

Red & Black

Bylaws & Policy Manual

August, 2004

Updated May, 2005

Mission Statement

As the official student newspaper of Washington & Jefferson College (“W&J College”), it shall be the mission of the Red & Black to inform the College community about news, entertainment, and sports, with a strong emphasis on the campus. It shall also serve as an open forum for student opinion and expression. It shall provide students with a unique opportunity to supplement their educational program. It is our hope that students who take part will increase their skills in writing, photography, layout/design, marketing/sales and student leadership. We will do our best to provide professional quality experience to those who wish to pursue a career in journalism or a related field. In all respects, we will strive to achieve the highest level of journalistic quality and excellence while maintaining a strong respect for the significant role we hold in regards to the culture of the W&J campus.

I. Name

- A. The newspaper as well as the organization will be known as the Red & Black, or simply Red & Black
- B. Changing the name will require a College-wide poll where students vote between new options provided by the newspaper staff as well as the existing name. A majority vote is required from those who take part before the new name can be officially accepted by the Board of Trustees.
- C. If a majority is not reached, a new vote may take place between the top two options or the name goes unchanged
- D. The new name will not be considered official until accepted by the Board of Trustees, to be voted upon as they see fit

II. Membership

- A. Membership with the Red & Black shall be open to any enrolled student at Washington & Jefferson College
- B. As academic success is the main goal for a student at W&J College, members are expected to maintain at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA)
- C. Membership status is granted only to committed students who attend weekly meetings, regularly contribute to the publication, and undergo any required training workshops
- D. Other members of the College community are welcome to serve as “contributors,” who only occasionally fulfill the requirements above; this is not equal to membership status

- E. Membership will never be denied to a potential member based on race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, political affiliation, etc.; this policy extends to the Editorial Board as well as staff
- F. "Membership" will also include those students who hold a title on the Editorial Board

III. Editorial Board

- A. Editor-in-Chief
 1. Shall be directly responsible for all materials published, ensuring the overall quality of the publication
 2. Shall schedule and preside over all staff meetings
 3. Shall oversee the work of all editors and staff members and ensure the proper functioning of all departments
 4. Shall represent the organization to the administration, faculty, and staff of W&J College
 5. Shall ensure adherence to all Red & Black policies
 6. Makes final judgment call on potentially harmful or controversial materials in print
- B. Business Manager
 1. Shall be initially responsible for the business operation of the organization
 2. Shall update the staff weekly on incoming revenue and printing expenses
 3. Shall make recommendations to the staff and administrative adviser regarding the use of the budget
 4. Shall be responsible for incoming revenue through advertising and is, accordingly, expected to find methods of ensuring incoming revenue
 5. Shall oversee all fundraising events outside of advertising
- C. Production Manager
 1. Shall oversee and participate in the actual layout process of the newspaper when needed
 2. Shall ensure that the production of each issue is completed by the deadline
 3. Shall be initially responsible for the design look of each issue
 4. Shall make recommendations to all members of the layout staff for an effective, visually appealing issue
 5. Shall provide training on design and layout to any new member of the staff who requires it
- D. Managing Editor
 1. Shall assist the Editor-in-Chief as necessary and make judgment calls in his/her absence when the situation arises
 2. Ensures the completion of all assignments in a timely manner
 3. Serves as main recruitment and retention officer for new staff members and editors

4. Serves as a staff morale officer and finds ways to ensure a positive atmosphere that encourages new members to take part and veteran members to continue in their roles; this may include organizing staff events outside of regular meetings and layout days
 5. May be asked to confront staff members and editors who are not serving their role appropriately
 6. Shall maintain an accurate list of all members of the staff, including editors, as well as contact information
- E. News Editor
1. As the primary function of a newspaper is to report news, the News Editor shall be the highest-ranking section editor
 2. Shall uncover potential news stories and features to be assigned to members of the staff
 3. Shall layout and design the news section of every issue or contact the Production Manager to find a temporary substitute when needed
 4. Shall decide what is worthy of publication in his/her section, including text and artwork, to include submissions from the Red & Black membership and contributors
 5. Shall ensure his/her section's adherence to media law and Red & Black policy; he/she is expected to bring any potential problems to the attention of the Editor-in-Chief or adviser
- F. Opinions Editor
1. Shall seek out and encourage opinion submissions, especially those from outside the staff
 2. Shall layout and design the opinions section of every issue or contact the Production Manager to find a temporary substitute when needed
 3. Shall decide what is worthy of publication in his/her section, including text and artwork, to include submissions from the Red & Black membership and contributors
 4. Shall ensure his/her section's adherence to media law and Red & Black policy; he/she is expected to bring any potential problems to the attention of the Editor-in-Chief or adviser
- G. Arts Editor
1. Shall uncover potential arts stories and features to be assigned to members of the staff
 2. Shall layout and design the arts section of every issue or contact the Production Manager to find a temporary substitute when needed
 3. Shall decide what is worthy of publication in his/her section, including text and artwork, to include submissions from the Red & Black membership and contributors

4. Shall ensure his/her section's adherence to media law and Red & Black policy; he/she is expected to bring any potential problems to the attention of the Editor-in-Chief or adviser
- H. Sports Editor
1. Shall uncover potential sports stories and features to be assigned to members of the staff
 2. Shall layout and design the sports section of every issue or contact the Production Manager to find a temporary substitute when needed
 3. Shall decide what is worthy of publication in his/her section, including text and artwork, to include submissions from the Red & Black membership and contributors
 4. Shall ensure his/her section's adherence to media law and Red & Black policy; he/she is expected to bring any potential problems to the attention of the Editor-in-Chief or adviser
- I. Campus Editor
1. Shall uncover potential Campus stories and features to be assigned to members of the staff
 2. Shall layout and design the Campus section of every issue or contact the Production Manager to find a temporary substitute when needed
 3. Shall decide what is worthy of publication in his/her section, including text and artwork, to include submissions from the Red & Black membership and contributors
 4. Shall ensure his/her section's adherence to media law and Red & Black policy; he/she is expected to bring any potential problems to the attention of the Editor-in-Chief or adviser
- J. Copy Editor
1. Shall check all copy for grammatical errors, spelling errors, and poor writing and make any necessary changes to ensure high quality writing in all sections of the publication
 2. Shall, when available, assist in the creation of cutlines, captions, headlines, and sub-headlines
 3. Shall make attempts to ensure all facts stated are verified and all quotes are accurate
 4. Shall ensure adherence to media law and Red & Black policy; he/she is expected to bring any potential problems to the attention of the Editor-in-Chief or adviser
- K. Photography Editor
1. Shall uncover potential photography or artwork additions to each issue to be assigned to members of the staff or handled personally
 2. Shall make recommendations to all section editors regarding usage of photos and artwork to maintain a visually appealing publication

3. Shall oversee all cameras and other photography equipment, ensuring that all are maintained in working order and are always accounted for
 4. Shall ensure all photography and artwork adheres to media law and Red & Black policy; he/she is expected to bring any potential problems to the attention of the Editor-in-Chief or adviser
- L. Other Editorial Board Policies
1. Editorial positions must be made open for application at least once annually
 2. Applications will be open to any member of the W&J student population; applications will not be limited to current members of the Red & Black membership
 3. All applicants will be granted the right to an interview
 4. Final selections will be made by the adviser
 5. Any person who is offered editorial board status will have the right to turn down the position
 6. Resignation by any member of the editorial board must be put in writing to the Editor-in-Chief and/or adviser; at least two weeks notice is recommended to avoid disruption in the publication process
 7. All members of the editorial board shall be held to the highest standards of journalistic excellence, and are expected to serve as model members of the staff and of the College
 8. All editors are encouraged to maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.5, a requirement slightly higher than other members of the staff
 9. A member of the editorial board may be removed from their position for violations of any of the previous requirements or of dereliction of assigned duties
 10. Removal from a position is an action that can be undertaken solely by the adviser, though all members of the staff are encouraged to bring forward any suggestions to this end

IV. Meetings

- A. Meetings will be mandatory for all who wish to reach staff status
- B. Meetings will be called by and overseen by the editor-in-chief
- C. All meetings require a quorum of at least 50% of the voting membership, to include editors, for official business to be undertaken; assignment of stories shall not be considered official business as this can be done outside of a meeting
- D. Notice for any meeting will be at least 48 hours; it will be the duty of the Editor-in-Chief to make sure all members of the staff are informed
- E. Under special circumstances, three members of the staff, one of which must be an editor, can call for an emergency meeting with no less than 18 hours notice; in this type of situation, it is the duty of those calling

the meeting to inform all members of the staff; this meeting will not be deemed mandatory, though a quorum is still required to be met

- F. Meetings will not be considered open to the public, but it is encouraged that potential new members be allowed to take part

V. Advertising

- A. The Red & Black will accept advertising and the revenue it generates
- B. The value of advertising space will be determined by the adviser with help from the business manager
- C. Any member of the staff is entitled to a commission of up to 20% on any advertising he/she sells; this commission will not be granted until payment has been made from the advertiser
- D. The Red & Black reserves the right to refuse any advertising; this decision should be made by the business manager and/or editor-in-chief
- E. On-campus student organizations will not be charged for advertising requests that are considered reasonable
- F. Any student organization that seems to be abusing their right to free advertising (i.e. request multiple full-page ads) may be billed for future advertising
- G. Space and size for unpaid advertising is not guaranteed; paid advertising will always take priority over unpaid
- H. The Red & Black will never charge any organization that was originally promised free advertising after the fact
- I. It is the policy of The Red & Black to not accept paid advertising which promotes tobacco products, alcohol, political campaigns, or controversial opinions which may be potentially disruptive to the learning environment of the College
- J. The Red & Black will deny any advertising that denounces groups of people or can be deemed hateful, bigoted, or offensive by a reasonable academic population
- K. More specific policies on paid and unpaid advertising can be made on an annual basis by the editorial board

VI. Editorials, Columns, and Letters

- A. Definitions:
 - 1. Editorial – an unsigned (without a byline) opinion piece that represents the majority opinion of the entire newspaper staff
 - 2. Column – regular opinion piece written by the same author usually revolving around a theme or topic
 - 3. Letter – an opinion, occasionally addressed to the opinions editor, editor-in-chief, or staff, which is not solicited and written by a member of the reading audience, often responding to a previously published piece
- B. Editorials must be written by the editor-in-chief or opinions editor unless approval from both is granted to another member of the staff

- C. Before an editorial is written, feedback **MUST** be collected from members of the staff to ensure their true opinion
- D. In some instances, a dissenting voice can be granted if the minority opinion is strong enough; if published, this minority report must be clearly marked, though no byline is attached to it
- E. Columnists must be “hired” by the editorial board and adviser
- F. Columnists are committing to regular publication, as agreed upon during the hiring process; it is recommended all columns appear weekly
- G. Because their publication is so regular, all columnists must strictly adhere to any deadlines imposed by the editorial board; failure to meet the deadline does not ensure publication
- H. Columns must be clearly marked as such
- I. Columnists are not necessarily granted staff status solely based on their column
- J. Columns must be approved by the Opinions Editor and Editor-in-Chief before publication
- K. Restraint of publication of columns can only be granted by the editor-in-chief or, in his/her absence, the opinions editor
- L. On the occasion of a restraint of publication, a letter to the columnist should be written by the editor-in-chief or opinions editor explaining the reasons behind the situation **BEFORE** the edition is distributed
- M. Columns and editorial are recommended to fall between 500 and 750 words
- N. Letters must carry the author’s full name and some relation to the College (i.e. graduation year) as well as some contact information
- O. In the event that a letter is not received in person it is recommended that the alleged writer be contacted to verify authorship
- P. For a letter to be printed, the author must clearly indicate publication was his/her intention; no letter may be printed without the author’s consent, express or implied
- Q. No profane, vulgar, or offensive language is allowed to be used within a column, editorial, or letter, to include swearing, racial or ethnic slurs, lewd allusions to sex or defecation, hateful terminology, or any other word, term, or phrase that personally degrades people or groups of people; name-calling is expressly prohibited
- R. Though restraint of publication of an editorial, column, or letter is considered censorship, it must be known that censorship is a necessary evil to ensure a high quality publication that is respectful of the mission of the College and show consideration for those who are reading the publication

VII. Affiliations

- A. When conducive to the continued improvement of the character, quality, and integrity of the newspaper or its staff, the Red & Black

may affiliate itself with other organizations, to include national agencies

- B. Such affiliations should be clearly marked within the publication when there is a reasonable need for the audience to be aware of such an affiliation, to include materials taken from a wire or press service
- C. At present, affiliations include the Associated Collegiate Press, College Media Advisers, 360 Youth, Universal Advertising, and Vaward Communications, as well as Washington & Jefferson College
- D. No affiliation will be accepted which requires any infringement of journalistic integrity or which threatens the student-run nature of the Red & Black
- E. Continuance of prior affiliations or establishment of new ones must be approved by a majority opinion of the Red & Black

VIII. Code of Ethics

- A. General: In all instances, members of the Red & Black staff, when serving in their role with the organization/publication, must always hold true to the highest standards of journalistic integrity and excellence
- B. Relationships with Other Organizations: Members of the Red & Black are more than welcome to serve as members or officers of any other organization, on-campus or off-campus, so long as they are not serving as a representative of the Red & Black when serving in other organizations in any capacity
- C. Coverage of Other Organizations: The Red & Black will always strive to be fair and just when covering other on-campus organizations, always bearing in mind the shared affiliation with W&J College, which implies similar goals and missions
- D. Conflicts of Interest: No member of the Red & Black should cover a story regarding an organization with which they hold an affiliation – such a relationship implies a conflict of interest; if a story is covered by an affiliate of an organization that is the subject of a story, the author's affiliation should be clearly marked in the byline or at the end of the piece; a similar policy will apply to stories involving family members or persons with whom a staff member has a financial, adversarial, or intimate relationship
- E. Plagiarism: Plagiarism is strictly forbidden and illegal if the material is copyrighted; for the purpose of this policy, the definition of plagiarism will be as outlined by W&J College policy; this policy will also include the verbatim copying of sentences, paragraphs, long phrases, or entire texts from wire or news services or press releases without proper attribution
- F. Fabrications: The use of composite characters or imaginary situations or characters will not be allowed in any story; a work, however, may use this approach to develop a story, so long as it is clear to the reader that the character or situation is fictional

- G. Altered Photos: Digitally altering a photo is permissible so long as the original photographer is aware of the changes and that the printed version is clearly marked as a photo illustration or photo manipulation; this policy does not apply to general “clean up” practices, such as adjusting brightness, etc.
- H. Profanity, Vulgarity, Etc.: the primary audience of a college publication is made up of adults and, though profane and vulgar words are part of everyday conversation, they are not used for scholarly writing and are thereby strongly discouraged from use in the Red & Black; usage of these words will at the discretion of the section editor with final approval from the editor-in-chief
- I. Bigotry and Hate: Writings involving bigotry and/or hate should never be included in the Red & Black; section editors and the editor-in-chief reserve the right to censor or replace individual words if the theme of the piece is maintained; in some rare occasions, the editor-in-chief may choose to publish writing which includes hateful or bigoted language so long as the piece is used as an educational tool against said hate or bigotry and can arouse meaningful and mature discussion on campus, always bearing in mind the sensitivity of the potential reading audience; the Red & Black will never promote or spread hate or bigotry in any form against any person or group of people
- J. Anonymity: All news stories must have verifiable, reputable, trustworthy sources; if anonymity is requested, information should be verified by another identifiable source, who then can be credited for the information; articles, reviews, letters, and opinions should not be accepted anonymously; requests for “name withheld” or pseudonyms are unacceptable except in the rare instance where the editor-in-chief deems the writing extremely worthy of publication because it can arouse meaningful and mature discussion on campus – even in these rare occasions, the editor-in-chief and/or section editor must strongly urge the author to include his/her name
- K. Source Confidentiality: Confidentiality should only be granted to a source if there is a real danger of physical, emotional, or financial harm to the source if his/her name were to be revealed; any information given by a source who requests to be “off the record” is not usable in a published piece, though that information may be verified by another source who can be credited; good journalism dictates that all information and facts can be followed back to a specific source
- L. False Identity: In the ordinary course of reporting, no staff member shall misrepresent themselves as anything other than a representative of the publication if that is the capacity in which they are serving
- M. Stolen Documents: A staff member may not steal documents, nor have another person steal documents on their behalf; all information used for any article must be obtained through ethical means

- N. Recording: Sources must expressly agree to any recordings, to include phone recordings; no staff member shall hide recording devices nor shall a staff member say a recording device is off when it is on
- O. Gifts: Gifts should not be accepted by any staff member, unless said gift is of insignificant value and does not imply any journalistic favor in return; products sent for review, such as music, become the property of the Red & Black; ownership of said gifts can be transferred to a staff member or non-staff member only with permission of the editor-in-chief
- P. Free Admissions: Staff members may only request free admission to events on campus and off campus if they are attending the event specifically for legitimate Red & Black purposes, i.e. to cover a story, to review or to critique; staff members will not take advantage of their press status to gain free admission to events that are not for legitimate newspaper purposes; it is recommended that section editors or the adviser obtain press passes or free admission on behalf of their writers; free admission granted to any staff member will never imply a required journalistic favor in return; there is no guarantee, express or implied, that the organization or the College will cover the costs of any staff members who attends an event for legitimate Red & Black purposes
- Q. Contests/Giveaways: If a contest or giveaway is sponsored by the organization, all details regarding the contest or giveaway must be released and strictly adhered to; purposeful inaccuracies regarding prizes, eligibility, and process are unacceptable and go against standards of journalistic integrity
- R. Corrections: An inaccuracy should never knowingly be published but, if a serious error is found after publication, the staff is obligated to correct the error as soon as possible, regardless of the source of the error; a consistent location for corrections is recommended, such as on the opinions page or news section; corrections should be respectful; factual errors in unsolicited submissions such as letters need not be corrected, though the editor-in-chief may contact the writer to give them time to make their own correction or, if the author does not respond, the editor-in-chief may run an “editor’s note” drawing the reader’s attention to the error
- S. Liability: The College cannot be held liable for any unethical and/or illegal behavior, to include bad journalistic practices, perpetrated by the Red & Black staff.

IX. Adviser

- A. The adviser, also referred to as administrative adviser or administrative director, is a full-time staff member of Washington & Jefferson College hired by the College as it sees fit

- B. In the event that a new adviser is needed, members of the Red & Black staff must be consulted and involved with the process before someone is assigned to the role
- C. The adviser shall serve the role of an educator of journalistic practices, including writing, layout and business; to this end, he/she is expected to establish training programs for new and old members of the staff
- D. The adviser is obligated to be an instrument of learning, without censoring, editing, directing, or producing against the will of the student staff; when needed, however, the adviser may serve a hands-on role in order to assist students in the learning process however, even these moments should be educational opportunities for the students involved
- E. The adviser is expected to serve as a role model and therefore must be beyond reproach with regard to personal and professional ethical behavior
- F. The adviser shall have the ability to exercise the rights of prior review (the ability to view before publication) as well as recommend prior restraint (withholding something from being published), though final decisions for restraint should be made by the student editors
- G. The adviser shall continuously encourage student control of the publication and persuade students to take part
- H. The adviser shall attempt to help create a solid policy model for student staff members to follow, and encourage their adherence to it
- I. The adviser shall, when needed, serve as an advocate for student press rights and support decisions on content and design which are made by the student staff, while also assisting the student staff in making ethical, responsible decisions
- J. The adviser will serve as a budget officer and representative to the W&J College administration when needed
- K. The adviser will officially hire members of the editorial board, including the editor-in-chief, based on his/her perception of the student applicant's ability to perform; the adviser will not make hiring decisions based on personal preference
- L. The adviser will make any final decisions on the additions or removal of members of the editorial board
- M. The adviser will not hire members of the writing staff outside the editorial board, nor create a limit to the number of students on staff
- N. The adviser will also serve as a supervisor to any paid member of the staff, to include those who receive commissions

X. Payment of Staff

- A. Members of the Editorial Board are eligible for payment as members of the work study program or simply as student employees
- B. Editors will be paid based on an hourly rate
- C. No editor will be paid a higher rate than another

- D. The adviser will set policies on time sheets and other guidelines for payment of editors
- E. Staff members who are not editors are eligible for payment on a per diem, or per publication, basis
- F. Staff members will be paid a standard rate for each published piece (to include photography and artwork, but excluding opinion letters)
- G. Unpublished pieces will not warrant payment
- H. Paid staff members need not be work study eligible; staff members not on the editorial board who are part of the work study program will not be paid from their work study allotment
- I. The adviser may choose to set up restrictions on payment, including a minimum number of words per article or a required training program before payment can begin
- J. Non-students will not be eligible for payment in any capacity
- K. Students who do not wish to be staff members are welcome to submit works for publication but will not be eligible for payment
- L. Staff members who serve as advertising representatives are eligible for up to 20% commission for advertising sold
- M. Commission percentage shall be taken from actual price sold if less than actual value
- N. Commission will not be granted until payment has been received
- O. Commission payments will not be taken from a student's work study program allocation

XI. Ownership of Work

- A. All works published, to include photography, writing, and artwork, from any staff member, contributor, or editor becomes the immediate property of the Red & Black
- B. Works published in the Red & Black may not be reprinted in any other publication, with the exception of other W&J student media such as the yearbook, without permission of the Editor-in-Chief
- C. Non-student campus publications may reprint material from the Red & Black without charge and without permission for as long as the Red & Black retains its affiliation with W&J College
- D. Outside agencies (i.e. local newspapers, other college publications, etc) will require permission from the Editor-in-Chief for republishing
- E. There will be no transfer of ownership agreements, express or implied

XII. Updating Policies

- A. The editor-in-chief, adviser, or editorial board may create policies to ensure the proper running of the organization or the high quality of the publication without altering this policy manual so long as new policies are not contradictory to previous policies
- B. Significant policy changes require majority approval from the staff as voted upon during an official meeting where quorum has been established

- C. Staff members and members of the editorial board may recommend and/or propose policy changes to be approved as indicated above
- D. The adviser may recommend and/or propose policy changes to be approved as indicated above
- E. Any unofficial policies for individual sections should be posted by the section editor and/or made available to all potential writers for said section (i.e. an earlier deadline, minimum story length, etc.)
- F. This policy manual should be reviewed every three years in order to maintain up-to-date, practical procedures to ensure the proper functioning of the organization

POLICY HISTORY:

This policy in its entirety was first written in August of 2004 by Rob Velella, administrative adviser, and presented that same month to the staff of the Red & Black

Updates:

May, 2004 – Added “Managing Editor” (Article III, Section D) including duties. Made slight alteration to duties of Editor-in-Chief (Article III, Section A-6). Fixed some grammatical and/or spelling and/or capitalization errors.

Next Full Review of Policies, In Accordance With Article XII, Section F: **August, 2007**