

Middle Georgia State University Student Media Bylaws

[approved by Student Media Advisory Board, April 2013]

Preamble

Student Media at Middle Georgia State University consist of *The Fall Line Review*, KnighTVision, a television lab that supports the newspaper site, and *The Statement*, the student newspaper. *The Fall Line Review* and *The Statement* are open-forum enterprises staffed with students who are free to select the materials to be published without undue criticism or pressure.

Student media serving as open forums are valuable aids in establishing and maintaining an atmosphere of free and responsible discussion as well as intellectual exploration on the campus. They are a means of bringing student concerns to the attention of the faculty and the institutional authorities, and of formulating opinions on various issues on the campus and in the world at large. In response to the editorial responsibility of student media, the University must provide sufficient editorial freedom and sufficient financial resources for the student media to maintain their integrity of purpose as vehicles for free inquiry and free expression in an academic community.

Institutional authorities have a responsibility to provide written clarification of the role of student media, the standards to be used in their evaluation, and the limitations on external control of their operation. At the same time, the editorial freedom of student editors entails corollary responsibilities to be governed by the canons of responsible journalism, such as the avoidance of libel, indecency, undocumented allegations, attacks on personal integrity, and the techniques of harassment and innuendo.

By authority of the Board of Regents and the President of Middle Georgia State University and on behalf of the University community, the Student Media Coordinator presents these bylaws governing specific student media, said bylaws representing the general framework of operations of the Middle Georgia State University Student Media.

Middle Georgia State University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Educational and Employment Opportunity institution. Factors of race, national origin, sex, age, religion, or disability are not considered in treatment of students, in accordance with Federal and State laws and regulations.

Mission Statements and College Expectations

The purpose of the Student Media Program at Middle Georgia State University is to provide interested students with opportunities to learn about the art and craft of creative endeavors, journalism, and new media via three primary outlets – an annual literary/art journal, a campus television lab, and a newspaper.

The Fall Line Review is literary/arts journal featuring the creative and collective consciousness of Middle Georgia State University students. *The Fall Line Review* is a Recognized Student Organization of the Office of Student Life. It is the expectation of the University that the journal will be staffed with well-qualified and responsible leaders and staff. It is also an expectation of the University that items published in the journal are selected by the magazine's Editorial Board based on literary and/or artistic merit.

Students must be currently enrolled or have been enrolled during the previous two semesters in order to be eligible to have work published in the journal. As a student publication produced by students and its faculty advisers, *The Fall Line Review* should explicitly state that opinions expressed are not necessarily those of Middle Georgia State University or the student body, and that the publication is funded with Student Activities fees.

KnighTVision provides the student body with timely and pertinent information concerning the campus community and the events thereof via content imbedded in the newspaper site. KnighTVision additionally provides students with the opportunity to develop skills in the television medium and experience firsthand the technological advances being made in the medium, as they relate to new media.

KnighTVision is a Recognized Student Organization of the Office of Student Life. It is the expectation of the University that the campus television lab will be staffed with well-qualified and responsible leaders and staff. It is also an expectation of the University that items displayed on the college newspaper site have been reviewed by the editorial staff of the newspaper. As a University and student enterprise published by students under the advisement of qualified faculty, KnighTVision should explicitly state that the programming is funded with Student Activities fees.

The Statement, the student newspaper, provides the students of Middle Georgia State University with timely and accurate campus news. It is a Recognized Student Organization of the Office of Student Life. It is the expectation of the University that the student newspaper will be staffed with well-qualified and responsible leaders and staff. As a news source published and financed by the University, *The Statement* should explicitly state on the editorial page that opinions expressed are not necessarily those of Middle Georgia State University or the student body, and that the publication is funded with Student Activities fees.

Student Media Policy

1. As safeguards for the editorial freedom of student publications, the following provisions are necessary:
 - A. The student press should be free of censorship and advance approval of copy. This editorial freedom entails corollary responsibilities upon student editors to be governed by the canons of responsible journalism such as the avoidance of libel, indecency, undocumented allegations, attacks on personal integrity, and the techniques of harassment and/or innuendo.
 - B. Leaders and staff members should be free to develop their own editorial policies and news coverage. Leaders of student publications should be protected from arbitrary sanction because of student, faculty, administrative, or public disapproval of editorial policy or content. Only for proper and stated causes (individual student media guidelines, Student Code of Conduct and this document) should leaders and staff members be sanctioned, including removal, and then by orderly and prescribed procedures. The agency responsible for the appointment of editors/managers should be the agency responsible for their removal. (See Student Media Advisory Board.)
 - C. All University-financed student publications should explicitly state on the editorial page that opinions expressed are not necessarily those of Middle Georgia State University or the student body and that the publication is funded with Student Activities fees. Leaders and staff members are not official spokespersons for the students or Middle Georgia State University.
2. Leaders and staff members are expected to have read and acknowledged understanding of the laws of libel, right of privacy, obscenity, and similar existing laws and interpretations. All news stories shall avoid indecency and expressions of personal opinion and bias.
3. Leaders and staff members of student media are expected to exhibit balance in the contents of their publications.
4. Leaders and staff members of student media have the right to criticize without malice public officials in the performance of their official duties.
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6. Students have the opportunity to express personal opinions through editorial columns that are clearly labeled as such.
7. Letters to the Editor of student publications must bear positive identification of authorship. Editors and staff members, before publication, must be able to verify and clearly identify the author of the letter. In limited cases, identification of the author may be withheld at the discretion of the editors, with the advice of the

Student Media Coordinator.

8. Leaders and staff members of student media may give news and editorial coverage to political events and controversies. At no time, however, will the leaders or staff members of any student publication, acting in his/her official capacity, enter into student partisan politics and/or use the facilities or the privileges of his/her office for the promotion of a political party or candidate.
9. Reprinting of materials from other sources does not mitigate deviations from this Student Media Policy.
10. The leaders of student media, along with the Student Media Coordinator, and any faculty advisers shall establish policies designed to encourage contributions from all segments of the University community.
11. All student media leaders shall submit a yearly budget proposal for review by the Student Media Coordinator. The Student Media Coordinator will forward appropriate proposals to the Student Affairs Committee. A recommendation by the Committee is then forwarded to the Vice President of Students Affairs and to the President of the University for final approval by the Board of Regents.
12. The Student Media Coordinator is responsible for all financial aspects of student media and will follow University policy when accepting bids, contracting, and paying for printing, equipment and other costs associated with the student media.
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14. The Department of Media, Culture, and the Arts is the base of all operations for the Student Media.
15. These policies are subject to periodic review by the Student Media Advisory Board, the Student Government Association, the Student Affairs Committee, and respective publication staffs and advisers. The policies shall not be interpreted as all-inclusive.

Student Media Fiscal Policy

The Fall Line Review, *KnighTVision*, and *The Statement* are Recognized Student Organizations (RSO) of Middle Georgia State University. They receive funding from the Student Activities fee.

1. "All mandatory student fees collected by an institution shall be budgeted and administered by the president using proper administrative procedures, which shall include the advice and counsel of an advisory committee composed of at least fifty percent students Middle Georgia State University Student Affairs Committee. Students shall be appointed by the institution's Student Government Association. All payments from funds supported by student mandatory fees shall be made according to approved business procedures and the appropriate business practices of the institution (Board of Regents). Minutes, 1999-2000, p. 364).
2. "All publications, including bulletins, annuals, magazines, etc., published either by students, faculties or staffs of any institution of the University System shall be published

only under proper supervision and authority of the president the institution. All financial contracts pertaining to such publications shall be approved by the president or his/her designated representative.” (Board of Regents Policy Manual, Section 1000: Information, Records, and Publications, 1002.02 INSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATIONS)

The Student Media Coordinator serves as the “designated representative” responsible for all financial aspects of student media. Any action by a student publication involving expenditures, purchases, chargeable services, maintenance, and contracts must be approved by the Student Media Coordinator in advance of the expenditure.

Student Media Advisory Board

Reconstituted in fall 2012, The Student Media Advisory Board is a board of the Middle Georgia State University Faculty Senate. In consultation with the Office of Student Life, The Board has the primary responsibility of appointing the editors and of making recommendations to the Vice President of Student Affairs and the President; the secondary responsibility of the Board is to assure due process when, in the judgment of the Board, any leader or staff member, including the editors-in-chief, must be sanctioned, including removal for cause; the Board additionally reviews requests of the student media regarding name, format, and other significant changes in the organizations, including concerns or complaints from any party pertaining to student media. Normally, the organizations will not change names more frequently than once in five years.

The Board will meet as needed at the discretion of the chair, usually at twice a semester. Any member of the Board may request a meeting by submitting a written request and reason to the chair.

Membership of the Student Media Advisory Board

Dean of the School of College of Arts and Sciences or Designee, Chair (ex officio, non-voting)

Director of Student Life (ex officio, voting member)

NMAC Coordinator (ex officio, voting member and Recorder)

Student Media Coordinator (ex officio, non-voting)

Chair, Student Affairs Committee (ex officio, non-voting)

Member of Faculty Senate (voting member), appointed by Faculty Chair of the Senate, 3-year term that may extend beyond two-year Senate term

Member of Student Government Association (voting member), appointed by SGA, one-year term

At-large student (voting member), appointed by Chair, one-year term

At-large student (voting member), appointed by Director of Student Life, one-year term

Journalism Professional (non-voting), appointed by President, replaced as necessary

Editor-in-Chief newspaper (ex officio, non-voting), one-year term

Editor, *The Fall Line Review* (ex officio, non-voting), one-year term

Student Coordinator, KnighTVision (ex officio, non-voting), one-year term

The Student Media Coordinator, the current student editors, the journalism professional, and any other ex officio member may make recommendations and participate in the discussions related to the selection of the editors, but they may not vote.

Student Media Coordinator – Responsibilities

The Student Media Coordinator receives his/her authority from the Georgia Board of Regents through the President of the University. The Student Media Coordinator is designated for the operating and non-editorial policy-making responsibilities for student media and promotes professionalism in the practice of journalism. The Student Media Coordinator is familiar with all student media programs and their activities, provides consistency from year to year, assists the organizations, and provides an educational experience for the organizations' members.

The Student Media Coordinator, as primary adviser, is available to provide guidance and learning resources to the students of each organization and for assisting the leaders and staff in creating and maintaining high standards for responsible publication.

The student staffs of the student media may select faculty advisers approved by the faculty member's department chair/school dean and the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate. The student leaders, Student Media Coordinator, and advisers (if any) will work together to develop and implement individual policies for each media outlet that are consistent with these policies, Middle Georgia State media policies, and the policies of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

The responsibilities of the Student Media Coordinator include but are not limited to:

1. Acting in an advisory capacity, supervising the non-editorial operation of recognized student media and such other student media as might be established by Middle Georgia State University

2. Being available to the leaders and members of student media in order to share ideas and concerns about the organization.
3. Providing mandatory and voluntary training in various aspects and skills of student media.
4. Acting as a liaison between student media, the administration, and community. This includes hearing complaints and suggestions and protecting the status of student media as public forums – namely *The Fall Line Review*, *The Statement*, and *KnighTVision*.
5. Meeting with student leaders of the student media to discuss progress and direction of the group and attending as many meetings and functions of the student media as possible.
6. Serving as non-voting member on the Student Media Advisory Board.
7. Approving all requests for expenditure of funds by the student media in advance of the expenditure.
8. Recommending sound editorial policies and establishing, implementing and monitoring sound fiscal, production and personnel policies. These include, but are not limited to:
 - A. Long-range planning in all areas of responsibility
 - B. Reviewing and submitting appropriate budget proposals of student media
 - C. Hearing complaints and suggestions
 - D. Acting as a liaison between student media and the community

Members of the Student Media – Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the student media students include, but are not limited to:

1. Being available in order to share ideas and concerns about the organization.
2. Meeting with the Student Media Coordinator regularly to discuss progress and direction of the group.
3. Keeping the Student Media Coordinator abreast of any changes that occur within the organization and its programs.
4. Coordinating all on-campus and off-campus events, meetings, functions, etc., as well as discussing all financial and budgetary matters with the Student Media Coordinator.
5. Attending all meetings of the Student Media Advisory Board.

6. Attending training sessions as required.
7. Being aware of University policies and regulations as presented in The Middle Georgia State University Student Handbook
8. Complying with all guidelines for Registered Student Organizations – with the following exceptions – the Student Media budget is a line item in the general Student Activities budget; the Student Media Coordinator is responsible for approving all student media expenditures.
9. Being aware of the scope of personal authority as related to professional responsibility (see Student Media Policy).
10. Securing approval of expenditures from the Student Media Coordinator prior to expenditure.

Faculty Advisers: Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the faculty advisers (if any) include, but are not limited to:

1. Offering organizations their own professional experience and knowledge to assist in the growth and development of leadership within the organization.
2. Providing a degree of continuity to student organizations whose compositions may necessarily change from year to year as new students enter and others graduate.
3. Providing knowledge of University operations, policies, and procedures to assist organizations in facilitating organizational programs and the achievement of organizational goals.
4. Safeguard the University as well as the organization by working with students to assure that organizational programs and activities are educational in nature, that they contribute to the total educational mission of the University, and the organization is worthy of continuing recognition and association.
5. Guiding the organization in its activities and its relationship with the University.
6. Taking an active part in the formulation of group policy through active interaction with group members.

These Student Media Bylaws were adapted with permission from Kennesaw State University.

