

# **RHODES COLLEGE PUBLICATIONS BOARD**

## **The Constitution of the Student Publications Board**

*Last Amended: September 2006*

### **ARTICLE I—NAME AND PURPOSE**

- SECTION 1.** The name of this organization will be the Rhodes College Student Publications Board.
- SECTION 2.** The Publications Board is an autonomous body funded by the Rhodes Student Government. It will be the purpose of the Board to supervise all official student publications, select their editors and establish their budgets. It will represent and incorporate diversity, as defined in the Rhodes Student Government Diversity Statement. It will allow the student publications to serve as the primary forum for examining and refining ideas, perspectives, and opinions of differing origins.
- SECTION 3.** A student publication must be approved by the Publications Board and pass through the existing College procedures for establishing a student organization for the publication to be considered an official student publication of Rhodes College. No student publication may solicit advertising in the name of the College without prior approval of the Publications Board. In no case will individuals use the College's name on publications without the express consent of the Publications Board and the Office of Communications.
- SECTION 4.** By virtue of inclusion as an official Rhodes College Student Publication, each publication is recognized as being of equal value and import to the Rhodes College Community regardless of frequency of publication, staff size, or content. The Publications Board should regard each publication as such, as represented by a single vote of equal value by the editor-in-chief of each publication. The Publications Board should represent and oversee each publication with equal concern.
- SECTION 5.** The Publications Board will operate as a non-profit organization.
- SECTION 6.** The Publications Board will abide by the applicable rules and policies of Rhodes College for official student organizations.

### **ARTICLE II—MEMBERSHIP**

- SECTION 1.** The Rhodes College Student Publications Board will be composed of: the Publications Commissioner (elected), one elected member from each of the first year, sophomore, junior, and senior classes, and the editor or designee from each publication.
- SECTION 2.** The Publications Commissioner may not be editor-in-chief of any publication concurrent with the term of President. The Publications Commissioner is an *ex officio* staff member of publications and must call all meetings of the Publications Board. Candidates for the office of Publications Commissioner must have:
- editorial experience on a publication for at least one year, or
  - one year of experience on at least two publications, or

- two years of experience on a single publication, or
- one year of experience on the Publications Board *and* one year of experience on a single publication.

Persons who wish to run for the position of the Publications Commissioner must file an election petition according to Publications Board procedures and deadlines for an election. The Rhodes Student Government Student Elections Commissioner will conduct the Publications Board Election. No person may run for the office of Commissioner without prior approval of the Publications Board. The Publications Board will review the qualifications of the persons petitioning to run for the position. Approval of the candidates will be by a simple majority vote of the Board. The Publications Commissioner will provide a list of approved candidates to the Rhodes Student Government Elections Commissioner two weeks prior to election date. Turnover for the President will occur two weeks after editor selection is complete.

**SECTION 3.** The representative for each publication will be its editor-in-chief. In the case of LynxTV, the representative will be the station manager. In the event that the editor-in-chief cannot act as representative for a publication, the assistant editor will act as representative for the publication. The editors-in-chief for the ensuing year must be elected no more than two weeks after the second semester Rhodes Student Government officer elections, excluding official school recesses. The incumbent Publications Board members will elect the new editors before their term expires. Interested parties must submit applications to the Publications Board and undergo an interview during a regularly called Publications Board meeting. An editor must be elected by a majority vote of the Publications Board. In the event that a current editor is applying for the same position, or another editorship, for the following year, that editor may not sit in on the interviews for that position and may not participate in the voting for that position.

**SECTION 4.** In the event of a publication being added or removed from the Publications Board, an at-large elected member will be either added or removed from the Board to reflect an equal number of elected members and representative members (editors) for the following year.

**SECTION 5.** Publications Board Members will serve a term of one year.

**SECTION 6.** No student may hold more than one seat on the board concurrently.

**SECTION 7.** In the event that a seat on the Publications Board becomes vacant, it must be filled within one month's time. Elected seats must be filled in by appointment of the Commissioner, subject to the three-fourth's (3/4) approval of the remaining elected members of the Publications Board. Vacant editorships will be filled by an assistant editor until such time as a new editor is chosen by the procedure outlined in Article II, Section 3.

**SECTION 8.** Each Publications Board member, save the Commissioner, will have one vote. In the case of a tie, the Commissioner will cast the tie-breaking vote.

**SECTION 9.** A quorum for voting is determined by taking half the number of the voting membership and adding one. A simple majority is necessary for changing standing rules and matters of normal business.

## **ARTICLE III—DUTIES OF THE PUBLICATIONS BOARD**

- SECTION 1.** To choose the editors of all official student publications and to remove and replace editors when necessary.
- SECTION 2.** To publicize requests for applications regarding the above positions at least two weeks prior to the election in accordance with Rhodes Student Government elections by-laws.
- SECTION 3.** To audit the expenditures of all Publications Board funds, and to allocate the Student Activities' money granted by Rhodes Student Government Allocations Board in accordance with Article VIII (Financial Organization).
- SECTION 4.** The Publications Board must approve the advertising policies of individual publications. The Publications Board will have final authority in addressing and resolving complaints regarding advertising in compliance with the Publications Board Complaint Procedure found in Article V (Complaint Procedure).
- SECTION 5.** The Publications Board may assume the responsibility of recruiting and appointing an editorial and general staff for any publication in the circumstance that a publication experience staffing problems that threaten its continued operation. The Board will recruit and appoint editorial and general staff for the publication in question. The prospective editorial staff must be approved by a majority of the Publications Board. Prospective editorial staff will be evaluated on their ability to increase the quality of the publication and the quality of discourse in the Rhodes community. They will also be acquainted with Article IV (Editorship).
- SECTION 6.** Publications equipment and offices may not be abused for personal use; priority will remain with any official publication use.
- SECTION 7.** To pass and ensure the enforcement of publications operating guidelines.

## **ARTICLE IV—EDITORSHIP**

- SECTION 1.** Each Publication must have one, and only one, editor-in-chief.
- SECTION 2.** All editors-in-chief must create and submit to the Publications Board for approval a set of operating guidelines. These guidelines will serve in place of a constitution. Any changes to these guidelines must occur with the two-thirds approval of the Publications Board. The guidelines must include:
- a statement of purpose
  - a hierarchy of authority, with a clear delineation of responsibilities
  - the method by which revenue is accrued and administrated, and
  - a statement of non-discrimination
- SECTION 3.** Editors will run their publications within budget. If any editor goes beyond budget, the Publications Board will take appropriate action.
- SECTION 4.** Each editor will be responsible for fulfilling the expectations in the operating guidelines of the publication.

## **ARTICLE V—COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

- SECTION 1.** Any member of the Rhodes Community may file a complaint against a student publication (having membership of the Publications Board) on the grounds of failure to adhere to the Journalistic Ethics in Article VI, failure to serve the Rhodes Community, falsity, fiscal mismanagement, obscenity, libel, or invasion of privacy.
- SECTION 2.** The written complaint will be concise and specifically state the material in question and how it clearly contains material of the aforementioned nature. It will be submitted to the Publications Commissioner.
- SECTION 3.** Any party who is the subject of the written statement of a complaint filed will also submit a written statement setting forth facts, materials, and arguments supporting his or her response to the complaint. This statement will be filed with the Publications Commissioner.
- SECTION 4.** The complaint and response will be reviewed by the Publications Board. A finding of facts will be made by the Publications Commissioner in cooperation with the affected publication's editor.
- SECTION 5.** If a finding of substantial evidence is made, appropriate disposition pursuant to Article X, Section 7 will be made. If a finding of no substantial evidence is found, the complaint will be dismissed by the reviewing official.
- SECTION 6.** If any party is dissatisfied by the outcome of any review or disposition hereunder, the party may appeal to Rhodes Student Government. A motion in Rhodes Student Government must be passed to have the complaint reviewed again by the Publications Board, requiring a three-fourths (3/4) vote to uphold the original ruling.
- SECTION 7.** Disposition will be as follows, at the discretion of the Publications Board including, but is not limited to:
- If a finding of no substantial evidence is found, the complaint will be dismissed.
  - A formal letter of reprimand to the responding party from the final reviewing authority.
  - A letter of apology from the responding party.
  - The retraction of the article, advertising, or matter which formed the basis for the complaint. In lieu of such a retraction, an article which sets forth information rectifying that which formed the basis for the complaint may be ordered.
  - Withholding of compensation.
  - Reduction of the publication's current or future budget.
  - Removal of staff members.
  - Removal of the Editor.
  - Dissolution of the publication.

## **ARTICLE VI—JOURNALISTIC ETHICS**

- SECTION 1.** The Purpose of the Publications Board is to serve the truth. The student publications are carriers of public discussion and information, acting on their Constitutional mandate and freedom to learn and report the facts. The Publications Board believes in enlightenment as the forerunner of justice,

and in our Constitutional role to seek the truth as part of the Community's right to know the truth. These responsibilities carry obligations that require journalists to perform with intelligence, objectivity, accuracy, and fairness. To these ends, the Publications Board sets forth the following statement of principles and code of ethics as a standard for encouraging the highest ethical performance.

- SECTION 2.** Responsibility - The primary purpose of gathering and distributing news and opinion is to serve the welfare of the community by informing the Rhodes Community and enabling its members to make judgments on the issues of their time. Journalists who abuse the power of their positions for self motives or unworthy purposes are faithless to the trust placed in them. Student publications are entitled to freedom of expression not just to inform or just to serve as a forum for debate but also to bring an independent scrutiny to bear on the forces of power in the community, including the conduct of official power at all levels of government. Student publications should strive to cover issues relevant to a cross-section of the Rhodes Community. The Rhodes Community's right to know about matters of importance is paramount, and the Publications Board should fight vigorously for public access to news of government through open meetings and open records.
- SECTION 3.** Freedom of the Press - Freedom of the press belongs to the Community. It must be defended against encroachment or assault from any sector. Journalists must be constantly alert to see that the Community's business is conducted publicly. They must be vigilant against all who would exploit the press for selfish purposes.
- SECTION 4.** Independence - Journalists must avoid impropriety or the appearance of impropriety as well as conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest. They should neither accept anything nor pursue any activity that might compromise or seem to compromise their integrity.
- SECTION 5.** Truth and Accuracy - Good faith with the reader is the foundation of good journalism. Every effort within reason must be made to assure that the news content is accurate, free from bias and in context, and that all sides are presented fairly. Editorials, analytical articles, and commentary should be held to the same standards of accuracy with respect to facts as news reports. Significant errors of fact, as well as errors of omission, should be corrected promptly and prominently.
- SECTION 6.** Impartiality - To be impartial does not require the press to be unquestioning or to refrain from editorial expression. Sound practice, however, demands a clear distinction for the reader between news reports and opinions. Articles that contain opinion or personal interpretation should be clearly identified and a clear distinction between fact and interpretation must be maintained within all articles.
- SECTION 7.** Fair Play - Journalists should respect the right of people involved in the news, observe the common standards of decency and privacy, and stand accountable to the Community for the fairness and accuracy of their news reports. Persons publicly accused should be given an opportunity to respond before the publication of an article. All viewpoints must be clearly attributed to the proper source. Opinions of individuals must not be represented as the

official viewpoint of an organization. All articles and letters must be printed with the names of their authors. However, the Publications Board and the Publications Board Faculty Advisor may together grant an exception to this rule in special cases.

**SECTION 8.** Diversity - True learning requires free and open debate, civil discourse, and openness to many different individuals and ideas. We are students preparing to live and work in a world that speaks with many voices from many cultures. Diversity is not only essential to learning, it is an essential to be learned. The Publications Board holds these values dear and should act vigorously to defend them. It should maintain an environment conducive to teaching and learning that is free from intimidation for all.

#### **ARTICLE VII—REMOVING A PUBLICATIONS BOARD MEMBER FROM OFFICE**

**SECTION 1.** The Publications Board has the right to terminate any Publications Board Member's term of office.

**SECTION 2.** The Publications Board Commissioner may be removed by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of no-confidence.

**SECTION 3.** Cause for removal includes disregard for Article IV (Editorship), consistent absence from meetings, and any other reason that would prevent the publication or the Publications Board from fulfilling its purpose, as stated in the publication's operating guidelines and the Publications Board Constitution.

**SECTION 4.** An editor may be removed from office for neglecting either his or her duties as editor or as Publications Board Member. Removal from one office necessitates removal from both offices.

**SECTION 5.** Removal of an editor or an elected member of the Publications Board for due cause will require a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of all voting members. The editor/elected official in question will not vote.

**SECTION 6** The terminated Publications Board member can appeal the decision by a passed motion in Rhodes Student Government. The editor will then be entitled to another termination hearing according to the aforementioned procedure.

**SECTION 7.** The assistant editor of the affected publication will assume the position of editor until an editor is elected. In the case there is no assistant editor, the Publications Commissioner will appoint a temporary editor.

**SECTION 8.** A vacant editorship must be filled according to the procedure outlined in Article II (Membership).

#### **ARTICLE VIII—FINANCIAL ORGANIZATION**

**SECTION 1.** All publications will have an account for their production costs. The Publications Board will have a single roll-over account for revenue generated.

**SECTION 2.** All publication computer facilities (hardware, software, and network) are the property of the Publications Board, and not of any single publication. These material resources may be assigned/located at the discretion of the Publications Board.

- SECTION 3.** Publications may collect revenues generated by advertising or other means with the approval of the Publications Board. These funds are to be placed in a Publications Board roll-over account if Publications Board has a positive balance at the end of the fiscal year, and may be used according to the publication's operating guidelines.
- SECTION 4.** Personal profit, through the use of any student publication or related equipment, incidental or otherwise, outside of official financial compensation, is prohibited.
- SECTION 5.** In the event that a Publication is dissolved, residual funds revert to the Publications Board. If the Publications Board is dissolved, residual funds will revert to the Rhodes College Student Government unless otherwise specified by the Publications Board at the time of dissolution.

#### **ARTICLE IX—AMENDMENTS**

- SECTION 1.** Amendments to the constitution may be proposed by any member of the Publications Board. Such proposals will be submitted in writing to the Publications Commissioner for a first reading to the membership at a regular meeting prior to the meeting at which the proposed amendment is to be voted on.
- SECTION 2.** Duly proposed amendments will be submitted to a vote of the voting members provided a quorum is present. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote in favor will be required for adoption of such amendments.
- SECTION 3.** An amendment to the Publications By-Laws will be adopted only after approval of the Rhodes Student Government and the President of the College.