

CONSTITUTION OF MEDIA SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE

PREAMBLE

Traditionally, Calvin College has maintained a policy of “responsible freedom” in matters of communications media. Participants are free to formulate their own opinions, to develop their own styles, and to exercise their own aesthetic judgments. Undue restrictions on these are to be discouraged. But, participants should exercise their freedom in a way that is consistent with Christian belief and behavior. They should be continuously aware of their obligation to “cultivate Christian discernment, discretion, and maturity of judgment” (*Acts of Synod, 1963*). Participants must also carry on their efforts with respect for the opinions, styles, and aesthetic judgments of readers who may differ with them.

The Student Life Committee will: 1) establish, support, and govern student communications media through a Media Sub-Committee; 2) provide opportunities for students to get broad experience in these media; and 3) assure the continuity of responsible leadership in these media.

The college community expects participants in student communications to be committed to the Christian faith as the basis for the concept of responsible freedom. It expects student expression to be consistent with a loyalty to Scripture, particularly as interpreted in the Reformed confessions. These standards, and not mere tradition, establish the limits of good judgment. Students are expected to be conscious that they function in the context of the greater Body of Christ. Thus, participants should not needlessly give moral or religious offense, seeking rather to build and enrich the Christian community.

ARTICLE I: PURPOSE

- A. The Media Sub-Committee of the Student Life Committee shall be the responsible publisher of all student publications and the regulating body of the TV stations. In these capacities it shall formulate basic policy, shall give general editorial and program direction, and shall supervise business policy and practice. Editorial opinions, however, shall not be restricted by the limitations given in the preamble to this constitution.
- B. The organizations under the jurisdiction of this sub-committee are *Chimes*, *Dialogue*, *Prism*, and CVN.
 1. *Chimes* shall be the student newspaper, and as such it shall concern itself with news and editorial comment about the Calvin community as well as news and comment of interest to members of that community.
 2. *Dialogue* shall be both a forum for discussion of important issues and a medium of artistic expression available to all members of the Calvin community.
 3. *Prism* shall be a meaningful and representative record of Calvin community life, particularly within the current school year.
 4. CVN shall provide television programming for educational, informational, and entertainment purposes to the Calvin College community, and shall offer students an opportunity to gain experience in television journalism and production.

ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

This Media Sub-Committee shall consist of one current media head from each organization, two students from the Student Life Committee, the faculty advisor of each organization, two faculty members of the Student Life Committee (one of whom shall chair the Media Sub-Committee) and the Assistant Dean of Student Development. Normally it shall meet not less than one time per semester during the academic year.

ARTICLE III: DUTIES AND POWERS

- A. The Media Sub-Committee shall seek candidates, interview candidates, and recommend appointments of the communications heads to the Student Life Committee at the times stipulated.
1. Application: after general publicity during the designated month, the sub-committee shall complete a list of applicants for each position. To be eligible for consideration, all applicants must meet the college eligibility standards and complete the application requirements.
 2. Requirements: each applicant must submit the following:
 - a. Completed application, including a signed acceptance of the provisions of the constitution of the Media Sub-Committee of the Student Life Committee.
 - b. Two statements of endorsement by student peers
 - c. Two letters of recommendation by professors or administrators
 - d. Written prospectus of editorial plans and staff personnel for the coming year
 - e. Signed release for sub-committee to review the applicant's academic transcript and discipline history.
 - f. Portfolio, or some other appropriate example, of the applicant's work
 3. Selection: in addition to reviewing the materials submitted by applicants, the sub-committee will interview each applicant. Based on these two components, the sub-committee will make recommendations with supporting rationale for each media position to the Student Life Committee for review and recommendation to the Faculty Senate and Student Senate. If the Student Life Committee does not approve an appointment recommendation from the sub-committee, it will be referred back to the sub-committee with specific instructions for further action.
- B. Any changes in staff positions shall be reported to the Media Sub-Committee.
- C. The Student Life Committee, through its Media Sub-Committee, shall have the authority over all student media bearing the name of the College or student body and over all other student publications not sponsored by an academic department.
- D. Although the Calvin College communications policy is to avoid prior restraint whenever possible, the Media Sub-Committee or the Student Life Committee may require the communications head to make available to the appropriate advisor material to be published or broadcast. The Media Sub-Committee or the Student Life Committee reserves the right to instruct the communications head regarding the publication or broadcast of potentially offensive or sensitive material.
- E. The Media Sub-Committee shall initiate disciplinary action when it finds that this constitution has been violated or that the communication heads have not lived up to the guiding principles as stated in its Preamble in the performance of their respective tasks. The communications heads shall, in all cases, be responsible for the activities of their respective organizations. In cases of alleged irresponsibility, the communications head shall be given the right to a hearing before the Media Sub-Committee. (Cases of misconduct by the communications head that are violations of the Student Conduct Code shall be referred to a senior judicial advisor for adjudication in the college disciplinary structure.) If the Sub-Committee finds that sanctions with respect to the student's communications position is necessary, it shall recommend a course of action to the Student Life Committee for implementation. If the Student Life Committee disagrees with the

recommendation, it shall send the case back to the Media Sub-Committee for reconsideration. The Student Life Committee may ultimately overrule the Media Sub-Committee and has final authority to implement sanctions and shall reports its action to the President of the college. The President is authorized to adjudicate any appeal that may result from such action by the Student Life Committee. Sanctions in cases of failure to execute the responsibilities of the communications head position may range from written reprimand to permanent removal from the office.

ARTICLE IV: GUIDELINES FOR THE PUBLICATION OR BROADCAST OF POTENTIALLY OFFENSIVE MATERIAL BY STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE CALVIN MEDIA SUB-COMMITTEE

- A. Publications or broadcast of any material devoted, in whole or in part, to satire, parody, caricature, or the like, is subject to all of the guidelines, rules, and regulations of this constitution, and to all other guidelines, rules and regulations officially instituted by the Student Life Committee.
- B. For any publication or broadcast devoted in the main to satire, parody, caricature, or the like, the communications head responsible for the publication or broadcast must file with the Media Sub-Committee prior to publication and broadcast, a declaration of intent in publishing the material, including a statement of the purpose(s) she/he intends to achieve by such a publication or broadcast.
- C. For any publication or broadcast devoted in part or in whole to satire, parody, caricature, or the like, the communications head must, **PRIOR TO PRINTING OR BROADCAST**, inform the appropriate Advisor of such material and seek her/his advice and counsel. Should the communications head disagree with the Advisor's advice or should either desire further advice in such matters, either person may appeal to the Media Sub-Committee and finally to the Student Life Committee, whose decision shall be final.

ARTICLE V: ADVISOR

- A. The communications head may recommend an Advisor or Advisors to the Media Sub-Committee. These recommendations shall be reviewed by the Student Life Committee and then submitted to the Committee on Governance for official appointment by the President prior to a change in leadership of the media organization. After the Advisor has been appointed, the communications head and the Advisor should thoroughly discuss their relationship and program of activities.
- B. The advisor shall have various functions:
 - 1. The advisor, as a member of the Calvin College faculty or staff, represents the common core of Christian beliefs and values of Calvin College and its constituency. The relationship of communications head and Advisor is both personal and professional, designed for effective working of the communications organization.
 - 2. The Advisor shall be a member of the Media Sub-Committee and shall be a liaison between the organization and the faculty.
 - 3. The advisor shall be available during regular College hours to the communications staff for advice and discussion.
 - 4. The Advisor and communications head should meet regularly for advice and discussion.
 - 5. The Advisor shall be available to the communications organization as an arbiter of internal disputes.

6. In matters of disagreement between the Advisor and the communications head, the issue may be brought before the Media Sub-Committee, the official agent of the College, which then may make a decision and if necessary make recommendations to the Student Life Committee for action.
7. The Advisor is not required to attend all regular meetings of the communications organization, since the communications head is responsible for the daily management of the organization. It is advisable, however, for the Advisor to attend a majority of the meetings to become well acquainted with the personnel and activities of the organization. The frequency of these meetings should be clearly understood by the communications head and Advisor before they assume office.