



The Southern DIGEST — both in print and online — will be a timely resource of information about the Southern University community. It will report on news, issues, activities, academics and athletics, in addition to offering a forum for discussion, reviews and commentary. It will also be an effective learning experience for students, who will have the final authority over what is published.

HANDBOOK

SOUTHERN DIGEST NEWSPAPER



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Staff policies

COPYRIGHT / DIGEST WORK

Work created for (and paid for by) The Southern DIGEST belongs to the publication first. Having work published anywhere else first diminishes the value of that work when it is published by The Southern DIGEST. **The Southern DIGEST has exclusive rights to published content for six months** after publication and to unpublished work done for The Southern DIGEST for two months.

After that time, both The Southern DIGEST and the student who created the work share the copyright, with each having equal rights to publish and/or sell the work. Students **may not sell work created for The Southern DIGEST to other professional media outlets** without permission.

This policy is the internal operating policy of The Southern DIGEST and is not intended to be a part of or supersede any policies of the University. Any actions taken in accordance with this policy shall be considered confidential, internal personnel matters, and shall be separate from any University

HIRING DIGEST STAFF MEMBERS

Other than the Editor-in-Chief, hired by the Board of Student Publications, DIGEST staff members are hired by the Editor-in-Chief. The Southern DIGEST staff members are expected to adhere to Southern University Policies and the Student Code of Conduct, while maintaining the editorial independence required of a newspaper. In addition, staff members are expected to follow The Southern DIGEST's policies and professional code of ethics.

NEWSROOM PROFESSIONALISM

While we encourage a fun environment, The Southern DIGEST newsroom is a place of business, and staff members are expected to act accordingly. While you are college students, remember that not everyone is comfortable with certain language or talk, and no one should ever feel uncomfortable or not welcome in the newsroom. Act and talk professionally. The newsroom is a place of business and students, staff, faculty and administrators from across campus might stop by. Make sure what they walk into is a professional environment.

Staff members should refrain from discussing personal or workplace issues they may have with other staff members in a way that is open and involves other staff members. The newsroom is not the place to hash out personal or professional differences. If you have a professional concern about another staff member or the workplace, present those concerns to your section editor or the editor-in-chief, so the concerns can be addressed professionally and appropriately. Be extremely careful about what you say about other staff members — particularly in texts, direct messages, etc. Those things have a way of resurfacing or getting back to the person you are talking about, causing not only hurt friendships, but personal problems on staff.

In other words: Leave the drama at the door.

ALCOHOL/DRUG USE

Staff members may not bring alcoholic beverages or any form of illegal drug into the newsroom, nor may they permit any persons accompanying them to possess alcohol or illegal drugs.

Staff members may not enter the office if they are intoxicated or inebriated or have consumed any amount of alcohol or drugs that would alter their thought process, slur their speech or cause them to engage in disruptive behavior.

Staff members may not drink when working on an assignment. Even after the interviews, photos and/or sales are completed, the employee shall not engage in behaviour that would adversely reflect on The Southern DIGEST.

DISCRIMINATION & SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The Southern DIGEST does not discriminate in its employment practices, or in its educational programs or activities on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, political affiliation, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or status as a veteran.

Sexual misconduct, relationship violence, and stalking are forms of sex discrimination and are prohibited under Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, other federal law, and SU System policies.

Any staff member who believes they have experienced discrimination or sexual harassment in violation of this policy should contact the following:

- The Dean of Students at (225) 771-4134, located 2nd Floor Student Union.
- The Title IX Coordinator at (225) 771-4955, located in Blanks Hall, room 245.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Staffers may not cover a campus organization of which they are a member, or participate in any news, editorial or business decisions regarding that organization.

To maintain the role of the press as an independent watchdog of government, section editors and news staff should not be an elected or appointed member of the Student Government Association.

Staffers are expected to reveal any potential conflicts of interest to their editor, including but not limited to employment with other media or activities, clubs, political and religious organizations. Staffers are expected to avoid any assignments involving close friends or family, or those that may compromise or give the appearance of compromising journalistic fairness and integrity.

Staff members who belong to organizations may, however, share tips about those organizations that they think might be newsworthy. If it is deemed newsworthy, other staffers not associated with the organization may pursue the tip.

VOLUNTEER & CAMPUS-MEDIA WORK

Other employment and volunteer work should not conflict with the staffer's first responsibilities to the publication.

Likewise, to avoid a conflict of interest, a staffer should not have similar positions with another campus news, public-information or public-relations media or organization. Any potential work that could that could be seen as a potential conflict or overlap should be cleared with the Editor in advance.

FABRICATION

The use of composite characters or imaginary situations or characters isn't allowed in news, sports or feature stories. A journalist never attributes something to a person if they did not say it. Fabrication is an especially egregious act against journalism and could lead to immediate removal from staff.

(See IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION at right.)

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is prohibited and illegal if the material is copyright protected. For the purposes of this code, 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. A comparable prohibition applies to the use of graphics and photographs. Information obtained from a published work must be independently verified before it can be reported as a new, original story.

STAFF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The Editor may initiate internal disciplinary action for non-compliance with The Southern DIGEST's policies or for failing to full-fill the expectations of employment. Not doing assigned work, missing deadlines or engaging in activities that create a conflict of interest (real or perceived) all harm the quality of the newspaper and other staff members abilities to do their jobs.

If a staff member's conduct is in conflict with policies or with the objective of the newspaper as established by the Board of Student Publications, the editor is expected to offer specific remedial steps a staff member can take to prevent further infractions, and to allow staff members a reasonable period of time to correct and improve on their performance.

Infractions may include, but are not limited to:

- failure to meet an established deadline
- failure to attend staff meetings
- poor job performance
- gross insubordination and/or disruption of the staff and process
- engaging in activities that are against the conflict of interest policy

The Editor is required to document in writing the reason and rationale for the disciplinary action. The actions available to the Editor are as follows:

1. Verbal warning — A verbal reminder of job-related infraction, to be delivered in a face-to-face meeting with the staff member.

2. Written warning — A written document following the verbal warning from the Editor that notifies the staff member of job-related infractions, and lists the resulting consequences for additional infractions.

3. Notice of suspension from staff — A written document from the Editor issued after one or more written warnings have been issued, which notifies the staff member of suspension from the staff for a specific period of time, not to exceed two weeks. During the term of suspension, the staff member will not be paid or assigned any duties. The Editor and staff member should meet with the adviser to discuss the rationale for suspension and steps for correction.

4. Removal from staff — Ultimately, the Editor is responsible for the content and the quality of the student newspaper. If a staff member is no longer actively contributing or if after warnings and sufficient time and resources, the staff member has not improved performance, they may be removed from staff, which means they would receive no more reporting, photo, multimedia or design assignments

Confidentiality — A disciplinary action is considered a personnel action and is kept confidential from staff members or students. The Editor must retain a file copy of written reprimands and is advised to have the reprimanded staff member or student sign the file copy as acknowledgment of its receipt.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Using AI (including Chat GPT, Adobe Firefly and other generative AI tools) to create any **content is considered off limits for now.** If you have an idea for a journalistic use of AI, in all instances, talk with the Editor first.

IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION

In a few exceptional cases, the Editor has the authority to immediately suspend a staff member without issuing a formal warning. These instances include, but are not limited to:

- fabrication of information or quotes
- deliberate and damaging plagiarism
- malicious destruction of newspaper property
- acceptance of money or other special favors in exchange for favorable coverage
- misappropriation of funds

These actions could cause serious legal and ethical ramifications for the newspaper and simply cannot be tolerated.

NEWSROOM ACCESS RELAX AND CARE

The Southern DIGEST newsroom is a place of business and should be treated accordingly.

- Students may have access to 1062 Hall to relax, congregate, and talk ideas. No one should be sharing ideas that are on the story board. A limited number of editors will have keys to the office if needed, so if you do not have a key, you will need to coordinate with someone who does to get in. (Gameday)

- DO NOT leave the office doors unlocked if there are no employees inside. Doing so invites anyone to walk in and steal expensive equipment — or snoop through anything in the newsroom. Likewise, the workstudy and editors should keep their offices locked when they are not occupied.

- Please keep food to the designated area. Covered beverages are fine anywhere. Always clean up after yourself.

EQUIPMENT | BADGES

DIGEST cameras and computers are expensive items. It is your responsibility to handle them with care and use them for professional DIGEST work and business only. Cameras and badges must be checked out by the students who are taking the assignment. If they are not returned, your student account with the university will have a hold put on it until you've paid for the equipment.

If badges aren't returned, your student ID will be deactivated, thus no cafe visits etc.

DIGEST Policies

ADVERTISING

Advertising is accepted and encouraged in The Southern DIGEST, both in print and online. Advertisements must be approved by the Assistant Director, and The Southern DIGEST reserves the right to refuse any advertisement.

Examples of advertisements The Southern DIGEST would refuse include any advertisement that:

- is libellous
 - violates a local, state or federal law
 - promotes academic dishonesty
 - encourages discrimination against any individual or group on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, religion or disability.

ONLINE READER COMMENTS

The Southern DIGEST welcomes and encourages readers to comment on our content and engage in substantive, lively, and relevant exchanges over topics. Reader comments featured on sustudentmedia.com do not represent the views or opinions of The Southern DIGEST or Southern University, and we can't vouch for the accuracy or appropriateness of comments from readers. Permission to post reader comments and the good-faith of our readers is assumed.

The Southern DIGEST (sustudentmedia.com) reserves the right to edit or delete any and all reader comments at the sole discretion of the Editor.

- Reading and posting comments at sustudentmedia.com constitutes acknowledgment of and agreement to the terms outlined in this comment policy.

- All comments must comport with applicable state and federal laws. The Southern DIGEST (sustudentmedia.com) has no obligation to monitor, edit, censor, or take responsibility for comments. Commenters are solely responsible for the content of their comments and should ensure that their comments are lawful and fall within the stated guidelines.

- The Southern DIGEST is not responsible for and often disagrees with material posted in the comments section. Comments are opinion. Comments may or may not be accurate.

REMOVING CONTENT

As a historical record of Southern University, The Southern DIGEST does not delete or remove content from its website, even in the event of an error (see the section on corrections). Simply removing the story does not expunge the errors and could potentially damage The Southern DIGEST's transparency and credibility.

Similarly, if a story subject or source, or even a staff member comes back years later asking for a story to be removed for some reason, this policy remains.

ALTERING PHOTOS/VIDEO/AUDIO

With the newspaper's credibility on the line, just as we do not fabricate information, we do not electronically alter photographs, video or audio in any way that changes the original content. Violation of this will result in probation for the photographer (or staff member/editor) on first offense and removal from staff on the second offense.

Posing photos is acceptable when it is explicitly described as a posed photo to readers (i.e. a portrait for a feature story); however, posing a photo and presenting it to readers or editors as a candid photo is akin to fabrication. This could lead to immediate removal from staff.

COURTESY ART / NON-STUDENT WORK

The Southern DIGEST ALWAYS attempts to create all its own content — stories, art, photos, etc. When it's necessary to publish something a student did not create, the staff may ONLY do so with explicit written permission. The preferred credit lines include:

Photo courtesy of xxxxxxxxxxxxx.

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES, POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Political involvement, including off-campus public office and service in community organizations, should be considered carefully to avoid compromising both the The Southern DIGEST and its coverage. It is important to preserve the journalist's position as an independent observer and fact-finder. No SouthernDIGEST staffers are allowed to join SGA Campaign team or accept gifts relative to.

ANONYMOUS SOURCES

Using anonymous sources can diminish the credibility of a story or The Southern DIGEST's overall credibility. Anonymity should be granted to sources only in rare cases when they have valuable information that cannot be obtained in any other way and when the source's personal safety, well-being or employment could be at risk if the information is attributed to their name.

Reporters are not allowed to grant a source anonymity without first getting approval from the editor-in-chief.

Additionally, the source and reporter must agree to establish anonymity ahead of time. A source cannot agree to go on the record and then retroactively tell the reporter that the information can only be reported anonymously.

Using anonymous sources also requires additional diligence and vetting on the reporters and editors' parts. Before granting anonymity, consider these questions: Why is the source asking for anonymity? Could they possibly have an ulterior motive for sharing this information (i.e. wanting to falsely damage someone's reputation)? Can I obtain this information elsewhere? If not, is there any way I can verify or support the information the anonymous source is sharing?

Finally, if anonymity is granted, the reporter and editor must work even harder to make sure they believe the source is credible. Verify any details possible from the source's story/account of things to make sure those details are factual. If any of the details you can verify turn out to be untrue, it weakens the source's credibility, and you should seriously consider not publishing the information.

In response to the Student Press Law Center's alert in May 2025, we acknowledge that at this moment, it is essential to hear from those most impacted by current U.S. policies. It is our duty as journalists to seek them out and to find the balance required to tell the most accurate story we can while minimizing harm. Pseudonyms or "anonymous" attribution for individuals, especially for non-citizens, speaking about sensitive topics (e.g., immigration, foreign policy, dissent), will be strongly considered.

COVERING SUICIDES

Covering death by suicide is something that the editor considers on a case-by-case basis, considering both newsworthiness and potential for impact, both negative and positive.

In covering suicide, be especially respectful of the victim, the survivors and the community. Inform your readership without sensationalizing the suicide or the manner of death. Use a reputable resource on suicide prevention to provide information on warning signs, what to do and whom to call.

Consider follow-up reporting on suicide as a public-health issue, with information from suicide-prevention experts.

CORRECTIONS

Student employees, paid or unpaid, are expected to be accurate and fair in all of their work. However, if an error does occur, it should be promptly and publicly corrected. Complaints and/or requests for corrections or clarifications must be reported immediately to the student's editor, who will make the determination whether a correction or clarification should be published.

Any correction should be immediately added to the bottom of the online story and should appear in the corrections and clarifications section of the next print issue. In some cases, the editor may choose to post the note at the top of the story

The editor should summarize the error and state the facts in a note marked "CORRECTION," along with the time and date the correction was made. Generally speaking, editors should avoid flatly repeating the error, as that risks further amplifying it.

Errors that could be libellous or require a more prominent display may go on the front page. This will be at the editor-in-chief's discretion.

For errors in social media, a new post correcting the erroneous information should be made as soon as possible. In instances or platforms where the erroneous post can be edited, the correction should be handled in a fashion similar to corrections on the website. Deleting an erroneous social media post will not expunge it.

SOCIAL MEDIA (INDIVIDUALS)

Your personal social media affects the news organization. Personal social media, blogs and podcasts, for example, will be perceived by readers as a corollary to or even a component of the organization's news content.

On that note, repeatedly or knowingly sharing disinformation on social media — especially disinformation about voting, public health or The Southern DIGEST's coverage — is considered a serious infraction of your responsibilities as a member of The Southern DIGEST's staff and could lead to consequences, including and up to removal from staff.

The editor-in-chief reserves the right to monitor the social media accounts of staff members and discuss with them content shared on their personal social media feeds if necessary. This includes more private forms of social media, such as Snapchat and Facebook, wherein the accounts may not necessarily be open to the general public.

Staff members are highly discouraged from having anonymous or "burner" accounts, especially if there are people connected to the account who know your true identity. Interacting with commenters or followers on The Southern DIGEST's social media pages through a burner account, for example, could result in immediate removal from staff.

PRESS CREDENTIALS

Press credentials are for work assigned by editors. It is unethical and against The Southern DIGEST's policy to use your position on The Southern DIGEST to gain press credentials for an event not assigned for you to cover.

TRAVEL FOR REPORTING

Travel requests for reporting should go first to section editors and then to the Director. If both agree, the editor should discuss the budget requirements with the Director to make sure there are enough travel funds available in the budget for that fiscal year.

University protocol for student travel must be followed for any travel for which a DIGEST staff member wishes to have expenses paid. Please let the Director know at least three weeks in advance for in-state travel and at least a month prior for out-of-state travel. (Exceptions will be made for reporting needs that come up last minute, of course.)

CONTESTS/HONORS

Many opportunities for contests exist through state and national journalism organizations. If you have work you would like submitted for an award, please notify the appropriate section editor and/or the editor-in-chief. When limited submissions may be made, the editor-in-chief will consult with the Director, but the final decisions about which pieces to enter will lie with the editor-in-chief/section editors.

The Southern DIGEST's generative AI policy

1. Human-first, human-preferred

Our journalists remain responsible for everything we produce and publish. Careful consideration is taken regarding the use of generative AI. We strive to verify anything created with help from generative AI.

2. Why and how we use AI

We may use AI to assist with tasks such as transcribing interviews, translating content, checking for grammar/style mistakes, helping us spot patterns in large data sets or brainstorming. If AI plays a major role in a story or feature, we'll tell you how and why it was used.

3. Your data, your trust

We do not input private or sensitive information into AI tools.

4. AI in visual journalism

Images shape how we understand the world, and they are an important part of our journalism. Our credibility is of the utmost importance to us. Simply stated, we want you to believe that what we publish is real and accurate. To that end, we do not use AI to generate images nor do we use the generative AI tools in Adobe Creative Cloud apps.

The photographs you see in The Southern DIGEST are real (and the content in them unmanipulated). We pay illustrators to create the illustrations you see. Even if we use stock art with a story, we take steps to make sure that stock art was either photographed or created by a person, not by generative AI.

Internal AI policies

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Although generative AI has the potential to improve newsgathering, it also has the potential to harm journalists' credibility and our unique relationship with our audience.

As we proceed, the following five core values will guide our work:

Transparency

When we use generative AI in a significant way in our journalism, we will document and describe to our audience the tools with specificity in a way that discloses and educates. This may be a short tagline, a caption or credit, or for something more substantial, like an editor's note.

Accuracy and human oversight

All information generated by AI requires human verification. Everything we publish will live up to our long-time standards of verification. For example, an editor will review prompts, and any other inputs used to generate substantial content, including data analysis, in addition to the editing process in place for all of our content.

Privacy and security

Our relationship with our audience is rooted in trust and respect. To that end, we will protect our audience's data in accordance with our newsroom's privacy policies. We will never enter sensitive or identifying information about our audience members, sources or our own staff into any generative AI tools.

Accountability

We take responsibility for all content generated or informed by AI tools. Any errors or inaccuracies resulting from the use of these tools will be transparently addressed and corrected. We will regularly audit feedback forms and incorporate audience feedback into policy updates. And violations of this policy will require retraining and possible disciplinary action.

Exploration

With the five previous principles as our foundation, we will embrace exploration and experimentation. We will strive to invest in newsroom training so every staff member is knowledgeable about the responsible and ethical use of generative AI tools.

ACCEPTABLE USES OF AI

We encourage the use of generative AI to improve efficiency and automate routine tasks. As such, we allow the use of AI tools for the following tasks:

Transcription

We may use generative AI to transcribe interviews and make our reporting more efficient. Our journalists will review transcriptions and crosscheck with recordings for any material to be used in articles or other content.

Translation

We may use generative AI tools to translate material for article research. We may also use those tools to translate article content to reach new audiences, which will always be reviewed by an expert in the language and include the following disclosure: This article/audio/video was translated using generative AI to be able to reach new audiences. It has been reviewed by our editorial team to ensure accuracy. Read more about how and why we use AI in our reporting [here]. Send feedback [here].

Searching and assembling data

We may use AI to search for information, mine public databases or assemble and calculate statistics that would be useful to our reporting and in the service of our audience. Any data analysis and writing of code used on the website will be checked by an editor with relevant data skills.

Grammar & style checks

Generative AI may be used as a tool to assist with copyediting tasks, such as identifying grammar issues, suggesting style improvements or rephrasing sentences for clarity.

Brainstorming

We may use generative AI to brainstorm headline ideas, questions for interviews, email drafting and other usages approved by the editor-in-chief. No ideas generated by AI are included in final content for publication in The Southern DIGEST without the knowledge and approval of the editor-in-chief. If approval is given to use AI in an editorial context, it must be clearly noted.

AI TERMS TO KNOW

Generative AI: A type of artificial intelligence that creates new content, such as text, images, or media, by interpreting and generating based on input data.

Large language models (LLMs): AI systems trained on vast datasets of text to understand and generate human-like language, and is the information backbone that powers Generative AI.

AI prompt: A specific input or instruction provided to an AI tool to generate a desired output.

Hallucination: The phenomenon where AI generates information or responses that are fabricated, inaccurate, or not grounded in fact.

Training data: The dataset — articles, research papers or social media posts — used to teach an AI model patterns, relationships and knowledge for making predictions or generating content.

The Southern DIGEST

STAFF POLICY AGREEMENT

With the exception of the editor-in-chief and, all DIGEST staff members are hired as contractors, chosen by the respective section editors. Contractors have no guarantee of a position or a job, and it is understood that a position may be eliminated at any time. The section editors are ultimately responsible for deciding what work is assigned to whom. These decisions are content related — both the type and topic of the content and quality of the content is at the discretion of the editor. The section editors are hired by the Student Publications Board. Everyone else is part of a general staff group that pays students for high-quality work on a per assignment basis.

All stories written, photographs taken or any other assignments performed for The Southern DIGEST should receive priority over other requests for your work you may receive from other media outlets or jobs. It is also understood that material submitted to the The Southern DIGEST may be published in The Southern DIGEST's print edition, on sustudentmedia.com, in the podcasts, and on any of The Southern DIGEST's social media accounts. Staffers also understand that The Southern DIGEST may use their work for promotional and marketing purposes.

All information received as a DIGEST staff member is proprietary. This includes press releases, news budgets, story ideas and conversations with editors or advisers. Release of such material to a source, to a competing news organization or to any unauthorized person is grounds for loss of leadership positions / work assignments.

Plagiarism includes use of previously published material as your own, copying off the web or from other sources, and fabricating quotes, people or facts. It also includes using AI to generate work. If you plagiarize, you will be subject to disciplinary action, including loss of leadership positions / work assignments.

DIGEST staff members are expected to be accurate and fair in all of their work. However, if an error does occur, it should be promptly and publicly corrected. Complaints and/or requests for corrections or clarifications must be reported immediately to the student's editor, who will make the determination whether a correction or clarification should be published.

Staffers are expected to reveal any potential conflicts of interest to their editors, including but not limited to employment with other media, PR-related activities on campus or for any outside business or organization. Staffers are expected to avoid any assignments involving close friends or family, or those that may compromise or give the appearance of compromising journalistic fairness and integrity.

DIGEST staff members who fail to complete assignments, who maintain substandard performance or who do not comply with editorial, business or personnel policies of The Southern DIGEST may be demoted on staff or no longer receive any work from The Southern DIGEST.

Use of office technology: computers, cameras and related technology are there for your responsible use in the production of authorized DIGEST work, whether print or digital. Staffers may, however, occasionally use office technology for coursework, provided that no one else needs to use the equipment for publications related assignments and such use is approved by the publication adviser. Office technology may not be used for unauthorized non-academic projects or personal gain. Passwords and access to The Southern DIGEST server and other accounts are to be kept in strict confidence.

I acknowledge that I have read The Southern DIGEST staff handbook and the key policy statement above.

STUDENT NAME (PRINT)

DIRECTOR. STUDENT MEDIA (SIGNATURE)

STUDENT NAME (SIGNATURE)

DATE

DATE

The Southern DIGEST

COPYRIGHT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

As a condition of being a member of The Southern DIGEST staff, I hereby understand and agree that The Southern DIGEST has joint copyright to any work subject to copyright that I create or prepare and submit for publication including items not published or otherwise used.

Such rights shall be granted to The Southern DIGEST in perpetuity, allowing publication of my work in projects created or commissioned by The Southern DIGEST in any medium.

Additionally, The Southern DIGEST may allow my work to appear in third-party publications in order to promote the publication. The Southern DIGEST may also grant use of my work to media partners the publication collaborates with.

For the purpose of use of this material by The Southern DIGEST, I understand that I will be compensated for a work one time only.

I understand that I will retain resale rights for my work, allowing me to sell my work to approved third parties, including but not limited to other WSU offices and departments, with time restraints detailed in The Southern DIGEST's handbook.

I understand that I must receive written approval from the current editor-in-chief before selling work originally created for The Southern DIGEST to another publication. I will not, under any circumstances, be permitted to sell my work to any publication in direct competition with The Southern DIGEST. Likewise, when on assignment for The Southern DIGEST, I understand that I am obligated to submit my work first before publishing on my own website/ socials or submitting to another group or individual for publication.

Additionally, work published in a third party must credit The Southern DIGEST in addition to myself. For example, "AP photo by John Doe via The Southern DIGEST" or "By John Doe, The Southern DIGEST."

The term "work" includes articles, photographs, illustrations, cartoons, designs and any other creative work. A "work" shall be considered to be one article, one photograph, one illustration, and likewise. Multiple stories in a package or multiple photos in a take will be considered to be multiple works.

Finally, I understand that I retain all rights to use my work for my own personal portfolio or for entries for contests, scholarship programs, internship programs and job searches. Such rights include publishing my work to an online portfolio, but I will not do so in a way that reduces the value of the work for The Southern DIGEST. I will not be required to seek permission from an editor for such uses of my work; however, I will not allow such use to reflect poorly upon the image and brand of The Southern DIGEST.

I understand that if I breach any portion of this agreement I will be suspended from leadership positions / work assignments for at least two weeks on first offense. Multiple offenses will result in longer suspensions.

I have read the above and agree to the Copyright Policy.

STUDENT NAME (PRINT)

DIRECTOR (SIGNATURE)

STUDENT NAME (SIGNATURE)

DATE

DATE

Members of the Society of Professional Journalists believe that public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy. Ethical journalism strives to ensure the free exchange of information that is accurate, fair and thorough. An ethical journalist acts with integrity. — *Preamble to the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics*

SPJ Code of Ethics

BRAVELY SEEK TRUTH, VERIFY IT, AND REPORT IT ACCURATELY

Ethical journalists should be accurate and fair. Journalists should be honest and courageous in gathering, reporting, and interpreting information.

DIGEST journalists should:

- Attribute everything.
- Act as watchdogs for the public by finding the truth. Question everything. Be vigilant and courageous about holding those in power accountable. Give voice to the voiceless.
- Seek to ensure the public's business is conducted in the open, and that public records are open. Report when and if things are being hidden.
- Support the open and civil exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.
- Provide context. Take care not to misrepresent or oversimplify in promoting, previewing, or summarizing a story (think Facebook teasers/display type).
- Gather, update, and correct information throughout the life cycle of a news story.
- Question the motivations of all sources.
- Avoid making promises. If you make promises, keep them.
- Identify sources clearly. The public is entitled to as much information as possible to judge the reliability and motivations of sources.
- Offer anonymity only to sources who may face danger, retribution, or other harm, and have information that cannot be obtained elsewhere. Explain why anonymity was granted. Never out your source.
- Diligently seek subjects of news coverage to allow them to respond to criticism or allegations of wrongdoing. If they don't want to comment or can't be reached, report it.
- Seek sources whose voices we seldom hear.
- Avoid stereotyping. Check their biases. Journalists should examine the ways their values and experiences may shape their reporting.

BE EMPATHETIC

Ethical journalists treat sources, subjects, colleagues, and members of the public as human beings deserving of human dignity.

DIGEST journalists should:

- Balance the public's right to know with potential harm.
- Use heightened sensitivity when dealing with juveniles, victims of sex crimes, and sources or subjects who are inexperienced or unable to give consent.
- Don't rob people of a fair trial. Don't accuse people of crimes.

- Recognize that legal access to information differs from an ethical justification to publish or broadcast. But don't hide information vital to the public interest.
- Realize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than public figures and others who seek power, influence, or attention. Weigh the consequences of publishing personal information.

ACT INDEPENDENTLY

The highest and primary obligation of ethical journalism is to serve the public.

DIGEST journalists should:

- Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived. Disclose unavoidable conflicts.
- Refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel, and special treatment, and avoid political and other outside activities that may compromise integrity or impartiality, or damage credibility.
- Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money; do not pay for access to news.
- Deny favored treatment to advertisers, donors, or any other special interests, and resist internal and external pressure to influence coverage.
- Shun prior review. Deny attempts to limit or screen what questions may be asked.

BE ACCOUNTABLE AND TRANSPARENT

Ethical journalism means taking responsibility for one's work and explaining one's decisions to the public.

DIGEST journalists should:

- Explain ethical choices and processes to audiences. Encourage a civil dialogue with the public about journalistic practices, coverage, and news content.
- Respond quickly to questions about accuracy, clarity, and fairness.
- Acknowledge mistakes and correct them promptly and prominently. Explain corrections carefully and clearly.
- Expose unethical conduct in journalism, including within their organizations.
- Abide by the same high standards they expect of others.

CONFIDENTIALITY EXPECTATION

What is said in the newsroom concerning story ideas, sourcing and news discussions, stays in the newsroom. Breach of this agreement will result in immediate disciplinary action.

4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The four guiding principles to always keep in mind when reporting:

1. Bravely seek truth, verify it, and report it accurately
2. Be empathetic
3. Act independently
4. Be accountable and transparent

Associated Collegiate Press

The following guidelines for professional and ethical reporting practices are from ACP's Model Code of Ethics

JOURNALISTS' CHECKLIST

From planning to information gathering to production to publication, journalists must answer these questions:

1. Why am I reporting this story?
2. Is the story built upon relevant primary and secondary sources, excluding conflicts of interest?
3. Is the story fair?
4. Have I attempted to report all angles?
5. Whom will the story affect?
6. Can I defend my decision to report the story?

Staff members should work as a team on these questions, particularly if the potential answers are unclear or troublesome. They're the foundation of journalism that serves readers.

— from the *Associated Collegiate Press / Model Code of Ethics*

PRIMARY & SECONDARY SOURCING

Strong reporting and commentary are built with strong sourcing, including primary and secondary sources with credibility on a topic. Reach beyond usual sources. Establish a diversity of sourcing that enriches the content with relevant information.

IMAGES OF VICTIMS OF ACCIDENTS, FIRES, NATURAL DISASTERS & CRIMES

Photos have a tremendous effect on readers. Editors should consider the question of privacy vs. the public's right to know. It is not always easy to draw the line between good and bad taste and reality and sensationalism.

Care should be taken to maintain the dignity of the subject as much as possible without undermining the truth of the event.

In making a final decision on a photo of this type, an editor should consider these questions:

- Who is helped and who is hurt by the publication of this photo?
- Is your perspective skewed by seeing other images from the event, images even more dramatic than the one under consideration?
- Do the readers need additional information and context to explain the image?
- How would you respond if your photograph were taken and published at such a moment of tragedy?

NON-RESPONSIVE SOURCES

If the source for a story does not respond to a reporter's inquiry, the reporter may note the failure to respond in the story.

However, objectivity report that the source "would not respond" or "declined to respond," as opposed to "refused to respond."

If the subject cannot be reached, it is acceptable to say that the subject was "not available for comment."

SOURCES, ACCURACY & PRIOR REVIEW

Be willing to read back quotes to check for accuracy. Sometimes a source may not be saying what the source intended in the meaning.

However, do not offer the source the opportunity to read the story before it's published (prior review). That invites the source to coerce content. Report any attempts to influence content to the editor and adviser. If content is technical in nature, the editor may give the reporter permission to allow a source to review the technical components to ensure accuracy.

COVERAGE OF CRIME

Such coverage raises important legal and ethical considerations. In covering crime, staffers should know any state laws that govern the publication of the names of crime victims.

Beyond the state law, it is journalistic practice not to publish names of rape victims. However, some news media have asked victims of sexual assault to identify themselves for publication. This may be negotiated between the victim and the publication.

Victims of non-sexual crimes may be identified, by the publication has a responsibility to give some protection to the victims, such as identifying a neighborhood instead of the specific address of the victim.

With the exception of major crimes, predetermined by the editor, an arrested person is not named until charges are filed. However, to avoid a subjective list of exceptions, it is acceptable to withhold all names, regardless of the crime, until charges are filed.

Evaluate the broader implications of naming suspects, especially in cases involving sexual assault. Naming suspects might inadvertently identify minors, victims of sexual assault and/ or others whom you would not normally identify. Weigh the public's right and need to know with the commitment to minimize harm.

SCRUTINY OF A PUBLIC PERSON

Conflicts exist between a person's desire for privacy and the public good — which is the public's right to know about a public person's life. A person who freely chooses to become a celebrity or public servant should expect a greater level of scrutiny than a private person, as should a private person who suddenly is involved in a public situation.

Staffers should make judgments based on the real news value of the situation, with common sense and decency.

Reporters and photographers should not badger a source who expressed the preference not to be interviewed or photographed. An exception? Those who are involved in criminal activity or in court.

Publishing intimate details of a person's life, such as their health or sexual activities, should be done with extreme care and only if the facts are important for the completeness of a story and reflect in a significant way upon the person's public life.

50 Writing Tips

By Roy Peter Clark

ACTIVE VOICE. ACTIVE VERBS.

• Subject - Verb - Object.
That is active voice. The subject is doing the acting rather than being acted upon.

Passive voice:

The students were selected by the provost.

Active voice:

The provost selected the students.

Shorter. More direct. More interesting.

Use it most of the time. Read your stories looking only or passive voice and try to rewrite those sentences. Here are the types of phrases you're looking for:

- was chosen by
- were elected by
- were selected for
- was built by

• Read your story once only looking at the verbs. In addition to passive voice, look for boring verbs (am, is, are, was, were, for example). Are there more interesting verbs you could use? Usually, the answer is "yes."

TWO MORE TIPS

• Avoid beginning sentences with "there are" or "there were" or "there is." Figure out the subject and get it to the beginning of the sentence.

• Read your sentences, paragraphs and stories out loud. If you stumble, rewrite the sentence. If it sounds unnatural, rewrite the sentence.

I. Nuts and Bolts

1. Begin sentences with subjects and verbs. Make meaning early, then let weaker elements branch to the right.
2. Order words for emphasis. Place strong words at the beginning and at the end.
3. Activate your verbs. Strong verbs create action, save words, and reveal the players.
4. Be passive-aggressive. Use passive verbs to showcase the "victim" of action.
5. Watch those adverbs. Use them to change the meaning of the verb.
6. Take it easy on the -ings. Prefer the simple, present or past.
7. Fear not the long sentence. Take the reader on a journey of language and meaning.
8. Establish a pattern, then give it a twist. Build parallel constructions, but cut across the grain.
9. Let punctuation control pace and space. Learn the rules, but realize you have more options.
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14. Get the name of the dog. Dig for the concrete and specific, details that appeal to the senses.
15. Pay attention to names. Interesting names attract the writer and the reader.
16. Seek original images. Reject cliché; ½s and first-level creativity.
17. Riff on the creative language of others. Make word lists, free-associate, be surprised by language.
18. Set the pace with sentence length. Vary sentences to influence the reader's speed.
19. Vary the lengths of paragraphs. Go short or long -- or make a "turn" -- to match your intent.
20. Choose the number of elements with a purpose in mind. One, two, three, or four: Each sends a secret message to the reader.
21. Know when to back off and when to show off. When the topic is most serious, understate; when least serious, exaggerate.
22. Climb up and down the ladder of abstraction. Learn when to show, when to tell, and when to do both.
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41. Turn procrastination into rehearsal. Plan and write it first in your head.
42. Do your homework well in advance. Prepare for the expected -- and unexpected.
43. Read for both form and content. Examine the machinery beneath the text.
44. Save string. For big projects, save scraps others would toss.
45. Break long projects into parts. Then assemble the pieces into something whole.
46. Take interest in all crafts that support your work. To do your best, help others do their best.
47. Recruit your own support group. Create a corps of helpers for feedback.
48. Limit self-criticism in early drafts. Turn it loose during revision.
49. Learn from your critics. Tolerate even unreasonable criticism.
50. Own the tools of your craft. Build a writing workbench to store your tools.

Legal Issues

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of **religion**, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of **speech**, or of the **press**; or the right of the people peaceably to **assemble**, and to **petition** the Government for a redress of grievances.

RESOURCES

Student Press Law Center
Washington, D.C.
splc.org

Student Press Freedom Initiative
www.fire.org

Louisiana Press Association
www.lapress.com
info@lapress.com

OPINION VERSUS FACT

Statements of pure opinion cannot be libelous. However, simply leading off an article with “In my opinion...”, publishing something on the opinion page or using the word “alleged” provides no automatic protection from a libel charge.

The test is whether the expression is capable of being proven true or false. Pure opinions, by their very nature, cannot be proven true or false. *Milkovich v. Lorain Journal Co.*, 497 U.S. 1 (1990)

RED FLAGS FOR LIBEL

- Statements that accuse someone of illegal behavior.
- Statements regarding improper sexual conduct. (For example, printing that an unmarried student is pregnant.)
- Statements that associate someone with a vile disease.
- Statements that hurt someone's livelihood.
- Statements that allege racial or religious bigotry.

The notion of the press as the fourth branch of government is sometimes used to compare the media with Montesquieu's three branches of government: legislative, executive and judicial. Edmund Burke said, “Three Estates in Parliament; but in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth estate more important far than they all.” It is the Fourth Estate that acts as a check and balance on all the other states, holding government accountable to the people. To that end, freedom of the press is guaranteed by the First Amendment.

LIBEL

The Student Press Law Center defines libel (part of defamation law) as: Any published communication — words, photos, pictures, symbols — that falsely harms a person's reputation.” Libel is one of two kinds of defamation

Reprinting or re-broadcasting a libelous statement made by someone else (such as a quote or a letter to the editor) can also subject a publication to a libel lawsuit. However, if a statement is true, it cannot be the basis of a successful libel claim.

There are four elements a person must establish in order to prove he or she has been defamed:

- 1. PUBLICATION:** A statement is published if it is communicated to someone other than the person whom it is about. Publication can take many forms and does not simply mean that the statement has been printed in a newspaper or other document. For example, a defamatory statement's presence on a computer screen in the newsroom where it is read by other students could constitute publication.
- 2. IDENTIFICATION:** A statement identifies a person if it is shown that it is “of and concerning” that person. Individuals can be defamed; groups of people cannot be. The key question is whether a statement about a group can reasonably be interpreted to refer to a specific individual in the group.
- 3. HARM:** A statement is harmful if it seriously shames, ridicules, disgraces or injures a person's

reputation or causes others to do so. Statements that are mildly embarrassing or merely confusing or inaccurate will not meet the “harm” test.

4. FAULT: In order to be “at fault” in publishing a statement, the person suing must prove that the reporter either did something they should not have done or that they failed to do something that they should have done. If the reporter did everything a “reasonable reporter” should have done to verify the information in his or her story before publishing it - for example, talked to all sides, obtained and read all relevant documents, took accurate notes, etc. - the reporter is not legally “at fault.”

MALICE: For a public official or a public figure to prove defamation, they must prove actual malice, which requires that the person prove the challenged statement was published by those who knew it was false or were reckless in verifying its accuracy.

If someone proves all four of the above, the burden shifts to the publication to offer ONE of the following defences.

CONSENT: A person who consents to the media's use of a libelous statement about him cannot later sue if the statement does, in fact, injure his or her reputation.

TRUTH: Truth, while it must still be proven, is an absolute defence to libel. In many cases involving media defendants the burden is actually on the person suing - not on the publication - to prove the falsity of specific statements.

PRIVILEGE: The media is protected from liability when they publish fair and accurate accounts of official public proceedings and reports even if the information reported later turns out to be false. For example, if a police report states that “Jack Smith was arrested” and a newspaper accurately reports the information, the newspaper will not be held liable even if it is later revealed that police actually arrested Jack Brown and officers made a mistake when they wrote down his name. To qualify:

- The information must be obtained from a record or proceeding recognized by the state as “official”.
- The media report must be fair and accurate. A “fair” report is one that is balanced and presented in context.
- The source of the statement should be clearly noted in the media report.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Freedom of information is not a concept unique to the United States. More than 60 countries have implemented some form of freedom of information legislation, laws designed to put limits on government secrecy. These laws, enacted in 1966 as the Freedom of Information Act, may also be described as open records or sunshine laws. A related concept is open meetings legislation, which allows the public access to government meetings, not just to the records of them.

A basic principle behind most freedom of information legislation is that the burden of proof falls on the body asked for information, not the person asking for it. The person making the request does not usually have to give an explanation for his request, but if the information is not disclosed a valid reason has to be given.

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, also known as FERPA or the Buckley Amendment, requires the University to keep educational records private and provides that students have the right to inspect records about themselves that are maintained by the university. The Act allows disclosure of directory information contained in a student’s education records “that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.” Such information includes, but is not limited to, students’ names, addresses, telephone numbers, photos, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, the weights and heights of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, and degrees and awards received.

LEGAL Q&A FROM THE SPLC

Q: Do students at a public college or university have First Amendment rights?

A: Emphatically, yes. As the United States Supreme Court said back in 1969, “It can hardly be argued that either students or teachers shed their constitutional right to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate.” As agents of the government, public school officials are prohibited by the First Amendment from censoring most student speech. Students at a public school have the right to voice their opinions and write about the issues that concern them just like every other American.

LOUISIANA OPEN MEETING LAWS

As a matter of state law, the reporter’s privilege in Louisiana is quite strong. The reporter’s shield statute applies to unpublished information as well as to confidential sources. La. R.S. 45:1451 et seq. In addition, the State Supreme Court has held that a reporter’s privilege applies to unpublished information as a matter of state and federal constitutional law. See *In re Grand Jury Proceedings* (Ronald Ridenhour), 520 So. 2d 372 (La. 1988). To our knowledge, reporters have not been jailed or fined for invoking the reporter’s privilege in Louisiana

SHIELD LAWS

In legal terms, a shield law most commonly refers to a reporter’s privilege statute protecting journalists from forced disclosure of confidential sources or unpublished information. In a different contemporary context, the phrase also relates to interstate abortion shield laws enacted by other states to protect telehealth providers

Louisiana provides robust statutory protections for journalists under the Louisiana Revised Statutes § 45:1451-1459:

Protection of Sources: Reporters cannot be compelled to disclose the identity of any informant or source of information obtained while acting as a gatherer of news

Unpublished Material: La. R.S. 45:1459 provides qualified protection for non-confidential or unpublished news, requiring a clear and specific showing by the party seeking disclosure that the material is highly relevant, critical to the case, and unavailable from any alternative source

Grand Jury Subpoenas: A grand jury cannot subpoena a reporter unless a prosecutor certifies in writing that the information is essential, directly bears on guilt or innocence, and cannot be obtained elsewhere

LEGAL Q&A FROM THE SPLC

Q: Can you protect against a libel suit by labelling a statement “opinion”?

A: Not necessarily. A pure opinion — “The coach should be replaced” — cannot be the basis of a libel claim. But if the opinion implies a fact that proves to be false — “In my opinion, the coach should be replaced because he bought his college degree on eBay” — then the “opinion” label is no insulation.

Q: Is our publication responsible for libelous quotes from third parties, or libelous statements that third parties make in letters-to-the-editor?

A: In print or broadcast media, yes. The fact that a statement comes from someone not on the staff makes no difference. If you publish it, you own it, and if the statement is factually false and causes harm, then both your publication and the speaker may be liable for defamation. On the Web, the federal Communications Decency Act offers some insulation against liability for comments left by third parties — but not content created by the publication’s staff.

Q: Can we be stopped from taking and distributing photos or videos of people in public places?

A: The general rule is that, when a person does something in an area that is visible to public foot traffic, that person has no reason to expect privacy and cannot complain if he is photographed or filmed. The exception is that a person’s likeness may not be associated with a commercial endorsement without a release.

Q: But if school officials or student governments fund a student publication, radio or television station, can’t they censor it like any other publisher or owner could?

A: Not at a public school. The courts have ruled that if a school creates a student news or information medium and allows students to serve as editors, the First Amendment drastically limits the school’s ability to censor. Among the censoring actions the courts have prohibited are confiscating copies of publications, requiring prior review, removing objectionable material, limiting circulation, suspending editors and withdrawing or reducing financial support.

WHAT RECORDS ARE AVAILABLE?

Most records maintained by public entities are open for public inspection and copying. Records commonly requested include, but are not limited to:

- Statutes
- Regulations
- Policies
- Minutes of open meetings
- Salaries of public officials
- Agency budget document

EXCEPTIONS TO OPEN RECORDS ACT

The KORA recognizes that certain records contain private or privileged information. The Act lists several exceptions, including:

- Personnel information of public employees
 - Medical treatment records
 - Records protected by attorney-client privilege
 - Records closed by rules of evidence
 - Records containing personal information compiled for Census purposes
 - Notes and preliminary drafts
 - Criminal investigation records
 - Records the disclosure of which is restricted or prohibited by a Tribal State Gaming Compact
- Several other specific types of records as outlined

LOUISIANA PUBLIC RECORDS ACT (LPRA)

The Louisiana Public Records Act, also known as Louisiana's Sunshine Law, was enacted by the state's legislature in 1940. Section LA 44.01.2(a) defines public records as, "All books, records, writings, accounts, letters and letter books, maps, drawings, photographs, cards, tapes, recordings, memorandum, and papers, and all copies, duplicates, photographs, including microfilm, or other reproductions thereof, or any other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, including information contained in electronic data processing equipment, having been used, being in use, or prepared, possessed, or retained for use in the conduct, transaction, or performance of any business, transaction, work,

duty, or function which was conducted, transacted, or performed by or under the authority of the constitution or laws of this state, or by or under the authority of any ordinance, regulation, mandate, or order of any public body or concerning the receipt or payment of any money received or paid by or under the authority of the constitution or the laws of this state, are "public records", except as otherwise provided in this Chapter or the Constitution of Louisiana."

Anyone can request public records and a purpose does not need to be stated. There are no restrictions on what can be done with the public documents once a records requester has them in hand. The custodian of the records must respond to requests within three days.

SAMPLE FOIA REQUEST

[Your Name]

[Street Address]

[City, ST ZIP Code]

[Date]

[Name of Custodian of Records]

[Title]

[Company Name]

[Street Address]

[City, ST ZIP Code]

Dear [custodian of records]:

Under the Louisiana Public Records Act § 44:1 et seq., I am requesting an opportunity to inspect or obtain copies of public records that [Describe the records or information sought with enough detail for the public agency to respond. Be as specific as your knowledge of the available records will allow. But it is more important to describe the information you are seeking.]

If there are any fees for searching or copying these records, please inform me if the cost will exceed \$_____. However, I would also like to request a waiver of all fees in that the disclosure of the requested information is in the public interest and will contribute significantly to the public's understanding of _____. [Here, you can identify yourself as a representative of the news media if applicable and state that your request is related to news gathering purposes.] This information is not being sought for commercial purposes.

Section 44:32(D) of the Louisiana Public Records Act requires a response within three business days. If access to the records I am requesting will take longer than that time period, please contact me with information about when I might expect copies or the ability to inspect the requested records.

If you deny any or all of this request, please cite each specific exemption you feel justifies the refusal to release the information and notify me of the appeal procedures available to me under the law.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Phone number]

Staff Tips

SOUTHERN DIGEST NEWSPAPER

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50 Writing Tips

By Roy Peter Clark

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Captions/cutlines

Who is responsible for captions?

Photographers are responsible for getting all caption information. Repeat. PHOTOGRAPHERS are responsible for getting all caption information. Photographers are responsible for entering the caption in the file metadata before turning it in for publication online or in print. Get the names, year in school and majors of people in your photographs.

Editors are responsible for editing, adding to, rewriting as needed to best work with the package. For example, sometimes multiple photos are used in a package and they all have some repeating information. Change it up. Find different information for the second sentences if needed. Add a quote if that makes sense for the package.



Junior, guard, Cam Amboree, prepares to drive to the hoop on Alcorn State's Davian Williams during conference play against on Saturday, February 1 inside F.G. Clark activity center. (Jasmine Meriedy/DIGEST)

How to write a good caption

Report before and after you take a photo. Introduce yourself as a DIGEST photographer and ask for names. Make SURE you get the spelling correct. For students, also get their year in school and major. Take a few notes about what was going on when you took the photo. Understand the situation and context. Ask questions if needed.

First sentence: Give the basics of the who, what, when and where — in a complete sentence written in present tense (so as if it is happening right now).

EXAMPLE:

Shelly Smith, a senior in mechanical engineering, takes the oath of office as she is sworn in as the Student Government Association president. (TAKES is the present tense verb.)

Second sentence: Write another complete sentence that gives some additional information. Who won the game? What was the score? What's an interesting fact about the event? How many people attended? Etc.

EXAMPLE: Smith won the election by the largest margin in university history, except for the years with only one candidate.

Creditline: It's a good practice to just tag your creditline at the end of the caption in the metadata in case it gets shared with another publication. (Photo by Jane Smith / The Southern DIGEST)

Associated Press Style Five-Minute Guide

The Associated Press Stylebook

serves as the “bible” (not Bible, per AP) for media-writing style. The goal in adhering to the stylebook is to create consistency both within a media outlet and among similar media outlets.

Trying to memorize this whole book can feel like catching sand in a pasta strainer: No matter how hard you try, you never catch it all. Even more, AP tends to change style on some items from year to year, such as its recent flip-flopping approach to hyphenating compound modifiers. For a beginning journalist, the goal of learning AP style shouldn’t be to memorize every change or item in the book, but rather to learn the kinds of things that are in the book so you know what to look up. (One of the more recent AP style changes has been to accept “they” as a gender-neutral, singular pronoun for nonbinary gender situations and instances in which an individual’s gender is unknown, such as a robbery or burglary. Although some grammarians may take issue with the lack of pure antecedent-pronoun agreement, this book will follow that standard.)

To help get students used to style, **Fred Vultee**, an associate professor at Wayne State University who spent more than 25 years as an editor for newspapers, offers his students some quick maxims that account for the majority of the style guide. Here is his “five-minute style guide,” reprinted with permission:

PEOPLE

Capitalize **formal titles** when they appear before names (The message was sent to President Vladimir Putin).

Lowercase **formal titles** when they follow a name or stand alone (Bashar Assad, the Syrian president, fired his foreign minister).

Lowercase **occupational or descriptive titles** before or after a name (The article was written by columnist Joe Bob Briggs).

Refer to **adults by given name** and family name the first time they appear in a news story (Melania Trump) and by family name only on later references (Trump).

Children 17 or younger are usually referred to by both names on first reference and given name only on later references. Children in “adult situations” — common examples are international sports and serious crimes in which they are charged as adults — are referred to by family name only on later references.

To avoid confusing **two people with the same family name**, such as husband and wife or mother and son, use both names on later references. A story mentioning Joe Biden and Jill Biden should usually refer to them as Joe Biden and Jill Biden even after they are introduced if there’s any chance of confusion. Sometimes a title can be repeated to make the distinction (Joe Biden could be “the president” on later references; Jill Biden could be “the first lady”). Only rarely, in some feature stories, should a writer refer to adults by their given names on later references.

Do not use **courtesy titles** (Mr., Mrs., Ms.) in news reports except in direct quotes.

Abbreviate **military and police titles** before names according to a standard reference list such as the one in the AP Stylebook. Don’t abbreviate titles when they stand alone or follow a name (Gen. Douglas MacArthur, the general).

PLACES

Most stylebooks will have lists of cities that are assumed to be understood without having the name of the state (Boston, New York, Los Angeles) or country (New York, London, Cairo) attached. Follow current AP guidelines, with the usual exceptions for common sense if needed (Books that are popular in London, Ontario, might not be popular in London, England).

Do not abbreviate the names of **U.S. states** except in datelines, captions or short forms of party identification: Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich.

Do not abbreviate such designations as “**street**” when they stand alone. Only three of these are abbreviated — “street,” “avenue” and “boulevard” — and they are abbreviated only when they appear with a numbered address.

Do not abbreviate “**south**” or “**north**” indicating a part of a road unless it appears with an address (South Eighth Street; 221 S. Eighth St.; 221 Abbey Road).

Associated Press Style Five-Minute Guide

THINGS

Capitalize **proper nouns**; lowercase **common nouns**. Capitalize **trademarks** (I drank a Pepsi) or use a common noun as a substitute (I drank a soft drink).

Use **abbreviations on first reference only** if they are widely known (CIA agents helped overthrow the prime minister of Iran). Otherwise spell out the names of agencies on first reference: The U.S. Agency for International Development, known as USAID. If an abbreviation would be confusing, use a common-noun substitute (the State Law and Order Restoration Council; the council or the junta) on later references. When in doubt, err on the side of clarity. Abbreviations are not as familiar as you think they are.

Generally, don't abbreviate **units of measure** (pounds, miles, hours, etc.).

Capitalize **shortened versions of proper names**: the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Transportation Department, the Department of Transportation.

Generic references are lowercase: the Communication Department, the department.

TIME/DATES

Use only the **day of the week** for events on the day of publication or within a week of publication (The summit ended Saturday. Negotiators will meet Thursday). Use "last" or "next" only if needed for clarity (The summit ended Friday, and the negotiators will meet again next Friday).

Never abbreviate days of the week in text.

Do not use "yesterday," "today" or "tomorrow" except in direct quotations or in generic cases that do not refer to a particular day: Kids today got no respect for the law.

Use **month and day** to refer to events happening a week or more before or after publication. Use cardinal numbers, not ordinals: The seminar will be held March 3.

Don't use the year unless the event is more than a year before or after publication (He died March 17, 2007; the tax will take effect Jan. 1, 2025).

Do not abbreviate a month unless it's followed by a date (January; Jan. 1). Do not abbreviate months of less than six letters (March; March 12, 1998).

Use lowercase "a.m." and "p.m." to indicate morning, afternoon and night. Use "**noon**" and "**midnight**" rather than the unclear "12 a.m." or the redundant "12 noon." **Always use figures for time**, in this form: 8 a.m., 10:30 p.m., 1:45 a.m.

Unless you need to emphasize one element over the others, generally follow **time-dateplace order**: Trials of collaborators will begin at 2 p.m. April 14 in New York.

NUMBERS

The basic rule: Spell out numbers under 10. Use figures for 10 and above.

Exceptions:

Spell out any number, except a year, that begins a sentence.

- Twelve students attended.
- 1999 was an important year.

Use figures for dates, weights, ages, times, addresses and percentages.

- Abe Roth was 9 when he died.
- The measure passed by 8%.

For most numbers of a million or more, use this form, rounded off to no more than two decimal places.

- 1.45 million
- the \$18.1 billion budget.

If the exact number is important, write it out.

- She received 1,253,667 votes to 988,401 for her opponent.

Spell out numbers used as figures of speech.

- Thanks a million.

Spell out fractions when they stand alone.

- one-half cup of flour

Otherwise write them as mixed fractions or decimals.

- 1½ cups of flour
- 1.5 liters of water

Generally, use a 0 to precede a decimal smaller than zero.

- 0.75 kilograms

SGA voting open through Wednesday

By Kylie Cameron
Editor in Chief

Short, straight news lede here. WHAT (voting) and WHEN (Monday through Wednesday).

Next most important item is HOW students can vote.

In case readers haven't been paying attention, here's the quick scoop on their ballot choices.

A nice little piece of historical data showing students how few people vote.

Published in April 2020

Voting for this week's Student Government Association election runs from 8 a.m. Monday through 5 p.m. Wednesday.

Ballot links were sent to student emails and can also be found at wichita-statesga.simplyvoting.com.

Just two executive tickets are running this year, compared to last year's four. Maribel Sánchez and Courtney Price-Dukes are running for president and vice president, respectively. Rija Khan and Mackenzie Haas are also running for president and vice president, respectively.

Voting for college-specific, at-large, and special constituency senators are also on the ballot.

Last year, just 16.2% of the student electorate voted. Current President Kitrina Miller and Vice President Michael Bearth won by just 26 votes. In 2018, just 12.3% of students voted in the election when a single executive ticket was running.



Water tank painters get university's name wrong

By Chance Swaim
Editor in Chief

Early arrivals to Wichita State this morning had to do a double-take at the water tank's new paint job.

Instead of Southern University, the y and e in "State" and "University" are switched. The tank now reads "Wichita Staty Universite."

The logo is around 25 feet tall and 35 to 45 feet wide, according to a June 30 university statement about the project. The logos required between 100 and 125 gallons of paint.

The tank, located on Wichita State's main campus near 17th Street and Oliver, is being updated by the City of Wichita "to make the Wichita State water tank a source of pride for the WSU community."

Sometimes the news is just fun. If you EVER see anything like this, snap a photo! This got painted over within an hour of The Southern DIGEST publishing this brief and photo online.

Published in August 2017

SU requires masks on campus

By Kylie Cameron
Editor in Chief

Straight news lede here that includes WHEN (often relevant on breaking news), WHERE and WHAT.

This is a good example of a short news story written from a news release with the main goal of informing readers quickly.

Effective immediately, everyone on Wichita State's campus is required to wear a face mask or covering until further notice.

Community members are encouraged to wear a reusable cloth mask, rather than a N-95 mask, unless specifically required for a job.

"This is going to be hard," Provost Rick Muma said. "We're all going to have to be patient. Being punitive, being reactionary is not going to change people's behavior."

Campus community members do not have to adhere to the rules if they are walking alone outside or working alone in an office.

A cloth mask for every university employee will be available at the physical plant office by appointment or delivered to offices. Departments are encouraged to submit a work order with their number of employees.

Campus will reopen with a staggered schedule start May 26, after the Memorial Day holiday.

"The university is preparing for the slow return of people to campus with cleaning and stocking up on supplies such as face masks, disinfectant, plexiglass and PPE," a university release said.

Nonessential travel will also still be limited during the phased reopening of campus.

178 - word news brief.

Published online as quickly as possible after the news release was issued.

Published in May 2020

Shiftspace criticized an SGA senator, now could lose funding

Julia Nightengale & Lindsay Smith
News editor and editor in chief

Newsy lede stating directly what is at stake, followed by a 'paragraph concisely giving the background. It's a conflict story that most readers probably don't know about. Need to educate them quickly.

1st source: SGA advisor. That person can be a good source of information. A good strategy for both the advisor and officers — go over to their offices in the RSC so they can't easily blow you off.

2nd source: Someone affected by the situation.

3rd source: Someone from SGA involved in the decision, giving his reason. This indirect quote serves as a good transition into the direct quote.

Shiftspace Gallery, a student-run art gallery located in downtown Wichita, could lose all of its funding from student fees allocations over a Facebook post criticizing a Student Government Association fine arts senator.

This comes after a month-long battle to restore the gallery's funding after it was initially cut 65.8% in student fees deliberations. When discussing it in Senate meetings, Senator John Kirk did not support the gallery. The group went to Facebook on April 1, three days before SGA elections voting, to share their frustration.

The Shiftspace Facebook post read:
"This is the support we are getting from our fine arts senator, John Kirk. He's up for re-election. Let's show him how ignoring and neglecting a significant portion of his constituency affects his poll numbers."

The election commission found the Shiftspace post in violation of election policy. SGA Advisor Gabriel Fonseca told The Southern DIGEST via email that the following was the specific policy

"No faculty or staff member can utilize University resources to support specific candidates. This shall include but is not limited to email list servers, resource rooms, room reservations, and finances. This shall not be interpreted to restrict the ability of any faculty or staff member to publicize the dates and times of the General Election or to encourage voter participation in the General Election, provided that no suggestion is made to encourage voting for any specific candidate."

Shiftspace President Lydia Humphreys, a graduate student, said that the allegations against Shiftspace don't make sense to her.

"It just feels like there was some grudge or something that we've done something wrong and we're not really sure," Humphreys said.

Humphreys said that all Shiftspace was trying to do was hold leaders accountable.

"We were voicing our concern for not having been represented by our fine arts representatives," Humphreys said. "For him to be the main one advocating against us was very confusing."

Humphreys said Zachary James, the SGA treasurer, reached out and called the post rude, which led to the gallery editing the post. But a day after they edited the post, Kirk submitted a complaint to the elections commission alleging that the group broke SGA election code.

Kirk said that because Shiftspace is a department, he saw it as problematic.

"Departments cannot say how people should vote, by saying ... 'This is going to reflect in his polls, let this show him,' that is telling people

howto vote," Kirk said. "Departments can't do that." *Published in April 2022*

"There's freedom of speech, people can do what they please, yes. That doesn't mean there's no freedom of consequences."

Kirk said when he submitted the complaint, he did not know that could lead to Shiftspace losing funding.

"I want it to be very clear that nothing that I did was out of malicious intent," Kirk said.

Jeff Pulaski, director of the school of art, design and creative industries, serves as the budget officer for Shiftspace. He said that he was notified via email from the SGA advisor that Shiftspace had done something wrong.

"I was told that somebody complained to the election commission, and that the election commission found we had violated the SGA policy, and the treasurer James implemented the only caption that was available to him," Pulaski said.

Shiftspace Gallery will submit an appeal to the student supreme court.

"We're going to work through the process with them and hope that there's a change in what they're doing," Pulaski said.

Humphreys said that if they did break a rule, SGA needed to make it clear to them.

"They could communicate better in order for us to understand," Humphreys said. "There's no reason for us to do something against their rules and regulations, and so being punished for them when we didn't even know about them is bizarre and unfair."

Humphreys said this brings up free speech questions.

"And we are in the arts, part of the arts is communicating about our lived experiences, making art into that so for them to critique us on critiquing our fine arts representative seems kind of against free speech," Humphreys said.

Max Kautsch, a media attorney in Lawrence, said that unless SGA can explain how cutting the organization's funding outweighs students' First Amendment rights, it breaks the constitution.

"It is presumably being punished merely for expressing a political opinion, which is the most fundamental protected activity under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution," he said in an email to The Southern DIGEST.

"Only if the SGA were able to identify the specific provision(s) of its bylaws the organization is alleged to have violated, and explain how cutting the organization's budget advances an interest that outweighs students' First Amendment right to express themselves politically, would the denial of funding here pass constitutional muster."

Pulaski said that arts is already dramatically under-funded, which would make it harder for the gallery to find funding outside of SGA.

4th source: director of the school of art, so now we have students and their WSU staff leaders on the record for both sides of this conflict.

Another indirect quote to transition back to a previous source.

5th source (count e'm, FIVE): This source is what's called an "expert source" not directly involved, but who can share expertise on First Amendment law, since freedom of speech was brought up.

The story ends with a quote from Pulaski. (You can read the entire story online.)

The cost of a degree at Wichita State continues to climb, tuition and fees increase

By Chance Swaim
Editor in Chief (June 2017)

Resident tuition and fees at Wichita State have more than tripled in the last 20 years — not including course- and program-specific fees for engineering, health professions, or fine arts students — and last week the Kansas Board of Regents approved another tuition and fees increase.

A freshman taking two 15-credit-hour semesters in 1998 paid \$2,475 in tuition and fees for the year. This year, a freshman taking the same course-load will pay \$8,093 for the year.

Last week, the board of regents approved a 2.5% tuition increase and a 2.45% fees increase at Wichita State for the upcoming school year.

“We really were trying to keep it as low as possible,” Wichita State President John Bardo said. “It will cause us to have to restructure some things.” He said state funding levels, increased costs, and enrollment were the primary reasons for raising the price.

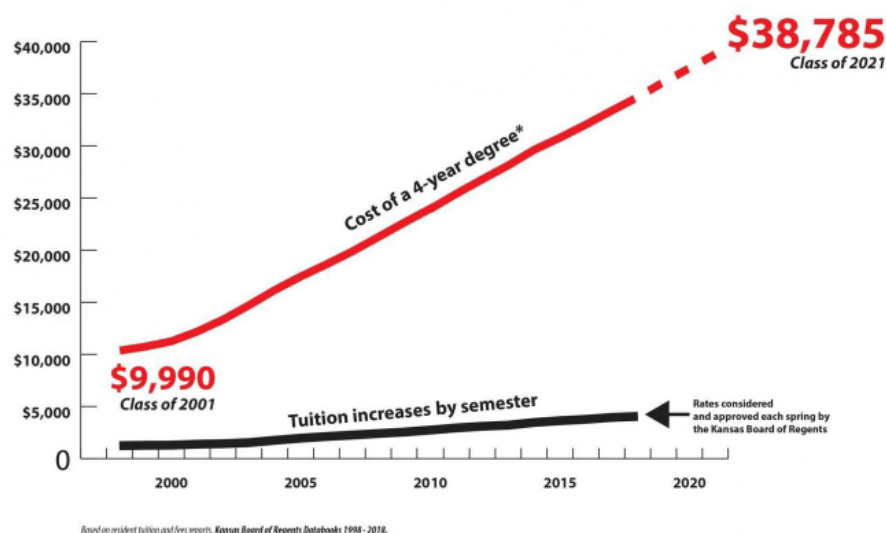
To make up the gap between state funding, tuition, and expenses, Wichita State will reallocate 3.5% of its resources to “fund strategic priorities of the university.”

According to the written proposal Wichita State submitted to the board of regents, the new tuition rate revenue of \$2,157,248 will be used to fund fringe benefit changes (\$991,129), student retention and enrollment growth (\$859,989), facility operating costs (\$149,250), and faculty promotions in rank and tenure (\$156,880).

Wichita State received the smallest percentage increase of all the regent universities — all raised tuition between 2.5 and 2.9%.

Although the increases — when looked at on a semester-to-semester basis — seem small, similar gradual, percentage-based increases in the past 20 years have driven the price of a bachelor’s degree at Wichita State closer to the average yearly salary of a graduate.

According to exit surveys administered by the university of Wichita State graduates with jobs at graduation, the average salary for four-year degree earners has hovered



around \$40,000 for the past five years. In 2017, the average graduate’s salary was \$42,411. If tuition and fees continue to climb, the cost of a bachelor’s degree will surpass that number by 2024.

Multiple regents objected to increasing tuition and fees, but the measure was ultimately approved.

Regent Ann Brandau-Murguia, who voted against the proposed increase at Wichita State, said all of the regent universities — Wichita State, Kansas, Kansas State, Pittsburg State, Fort Hays State, and Emporia State — “made a great case for themselves on why they feel they needed tuition increased.”

“In the last four years, I’ve always voted for these percentage increases. But I don’t think I’ve spoken loud enough about how important this is to me for affordability and accessibility. We all tend to throw around 100 bucks or 200 bucks like it’s no big deal.

“Well, you know, I don’t know where all of you specifically live, but I know where I live, and 200 bucks is a lot of money,” Brandau-Murguia said during last week’s board meeting.

The class of 2001 entered Wichita State expecting to pay around \$10,000 for a four-year degree. The class of 2021 will pay close to that amount each year, depending on the program of study.

As tuition and fees have increased, other expenses have also popped up. Engineering,

health professions, and fine arts students pay course and program fees that can add more than \$1,000 a year to their bills.

If a student chooses to live on campus for four years, their cost of attending a university skyrockets. Based on projected tuition and fee rates for the class of 2021, an incoming freshman who decided to stay in the cheapest living option at Shocker Hall — a shared, single bedroom — with the cheapest meal plan (and move out during the summer) for four years would spend more than \$85,000 at Wichita State.

The tuition increase at Wichita State will cost resident undergraduate students about \$100 more for 15 credit hours (the number of credit hours needed each semester to complete a bachelor’s degree in four years). Bardo asked the board of regents to consider the fact that many students receive financial aid.

“So the student for whom \$50 is a big deal, there is a financial aid package that also is effective in all this, particularly for low-income students,” Bardo said.

Brandau-Murguia said she thinks Kansas universities and the board of regents have been “caught in the middle of the situation” created by insufficient state funding, but someone needed to take responsibility for the increased costs to get a degree.

“Absolutely, I can sit up here and say all the popular things,” Brandau-Murguia said. “Absolutely, (regents universities) are way

underfunded by the state. I've said that over and over again. But I don't have any control over the state. And somebody's got to bear the burden of the cost of the education.

"At some point there's got to be some pushback on behalf of Kansas families to say that's enough," Brandau-Murguia said.

State Funding troubles continue

The Kansas legislature passed a budget plan earlier this month that increased funding to regent universities but cut Wichita State's operating budget by almost a million dollars. That will put state funding to Wichita State below what it received from the state in 1999.

The Kansas House voted 88-27 in favor of the budget plan, and the Senate voted 27-11 in what became the second-longest legislative session in Kansas history.

A funding bill is usually passed in the spring, allowing universities to assess tuition based on what the state will contribute to the general fund of the university. But the lengthy session this year left universities unsure how the allocations would affect the upcoming school year.

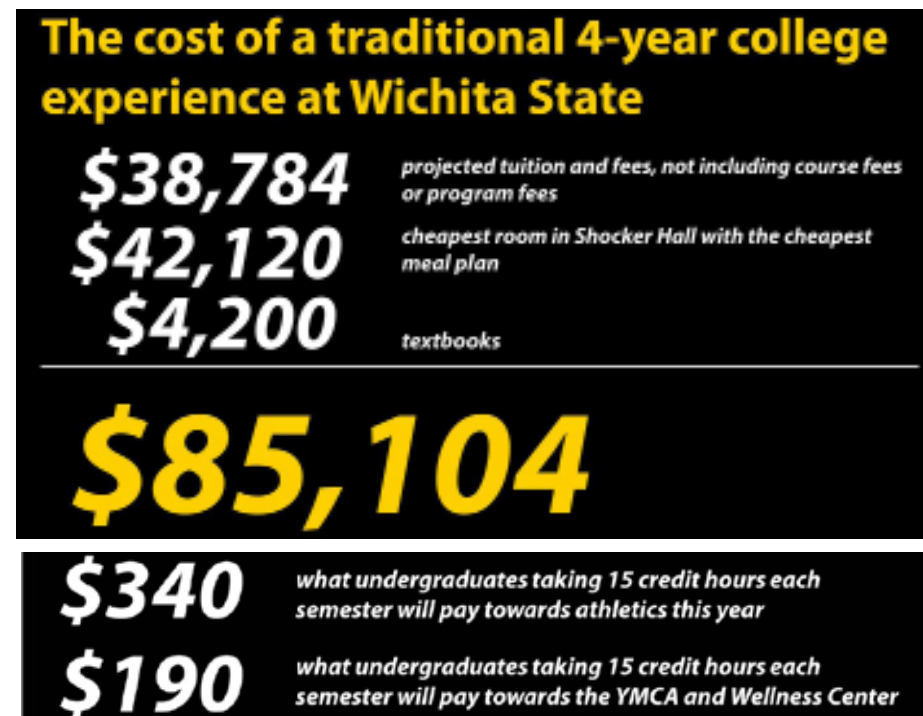
One of the larger challenges, Bardo said, will be implementing state-mandated employee raises. Without substantially increasing allocations to state universities, the budget bill requires state employers, such as Wichita State, to give 2.5 % raises to its employees with fewer than five years of employment. Employees who have been at Wichita State for more than five years will receive a 5 % raise, according to the funding plan.

"We have to go through all the language and analyze it," Bardo said. "Analyze the language and look at who does it cover. And if we are going to cover everybody, what would that mean?"

"So not just the ones that the law covers — because I do believe there are people who are left out under the law — and yet we haven't been able to give raises, so we need to figure that out. We don't want people to be caught in the middle. So we're trying to think what do we cut to make sure that they get a raise, too. This is not the fun part of the job."

Student fees for YMCA and athletics

The board of regents approved Wichita State's increased student fee to fund the switch from the Missouri Valley Conference to the American Athletic Conference and the operation of a YMCA facility on Innovation Campus. Part of the YMCA building will



include a new health and wellness center.

Regents questioned what the shift of conferences would cost the university.

President Bardo said the university stands to lose \$1.9 million next year from the change of conferences, and that it could be five years before the university sees a positive financial impact from the joining the American Athletic Conference.

Regents then asked what a student stood to gain academically from joining a different athletic conference.

"A lot of why you do athletics on a college campus is to create the ambiance and the feeling of belonging on campus," Bardo told the board. "What that really does is connect a student on campus, whether they go to the games or they don't go to the games. There's a connection there. And that connection really does have a huge impact. Second, if you care about athletics at all, you're going to see a lot better grade of athletics, just by the nature of who will be coming in."

"But the really big issue from a student perspective, from my perspective, is the branding of who we are. That, at the end of the day, will mean a lot to the student who graduates than even going to the event."

An undergraduate taking 15 hours a semester will pay \$340 in athletic fees next year. That's a \$24.40 increase from last year.

A student enrolled in 15 hours a semester will also pay \$190 for a "Health and Wellness Fee" that will fund the operation of a YMCA on Innovation Campus this year.

A committee of student leaders from

universities across the state declined to endorse the Wichita State fee increase, in part because of the controversy surrounding the fee increase to operate a YMCA.

In March, the 59th Session of student government voted against a fee increase to fund the YMCA. Less than two months later, the 60th Session voted in favor of the fee increase, which had been re-packaged as a health and wellness fee considered alongside a tiered-system fee structure instead of the per-credit-hour fees of the past.

Student fees will provide \$5 million a year to the YMCA to operate. Students, in turn, will receive a membership to all local YMCAs. The YMCA on Innovation Campus will be open to the general public and not exclusive to students, and students will pay for the full operational costs of the facility.

The YMCA building will also include a health and wellness center that provides drop-in daycare, which will require a fee to use. In their reports to the board of regents, Bardo and Student Body President Paige Hungate cited the need for improved health and wellness facilities at Wichita State. The board of regents did not ask any questions related to the YMCA during the meeting.

Regent Brandau-Murguia said the proposed YMCA did not factor into her decision to vote against the tuition and fee increase.

"I'd rather not as a regent get into the weeds of each university and how they're spending their money," Brandau-Murguia said. "That's why we hire people to run those universities."

Professor champions legislation ensuring Kansas hospitals have qualified interpreters

Hook lead puts you into a character's story. It uses an anecdote to SHOW the readers the issue before ever explaining the issue. The reader can immediately get the WHY of this story and grasp why this issue is important — how it affects people's lives. The subject shared this story during the interviews, and the writer wrote the story in an impactful way.

This is the nutgraf. It plainly states the problem illustrated in the story above. It also provides the bridge between the personal anecdote and the rest of the story, which is what a WSU professor is doing to try to help solve this problem.

First direct quote of the story. It's a long one, so notice how the writer put the attribution (Showstack said) at the end of the first sentence. This helps the reader know early on who is "speaking."

2nd source — an expert in the field.

By Matthew Kelly Wichita Journalism Collaborative

When Veronica Mireles' son complained he was in severe abdominal pain, she rushed him to a Wichita emergency room. No interpreter was provided for the Spanish-speaking family, and the teenager was told he may have contracted a sexually transmitted disease. His doctor sent him home.

But as the pain escalated in the following days, Mireles had no choice but to bring her son back to the ER. This time, a physician accompanied by an interpreter quickly realized what was actually wrong — appendicitis. Because of the delay in treatment, the boy's appendix had ruptured, resulting in an extended hospital stay and a massive medical bill.

Federally funded hospitals and clinics are required to offer interpreting services for patients. But all too often, the system fails and non-English-speaking patients find themselves in the middle of high-stakes medical conversations without a qualified interpreter.

Rachel Showstack is a Wichita State sociolinguist and Spanish professor. Her research focuses on language accessibility issues in health care.

"One of the biggest issues is people not knowing that they have the right to an interpreter and that they should ask for one," Showstack said. "Really, the health care institution should be offering them an interpreter and making it extremely clear that those services are available with signage and also verbally at the check-in for the hospital or clinic. But that's not always happening."

When patients aren't informed of their right to a qualified interpreter, family members — oftentimes young children — tend to find themselves in the role of de facto interpreter.

"Patients often bring family members with them because they know that they need help," said Pilar Ortega, president of the National Association of Medical Spanish (NAMS), an interdisciplinary collaborative working to improve health equity.

"Family members should not be

burdened with doing the job that they're absolutely not prepared or trained to do, and so there's a very high risk of miscommunication."

Although bilingual family members shouldn't have to serve as primary interpreters, they still play an important role from a patient advocacy standpoint. COVID-19 visiting limitations in hospitals have left non-English-speaking patients in an even more vulnerable position without these family members by their side.

Improving language access

Showstack took an interest in health care providers' interpreting practices when a local clinic contacted her to ask if some of her students could take on interpreting duties.

"That's why I started to investigate what someone needs to know in order to be an interpreter, and the more I looked into it, the more I found out that . . . the federal legislation that supports health equity for speakers of minoritized languages is really not being upheld in Kansas," Showstack said.

Unlike many states, Kansas doesn't mandate that hospitals and clinics provide certified interpreters. Prospective interpreters aren't even required to log a certain number of training hours before being thrust into real-world situations.

Showstack organized a series of stakeholder meetings with Spanish-speaking patients, who reported inconsistent access to qualified interpreters, resulting in an eroded trust between patients and physicians. In the worst cases, the breakdown in communication turned preventable conditions into life-threatening ones.

The pandemic has left unqualified interpreters even less equipped to help patients and physicians communicate.

"In the situation where you're wearing masks and you're wearing face gear and all this kind of stuff, it's even harder to read facial expressions," Ortega said. "It's harder to understand just words and what people are saying, so that definitely complicates things in terms of interpretations."

Dave Stewart, Wesley Medical Center's

Clear. Concise. Further explains the problem.

Sub-head within the story — an excellent reader service.

This info was gained in an interview, but the writer boiled it down into an informative, easy-to-read paragraph.

Info followed up with a quote that illustrates the information in the previous paragraph.

3rd source

director of marketing and public relations, said the hospital has utilized both electronic and in-person interpretation during the pandemic.

“Interpreters who provide in-person services to our patients are provided appropriate PPE and maintain social distancing to minimize personal risk,” Stewart said. “We rely fully on qualified interpreters, and do not allow staff members or patient family members to act as interpreters.”

But many hospitals and clinics still lean heavily on unqualified interpreters, stunting medical conversations and negatively impacting health outcomes. Showstack says that’s unacceptable.

That’s why she’s advocating for legislation that would require interpreters to obtain professional training before serving Kansas healthcare providers.

She’s also urging lawmakers to require that the state’s federally funded hospitals develop and implement language access plans that describe their language services, the steps they take to inform patients of said services and their procedures for training staff on language policies.

Showstack said she’s partnering with Johnson County Democratic state Rep. Susan Ruiz on the proposed legislation, and hopes to see it introduced as early as next legislative session.

Helping others understand the needs

Health care providers should be prepared to rely on a qualified interpreter any time they enter a potentially language-discrepant interaction with a patient, said Ortega, NAMS president.

Language, she says, is no different than any other tool a physician needs to successfully care for their patients.

“If I don’t have the tools that I need — if I don’t have an ophthalmoscope, I can’t examine someone’s eye. If I don’t have the language skills and I can’t speak with that person directly, then I need help with that and I need somebody else to help me achieve that communication, which is a critical piece for me to be able to do my job,” Ortega said.

Showstack and one of her students have started providing seminar presentations for health care providers about how to work with interpreters. They’ve put on three so far but plan to hold more in the future.

Ortega said no physician-patient interaction is so commonplace that it doesn’t need to be properly interpreted.

“I would argue that every medical



encounter is potentially a high-stakes encounter because you don’t know what you’ve missed, and that’s the scariest part,” Ortega said.

“When you have a poor interpretation or mistake in understanding, you may not even realize it. There’s no way for the doctor to know, ‘Oh, it was okay that I had the family member interpret this one because this was just about knee pain,’ or something because you don’t know what you didn’t understand that the interpreter didn’t tell you during that encounter. Maybe the patient actually said something else that would have changed the course of that visit completely.”

That’s why it’s so important for physicians and all future health professionals to understand how to work with interpreters, she said. It also underscores the need for more linguistically diverse representation in the medical field.

One aspiring medical professional, Jonathan Lozano, came to the U.S. from Durango, Mexico, when he was in the third grade.

“I was 8 years old, and from that moment, ever since I was able to pick up English, I had to translate for my mom,” Lozano said. “My mom was quite often in and out of clinics and hospitals because she has diabetes type 2.

“I quickly noticed that there’s a lack of Hispanic representation within the medical field, and that really inspired me to one day become a medical professional and help out the Hispanic community by providing services in Spanish.”

Now a second-year junior at WSU, Lozano is majoring in biological sciences with an emphasis in biomedicine.

“One of my goals in life is to eventually do missionary work and travel around the world and provide services to any under-represented community or those that need the services,” Lozano said.

This story was produced as part of the Southern Journalism Collaborative, a partnership of nine media companies, including The Southern DIGEST, plus several community organizations working together to bring timely and accurate news and information to Kansans.

Another example of how to attribute an indirect quote. It’s important information that the writer wanted to include, but didn’t want to use another direct quote after the long one just above.

4th quoted source and another personal story. Going back to another personal anecdote is a nice way to tie back up to the beginning of the story — book-ending the problem and the work a professor is doing with a pair of personal short stories that illustrate rather than explain the problem.

Writer delayed the traditional identifying info, starting above with the fact that he is an aspiring medical pro and an immigrant, which are more important there.

Great use of indirect quotes here to explain in the writer’s words (easy for readers to understand), but obviously info shared by Showstack.

Reminds readers who Ortega is, since it’s a multiple-source story and they may have forgotten.

'I'm not done rebelling, yet'

Meet WSU's punk rock School of Music director

By Andrew Linnabary Wichita
Journalism Collaborative

Hook lede — the reader is drawn in by both the picture of a “messed-up” teen now the director of a School of Music, and two, by the fact that he obviously used the f-word in describing himself to the reporter.

Writer is further painting the picture of a rebellious teen. He obviously had a long and open interview with Aleks.

Nice way of tucking in the subject's age and work title. Much better than: Sternfeld-Dunn is 38 years old and he is the director of...

What a great transition into this section.

His music story just beautifully unfolds with little details mixed into his personal history.

Aleks Sternfeld-Dunn was, by his own admission, a mess-up as a teenager. He didn't use the word “mess-up” to describe his younger self — the one he used isn't fit for print.

Sternfeld-Dunn grew up in the San Francisco Bay area. He was bright but unmotivated, and kind of a jerk, he said.

His hair nearly reached his knees his sophomore year of high school. He hadn't cut it since the fourth grade, when his sister told him to grow it out. He wanted to pierce his ears, but his parents wouldn't let him. So he rebelled in the ways he could.

“I didn't know what I was doing,” said a shorter-haired Sternfeld-Dunn, now 38 and director of Wichita State's School of Music.

Sternfeld-Dunn did have aspirations during high school, though. He wanted to become a circus clown.

“I was going to go to the Ringling Brothers circus college in Florida. I was going to become a circus clown, and I was going to see the world,” Sternfeld-Dunn said Monday in the Duerksen Fine Arts Center.

He never got around to chasing that dream, but his attitude did leave him chasing something: a girl, Kristine, who he met in summer school between his freshman and sophomore years.

“I had a total crush [on her],” Sternfeld-Dunn said.

Kristine was in the high school marching band. Sternfeld-Dunn — who attended a private Montessori grade school that didn't offer many music courses — didn't have any marching band experience before high school.

But he had a different kind of band experience. He had picked up the electric guitar in middle school, and was in a punk band: Novacaine.



“Our slogan was ‘We're so punk it hurts,’” Sternfeld-Dunn said.

So he had some musical experience when Kristen asked him to join the marching band, which was going to tour Canada the following year.

“I was like, ‘Okay, but I don't know how to do anything in a marching band.’ And she's like, ‘That's okay, anyone can play bass drum,’” Sternfeld-Dunn said.

So he joined the marching band. And then he joined orchestra. And that's when music started to become a possibility, thanks to a teacher who took a chance on him and taught him well, he said.

He and Kristen didn't last, but they're still good friends.

Sternfeld-Dunn had some catching up to do to meet the musical skill level of his peers, so he started teaching himself music theory. Not long after, he fell in love with composing.

“The idea of creating music for others to play . . . resonated with me really strongly, so I started doing that,” Sternfeld-Dunn said. And as he worked his way through college, he found a growing passion to teach.

“That felt right to me, so it just kind of coalesced in that way.”

Sternfeld-Dunn met his wife, Emily, in a music theory class during his junior year of college at California State University East Bay. They've been married 15 years,

The writer uses conversational style to keep the story moving and keep readers going — not formal or stuffy.

More great detail and nice way to tuck his college information in, rather than: He went to Calif....

AP Style says ALWAYS use numerals when referring to age.

and have two daughters — one of whom turns 10 today. The other is 8.

In his free time, Sternfeld-Dunn likes to ride his bike. That's when he's happiest, he said. And he recently picked the electric guitar back up. He noodles on it when he needs a break at work, or when he's unwinding at home.

It's a good hobby to have because there's no expectation, like there is with composing, Sternfeld-Dunn said.

"If you go hear me play guitar, nobody expects me to be great. Having something that's creative with no expectation is really nice, and it's one of the ways I decompress."

Sternfeld-Dunn has mastered the art of mixing professor-wear with personal touch. Both his ears are pierced now, which was the first thing he did when he turned 18.

"I'm corporate in some ways. Especially as the director I've got to be more shirt and tie, right?" Sternfeld-Dunn said.

He once had a colleague stop him in the hall to ask him, "What's the deal with those earrings?"

"I said, 'Listen, when I was 18-year-old, this was my act of rebellion.' And she goes, 'You're not 18 anymore.' And I said, 'Well, I'm not done rebelling.'"

He's got earrings and two tattoos, always wears brightly colored glasses, and on some days, can be spotted in Converse high tops. But he said he's jealous of some of the other faculty on campus, "who are way more punk rock" than he is.

On Tuesday morning at 8 a.m., he wore Captain America socks to his aural

Wonderful detail and also ties back to the beginning of the story. Good storytelling device.

skills class. He taught the lesson using a Shania Twain song. He dissed Spotify. He jammed out a polka rhythm on the piano as his 15 students bobbed their heads. And when Spotify crashed for the second time, his students asked him to pull up YouTube, which he did with reluctance.

"I mean yes . . . but that means you'll see my YouTube history," Sternfeld-Dunn said. The history included Potter Puppet Pals, among other searches.

Later in the class, after a student correctly gave the meter of one of the musical selections, Sternfeld-Dunn bumped the student's fist — and it didn't appear forced.

"He just adds so much life to the classroom," vocal performance freshman Hector Garcia said after class. "The things he does, he just does them with such clarity and preciseness. He adds another level of enjoyment to the class."

Music is something Sternfeld-Dunn enjoys on another level, he said, because of its uniqueness compared to other disciplines.

"This is a place where people from all sorts of walks of life come together with no agenda other than trying to make something great together," Sternfeld-Dunn said. "You're all working toward making something really great, and understanding that you need each other. You can't ostracize anyone, because you need everyone."

"Sports can be like that, but the difference for me is that sports, at the end of the day, are about creating a team to work together to win something."

"You can't win music."

Excellent detail that the reporter could only know and describe if he actually attended one of his classes. SO SMART.

Good reporting. Never write a profile with only an interview with the subject. Talk to others! Ask the subject who knows them well. Ask who else you should talk to. Then when you interview someone else, ask them, too. "Who else should I talk to about this person?"