



SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Board of Trustees Policy

Chapter 5 – Student Services

BP 4500 – STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Student publications are established under the authority of the Board of Trustees in order to carry out authorized courses of instruction. Within the context of this policy, "student publications" means newspapers, handbooks, yearbooks, or other printed or electronic materials published as a part of a District instructional undertaking, containing material prepared by students and supported in any way by District resources. Once established, the newspapers primarily, and other student publications to a lesser degree, provide a forum for free expression under constitutionally protected rights of free speech and press. These rights, however, are not absolute and carry with them liabilities for abuses.

1. POLICY

- a. The primary goal of the District's instructional programs that produce student publications is to teach the skills which enable students to express themselves, and the self-discipline to use these skills in a responsible manner.
- b. The restriction of student expression due to its content or thought shall not be invoked by any officer or employee of the District:

" . . . except that expression which is obscene, libelous or slanderous according to current legal standards, or which so incites students as to create a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts on community college premises, or the violation of lawful community college regulations, or the substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the community college, shall be prohibited." [Ed Code Section 76120](#)
- c. Professionally qualified advisors/instructors shall be assigned to oversee each student publication. The advisor/instructor is responsible to teach to the objectives contained in the official course outline. It is not the function of the advisor/instructor to approve, restrain or regulate the content of expression. However, to foster effective instruction, it is the intent of the Board that the advisor/instructor advise students of their editorial responsibilities.
- d. Student editors/editorial staff shall be selected under local procedures, guided under the counsel and advice of the advisor/instructor and responsible to carry out the course objectives as specified in the approved course outline. Where a student editor's decision is alleged by a student writer to be an infringement of the student's constitutionally protected rights, the advisor shall hold a prompt hearing and sustain or reject the editorial decision. First-line authority is at this level to assure that a hearing procedure will not, because of time, restrict free expression. It does not preclude appeal through successive levels of District authority.

- e. All student publications shall publish the following statement as an integral but prominent part of the publication:

"This publication is produced as a learning experience under a San Diego Community College District instructional program. All materials, including opinions expressed herein, are the sole responsibility of the authors, and should not be interpreted to be those of the College District, its officers or employees."

Adopted: June 10, 2021

Supersedes: Policy 3102 – 05/24/84; 10/14/98; 05/24/12; (*Renumbered BP 4500*)