being awarded the Juanita Cousins Traugher Scholarship was an honor. Not only did it affirm The Red & Black’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, but it also affirmed that the work I have been doing to help amplify marginalized voices does not go unnoticed. It has encouraged me to continue strong in my pursuit of stories pertaining to social justice and racial equity.”

Dawn Sawyer, 2023 Scholarship Recipient



SUPPORTERS

We appreciate and rely on the generous support of alumni, friends and readers. Our policy is to disclose gifts of \$5,000 and above and to list all other donors by name only. Make your gift today at redandblack.com/donate. The following list represents donations made between June 1, 2022, and Dec. 31, 2023, due to adjustments from a fiscal year to a calendar year.

MAJOR SUPPORT

The Miami Foundation
(NewsMatch)
\$33,700
Don E. Carter and Carolyn
McKenzie Carter Endowment
for Journalism Excellence
\$8,000
Juanita Cousins Traugher
\$7,000

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