STUDENT PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Mandate
The Student Publications Committee shall be the responsible publisher of all student publications. In this capacity it shall formulate basic policy, guide program direction, and supervise business policy and practice for student publications by 1) establishing, supporting, and providing appropriate oversight for student communications media, 2) developing policy governing student publications, 3) ensuring that student participants have the resources and mentoring needed to gain meaningful experience in these media, and 4) assuring the continuity of responsible leadership for student publications.

Calvin College maintains a policy of “responsible freedom” in matters of communications media. Student participants are free to formulate their own opinions, to develop their own styles, and to exercise their own judgments over content and aesthetics. Undue restrictions on these freedoms are to be discouraged, as the responsibility that comes with student leadership is a crucial component of student learning. Nevertheless, student participants are expected to exercise their freedom in the context of a Christian community, and thus in a way consistent with Christian belief and behavior. Student leaders and participants should be continuously aware of their obligation to cultivate Christian discernment and maturity of judgment. Participants must carry on their efforts with respect for the convictions, opinions, styles, and aesthetic judgments of readers who may differ from them, both on campus and in Calvin’s broader constituency.

The publications under the jurisdiction of this committee are the following:

1. *Chimes* shall be the student newspaper and 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 a publication that celebrates the creative work of current members of the Calvin students, particularly creative writing, visual art, photography, film, and music.
3. Any future, regularly published student-led publications will fall under the jurisdiction of this committee.

Reporting Relationship
The Student Publication Committee reports to the Faculty Senate.

Membership
The Committee on Student Publications shall consist of

- a Student Life staff member;
- *Chimes* and *Dialogue* faculty advisors;
- faculty representatives with expertise in English CAS, and/or the visual arts if the advisors are not already from those departments; an at-large faculty member;
- a member of the Arts Council Board;
- the student editor-in-chief of *Dialogue* and the editor-in-chief and managing editor of *Chimes*;
- a student senator; and
- an alumna former editor.
Appendix: Policies for Student Media

I. Selection of editors

The Student Publications Committee shall seek candidates, interview candidates, and appoint the editor-in-chief of Dialogue and the editor-in-chief and the managing editor of Chimes for a term of one academic year, subject to the approval of the Faculty Senate. A summary of the above should be sent for information to Student Senate.

1. Application. After general publicity during the designated month, the committee shall assemble a list of applicants for each position. To be eligible for consideration, 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 Student Publications 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 the 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 committee will interview each applicant. Based on the application and interview, the committee will make recommendations with supporting rationale for each editor-in-chief position to the Faculty Senate and Student Senate.

4. Editors should report any changes in staff positions the Student Publications Committee.

II. Advisors

A. The editor-in-chief may recommend an Advisor or Advisors to Dialogue to the Student Publications Committee. The Chimes advisor will be the appointed journalism faculty member. SPC and the Chimes editors may choose to suggest an additional Chimes advisor. These recommendations shall be reviewed by the committee. If approved, the selection shall be submitted to the Committee on Governance for official appointment, prior to a change in leadership of the publication.

If the committee chooses, it may recommend that the editor choose a different advisor. It is expected that the editor and committee will reach consensus on this matter.

B. The advisor shall have the following functions:

1. The editor and Advisor should follow the recommendations given to all student organizations on campus with regard to best practices for organization leaders and advisors. This will include reviewing the organization’s mandate and agreeing on expectations both for editor and advisor.
2. 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 editor and Advisor is both personal and professional, designed for effective working of the publication.

3. The Advisor shall be a member of the Student Publications Committee and shall be a liaison between the publication and the committee.

4. The Advisor and editor should meet regularly for updates and advice.

5. The Advisor shall be available to the publication staff as an arbiter of internal disputes.

6. The Advisor shall offer advice and guidance to editors regarding external disputes or criticism. If the dispute or criticism is extreme, the Advisor should notify the SPC chair, who will then decide whether the concern should be heard by the committee.

7. In matters of disagreement between the Advisor and the editor, the issue may be brought before the Student Publications Committee, which may make a decision and, if necessary, send the matter to a higher authority.

8. The Advisor is not required to attend all regular meetings of the publication staff, since the editor is responsible for the daily management of the organization. It is advisable, however, for the Advisor to become well acquainted with the personnel and activities of the organization.

III. Resources.

1. The Student Publications Committee shall seek to ensure that the publications’ budgets, physical space, and equipment are sufficient for the effective production of the publications. The committee is empowered to advocate on behalf of the publications as needed.

2. The committee is also charged with empowering editors with sufficient training and professional guidance. This is normally accomplished through a period of apprenticeship in the publication prior to appointment as editor as well as through the involvement of the alumni editor serving on the Student Publications Committee.

IV. Sensitive Material.

One of the purposes of student publications is to create a space for useful and respectful conversation about difficult topics. However, it must be remembered that student publications have a wide audience that includes students, faculty and staff, alumni, donors to the college, and potential students and their families. Student publications, along with all our work at the college, should therefore model fairness, compassion, and respect as well as courageous inquiry and challenge.

1. Although Calvin College communications policy is to avoid prior restraint on student
publications as far as possible, the Student Publications Committee may require editors to make available to the appropriate advisor material to be published or broadcast. The Student Publications Committee reserves the right to instruct the editors regarding the publication or broadcast of potentially offensive or sensitive material.

2. Student editors are responsible for identifying before publication any material that could be potentially offensive or sensitive. If their staff agrees that they wish to publish the material, the editor shall first seek the counsel of the publication’s advisor. Together, the advisor and editor can decide whether to seek the counsel of the Student Publications Committee. Both editors and advisors are charged with addressing potentially offensive and sensitive material in a spirit of collaboration and collegiality, seeking wisdom before publication from a variety of voices appropriate to the material in question.

3. Potentially offensive or sensitive material includes parody and satire. Thus, publications designed in whole or part as parody or satire are subject to the same guidelines as a publication’s normal operations. Editors are responsible for seeking the counsel of the advisor and the alumni editor, well in advance of publication, about the concept and content of parody/satire.

V. Disciplinary Proceedings

The Student Publications Committee shall initiate disciplinary action when it finds that this mandate has been violated or that the editors have not lived up to the guiding principles in the performance of their respective tasks.

1. Editors shall be responsible for the activities of their respective organizations. In cases of alleged irresponsibility, the editor shall be given the right to a hearing before the Student Publications Committee.
   a. The conduct of Chimes with respect to Faculty Senate is laid out in the Faculty Handbook. Consequences of violations of that policy are stipulated there and trump any policy outlined here.

2. Misconduct by the editor in violation of the Student Conduct Code shall be referred to a senior judicial advisor for adjudication in the college disciplinary structure.

3. If the Student Publications Committee finds that sanctions with respect to the editor’s publication position is necessary, it shall recommend a course of action to the Vice President of Student Life for implementation. Sanctions in cases of failure to execute the responsibilities of the editor position may range from written reprimand to permanent removal from the office.

4. The President of the college is authorized to adjudicate any appeal that may result from action by the Student Publications Committee or Vice President of Student Life.

Presented to Faculty Senate for information November 2016
Revised 2017; approved by the Committee on Governance September 2017