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**Administrative Procedure**  
Chapter 4 – Academic Affairs

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## **AP 4500 STUDENT NEWS MEDIA**

### **Reference:**

Education Code Section 66301

### **Responsibilities**

The Vice President of Academic Affairs shall be responsible for the overall coordination and implementation of these procedures relating to orderly administration of student news media.

### **Definitions**

College news media are any news/feature publications issued under the name of the college, funded by the District, and produced by students as an integral part of instruction in the Journalism program, housed in the English department. It may include, but is not limited to, student newspaper reporting, broadcast news journalism and internet news journalism. The term “editorial” refers to all content other than advertising.

### **Purpose**

- A. College news media, as laboratory publications of the Journalism Program curriculum, shall provide vehicles to train students for careers in mass communication. College news media shall also serve the entire college community by reporting the news, including college events and activities, providing a forum for comment and criticism, and encouraging free expression as guaranteed in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.
- B. College news media are valuable aids in establishing and maintaining an atmosphere of free and responsible discussion. College news media shall exercise editorial freedom in order to maintain their integrity as vehicles for free inquiry and free expression in the college community. At the same time, the editorial freedom of the college news media shall entail corollary responsibilities.
- C. Each college newspaper or other news medium is published as a learning experience, offered under the Journalism program. The editorial and

advertising materials published in each news medium, including any opinions expressed, are the responsibility of the student staff. A student or students will serve as Editor-in-Chief or Co-Editors-in-Chief and form an editorial board. The Editor-in-Chief/Co-Editors-in-Chief in consultation with the editorial board will maintain the right to determine what work will and will not be published. Under the appropriate state and federal court decisions, these materials are free from prior restraint by virtue of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. These procedures are adopted so as to encourage responsible exercise of such freedom.

## **Best Practices**

- A. The Viking News staff will report as accurately and fairly as possible and will comment fairly and constructively.
- B. Realizing that the Viking News is a student newspaper and a vital means of communication for Long Beach City College, the staff will give the greatest emphasis to activities and issues originating within the college, although this will not preclude printing news and opinions about off-campus activities and issues that affect the students and/or the college.
- C. The Viking News is discouraged from printing matter that is offensive to accepted standards of human decency or contains slurs against protected classes (e.g., ethnic, religious, racial or homophobic), or causes substantial disruption of education.
- D. Viking News editorials are the opinions of the editorial board. All other editorial page material, such as feature columns, is the opinion of the individual writers, not the Viking News.
- E. The Viking News is entitled to the rights accorded the press in a free society and therefore, has the right to criticize and point out shortcomings in any phase of school life or in any situation which affects students or the college. In its commitment to be accurate and fair, the Viking shall operate within the following guidelines:
  - 1. Controversial Viking News editorials and feature columns should be based always on the issues, not personalities. Although individuals and organizations may be named, comment will be limited to their activities, policies and stated opinions regarding the issue under discussion.
  - 2. Any individual or group criticized in Viking News editorials or feature columns shall be afforded equal space in a position of equal prominence on the same page for a reply. Each reply is published in a timely manner in a modality similar to the modality of the initial article. Mere difference of opinion shall not be construed as criticism. The individual or group criticized must be clearly identified in the editorial or feature column to which a reply is addressed. The rules forbidding libel, affronts to community standards of taste and decency and slurs against protected

classes shall apply with the same force to replies as they do to all other material published in the Viking News.

3. Statements made "in public" shall be defined as those made in any meeting or gathering officially sanctioned by the college and open to the student body or faculty. When such statements contain material unfavorable to any individual or group, the quoting or paraphrasing of the statements in the news columns of the Viking News shall be construed as reporting the news, not as attacks emanating from the Viking News. The same shall apply to statements given in interviews. However, it shall be the responsibility of the staff writer covering the story to give the criticized or accused person or group the opportunity to reply in the same story. The reply may be edited, but not deleted or its meaning changed. Failure to reply shall not be grounds for delaying publication.
4. The writers of Viking News editorials and feature columns will be free to write or express any opinion on any candidate, party, or issue with the understanding that these are only the opinions of the individual writers.
5. Letters to the editor, guest columns and guest editorials are encouraged. However, columns and editorials from non-staff writers must meet the same standards required of student journalists. Letters to the editor need not meet journalistic standards, but they may be edited to correct gross grammatical errors or to fit available space.
6. These best practices shall be displayed prominently in the Viking editorial offices.

### **Student News Media Grievance Procedures**

- A. Definition of a Grievance: A grievance is a complaint that alleges facts which, if true, would demonstrate a violation of the grievant's right to free inquiry, free speech, or fair treatment; contains allegations that appear to be substantially credible; and is not frivolous.
- B. Individuals may submit a Public Incident Report through the LBCC website to the grievance officer. Each complaint should be responded to in writing and in a timely manner.

Also see BP 4500 Student News Media.

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*(Replaces LBCC Administrative Regulation 5016)*