

## The Bylaws of The Michigan Daily

November 11, 2005

**Preamble:** The Michigan Daily exists to inform the University of Michigan community on events and ideas concerning the University, to keep those within the community abreast of events and ideas from outside the University and to provide an educational experience through journalism.

We will work to attain and protect an entirely independent, student-run newspaper because we believe a voice independent of the University administration will help us best attain our goals.

We will strive in all cases to uphold a sense of journalistic integrity.

**Organization of The Michigan Daily Editorial Staff:** The newspaper's editorial staff will be headed by an Editor in Chief and divided into the following sections: news, opinion, sports, arts, photography and online. The Editor in Chief shall preside over all sections. Each section shall have one or two managing editors, who shall serve as the chief editor(s) of their respective sections. Each section may also have one or more assistant editors, who shall report to their section's managing editor(s). The Editor in Chief may also appoint a Managing Editor of The Michigan Daily, subject to Management Desk approval.

The Editorial Page Editor(s) is/are the managing editor(s) of the opinion section. Those known as news editors, senior sports editors, arts editors, associate editorial page editors, online editors and the editor(s) of The Statement shall be considered, for the purposes of these bylaws, assistant editors. The Editor in Chief may also appoint additional assistant editors to help him/her carry out his/her duties subject to M-Desk approval. M-Desk will choose the editor(s) of The Statement and the editor(s) of the New Student Edition.

**Responsibilities of each section:** Each section will be responsible, according to its self-determined rules and the rules of The Michigan Daily, for publishing its own pages each day. The Editor in Chief will perform all staff-wide administrative duties as approved by Management Desk.

Each staff will have its own set of rules and regulations, which must include, but are not limited to: staff requirements (to be ratified by Management Desk), a style guide (excluding photography) and job descriptions for each position. These will be on file with the Editor in Chief at all times. When applicable, staff rules must be consistent with paper-wide regulations and Michigan Daily Bylaws. It is the responsibility of the managing editors to oversee nightly operations of their respective sections.

**Responsibilities of the Editor in Chief:** The Editor in Chief will be responsible for leading the paper in all day-to-day editorial operations, carrying out his or her administrative duties and acting as a liaison with the business staff. The Editor in Chief's decision on all timely editorial matters is final. His or her decision may be ratified or changed at a later Management Desk for permanence, if applicable.

Appointment and Responsibilities of a Managing Editor: The Editor in Chief may appoint a managing editor to assist him or her in overseeing the day-to-day editorial operations of The Michigan Daily. Management Desk must approve the appointment by a simple majority. Content disputes between a section's managing editor and the Managing Editor can only be settled by the Editor in Chief. The Editor in Chief will determine the Managing Editor's job description, subject to Management Desk approval.

**Management Desk:** Management Desk shall consist of the Editor in Chief, the editors of the various sections and the Managing Editor, if there is one. The Editor in Chief shall preside over meetings of Management Desk, unless two-thirds of Management Desk votes otherwise. The news section shall have two votes, the sports section two, the arts section two, the opinion section two, the photography section two and the online section one. The Editor in Chief may cast one vote, but only in the event of a tie. The managing editor(s) of each section or a proxy he/she designates will determine the manner in which the section's votes are distributed. Proxies will be given to editors on Daily business.

A quorum will consist of a majority of Management Desk votes. Management Desk will have final authority over all matters concerning the editorial side of The Michigan Daily, except editorials ("leftsides"), which will be decided by Editorial Board. However, when in dispute with Editorial Board, authority over the content of the Daily's staff editorials will rest with the Editorial Page Editor(s), who shall deliberate with a presumption in favor of previous editorial precedent. Editorials concerning The Michigan Daily or any member of The Michigan Daily editorial staff will be under the jurisdiction of Management Desk.

Management Desk can be called by the Editor in Chief or by a quorum of Management Desk.

**Editorial Board:** Editorial Board will meet, on a regular schedule established by the Editorial Page Editor(s) to discuss the content, structure and argumentation of the Daily's staff editorials. Any Daily staffer may attend Editorial Board meetings, however only Editorial Page staffers may vote at meetings. The Editorial Page editor(s), Managing Editor and Editor-in-Chief also have votes at Editorial Board.

**Online editors:** Online editors will designate an individual or individuals in November to serve as managing editor(s) for their section for a one-year term, excluding summers, to begin February 1. The designated managing online editor(s) shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Management Desk before taking their positions.

**Hiring/Firing Policy:** Managing editors may fire any staffer of their respective sections for cause. The Editor in Chief may fire any staffer. Management Desk may also propose firing any staffer. A fired staffer may appeal his or her firing to Management Desk. Pending appeal of firing, a person is suspended from all Michigan Daily activities. A violation of these bylaws and/or the ethics code is cause for dismissal.

A two-thirds vote of Management Desk will overturn a firing completely. If the firing is not overturned, a simple majority vote can allow the person to attempt to join another staff.

Managing editors, the Managing Editor and the Editor in Chief may be fired by two-thirds

of Management Desk. The Editor in Chief may fire the Managing Editor.

The Daily will abide by University Bylaw 14.06 governing non-discriminatory hiring policies.

Appealed firings will be taken up at the next Management Desk. Suspended staffers may bring one outside representative to their hearing.

All Michigan Daily staffers must be enrolled University of Michigan students. Non-students may join The Michigan Daily if they have disenrolled from the University for personal or financial reasons and it has not been more than one year since the disenrollment occurred.

**Election Rules:** Paper-wide elections shall be held twice a year at times deemed appropriate by Management Desk — once in the fall to elect the next year's Editor in Chief and Editorial Page Editor(s), and once in the spring to elect a summer Editor in Chief and Editorial Page Editor(s).

An eligible voter is anyone who has met his or her staff's requirements for four consecutive weeks or three quarters of the school term prior to the election. All voters must be present at the entire election. All staffers will sign in before voting.

Proxies may be given for staffers on Michigan Daily business or for religious reasons.

It is the responsibility of each managing editor to know who from his/her section will be missing and to collect proxy votes. Proxy votes will be turned in after the rest of the staff has voted.

To be eligible to run for Editorial Page Editor or Editor in Chief in the fall election, a person must have been on staff for a full year prior to elections.

**Election system:** The Daily will conduct its staff-wide elections using a system of instant runoff voting. Instead of selecting a single candidate, voters will rank candidates based on preference. To facilitate this process, the Editor in Chief presiding over the election will be responsible for creating ballots with sufficient numbered blanks.

**Tabulating results:** Candidates will initially be assessed on how many first-place rankings each one earns. At this point, if one candidate has a majority of the first-place rankings, the election will be decided in his/her favor.

If no candidate has a majority, the candidate with the lowest number of first-place rankings will be eliminated. All ballots listing that candidate as the first-place choice will be reallocated on the basis of the second-place rank. After the reallocation of votes, if any of the remaining candidates now has a majority, that candidate wins the election.

If there is still no winner, the vote-reallocation process is repeated until one candidate has a

majority of the votes. In a hypothetical four-way contest, if both the first- and second-ranked candidates on a certain ballot are eliminated, the third-ranked candidate receives the ballot.

Only one candidate may be elected to any position, except for Editorial Page Editor, in which case a two-person ticket can be elected, provided they run, and are voted upon, as a team.

Elections will be certified by the Editor in Chief and nonrunning editors of each staff.

Each section, with the exception of the opinion and online sections, shall hold an election in the fall at a time determined by the section's managing editor(s). A majority vote of the section's staff shall elect the next year's managing editor(s) at the fall election.

The managing editor(s) of each staff shall decide how their assistant editors are chosen. The managing editor(s) will also decide how their staffs' summer editors are chosen.

When an editor position is vacant, a new editor shall be named immediately by the managing editor(s) or by the Editor in Chief if a managing editorship is vacant. When the Editor in Chief position is vacant, Management Desk will elect an interim Editor in Chief until staff-wide elections can be held.

**Ownership:** The Michigan Daily has the right to publish images for any publication, print or electronic, that were shot for the Daily by Daily photographers forever. The Daily may license any image subject to the Daily's policy on freelancing under these bylaws. Any sale of Daily content must have prior approval of the Editor in Chief. When content is sold, credit must be given courtesy of The Michigan Daily and the author. Policies concerning licensing rights for authors of Daily content shall be set by Management Desk

**Deadlines:** Deadlines will be created by the Editor in Chief.

**Meetings:** All Management Desk or staff-wide meetings will run according to parliamentary procedure, except special rules made in these bylaws. This includes the parliamentary procedure rule that a speakers' list may be changed by a two-thirds vote.

All votes concerning personnel, including elections and firings, will be by secret ballot. All other votes will be open.

All votes, including those that are procedural and those limiting or stopping discussion, will be made only by those people who have voting power in such a situation. All votes, including those on procedural matters, will require a majority to pass.

Staffers or those attempting to become staff members may attend all meetings. Non-staffers will not attend Michigan Daily meetings except if permitted by the chair of the meeting.

**Code of Ethics:** The Michigan Daily provides its readers with an accurate and fair account of the news while maintaining editorial independence and accountability to its readers. Daily staff members follow the code of ethics designed by the Society of Professional Journalists (in italics below), along with a number of rules specific to the Daily.

### *Section I: Seek Truth and Report It*

Journalists should be honest, fair and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.

Journalists should:

Content – representation, diversity, stereotyping, advocacy, advertising

I.1. Make certain that headlines, news teases and promotional material, photos, video, audio, graphics, sound bites and quotations do not misrepresent. They should not oversimplify or highlight incidents out of context.

I.1.A. The Daily's online content adheres to the same standards as what appears in print. The Internet's demands for instant information do not override the need to accurately report the news.

I.2. Never distort the content of news photos or video. Image enhancement for technical clarity is always permissible. Label montages and photo illustrations.

I.2.A. The Daily's photo captions should not distort the meaning of a photo. If the Arts section inserts commentary and humor into its captions, it should not distract from the photo's meaning or clash with the tone of the article it accompanies. Such captions should not appear in sections of the paper other than Arts.

I.3. Avoid misleading re-enactments or staged news events. If re-enactment is necessary to tell a story, label it.

I.3.A. Whenever possible, the Daily avoids posing the subjects of photos and captures people in real situations. When a portrait is taken instead, readers should be able to identify it without confusion as a posed photo.

I.4. Tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, even when it is unpopular to do so.

I.5. Avoid stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance or social status.

I.5.A. When describing an individual based on any of these categories, the Daily must balance the need for clarity with a respect for the person's self-identification. The use of categories requires a cautious consideration of how people categorize themselves as well as a regard for consistency, clarity and relevance.

I.5.B. The Daily takes special caution when printing physical descriptions of crime suspects. Such descriptions should be published only if they are specific and relevant. Vague descriptions often perpetuate stereotypes while serving no public good.

- I.6. Support the open exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.
- I.7. Give voice to the voiceless; official and unofficial sources of information can be equally valid.
- I.8. Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable.
- I.9. Distinguish between advocacy and news reporting. Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresent fact or context.
- I.9.A. Articles expressing the Daily's opinion should be distinguished from those expressing the opinions of individuals or groups.
- I.9.B. Articles expressing the view of the Daily must be approved by its Editorial Board and the Editorial Page Editor(s). All Daily staffers may attend Editorial Board meetings, but only Editorial Page staffers, the Editorial Page editor(s), Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor may vote. A staffer may not vote on an issue if the Editorial Page Editor(s) determines he or she has a conflict of interest regarding the issue.
- I.10. Distinguish news from advertising and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two.
- I.11. Recognize a special obligation to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open and that government records are open to inspection.

#### Content ownership

- I.12. Never plagiarize.
- I.12.A. The Daily labels direct quotations, whether the source is a person, a written statement, a document or another news report. When quoting another news report, even in paraphrase, identify the source. Whenever feasible, avoid using information from other news sources altogether, in favor of the original work of Daily writers. When reporting information that the Daily has previously reported, refrain from using the exact words of previous Daily articles if it can be rephrased. Label information from wire services.
- I.12.B. Label photos obtained from wire services or other outside sources. Do not use photos from these sources unless the owner has given permission or the photos are explicitly designed to be used by the media. Photos on the Internet are not necessarily in the public domain.

#### Sources – relationships with sources and anonymous sources

- I.13. Test the accuracy of information from all sources and exercise care to avoid inadvertent error. Deliberate distortion is never permissible.
- I.13.A. Daily staff members should keep all of their notes so the information in their

articles can be checked. They must turn them over to editors if asked to do so. If a writer cannot hand over her/his notes or other proof of accuracy, editors are justified in assuming that an article may contain inaccuracies and acting accordingly. Because notes can be altered, editors may ask for a writer's notes without revealing the specific questions they have.

I.13.B. Daily staffers should avoid sharing their notes, their drafts, or their articles and photos that have not yet been published, with sources or others outside the Daily. A reporter may read quotes back to a source to ensure accuracy, but he/she should not alter the quotes on request. Because reading quotes back invites such second thoughts by sources, it should be avoided whenever possible.

I.14. Diligently seek out subjects of news stories to give them the opportunity to respond to allegations of wrongdoing.

I.14.A. If a response is not available, the Daily should tell readers why. For example, "She declined to comment" or "She did not return phone calls and e-mails yesterday."

I.15. Identify sources whenever feasible. The public is entitled to as much information as possible on sources' reliability.

I.15.A. In the rare cases that the Daily does not identify sources, it should give as much information on them as possible, including a reason for withholding their names. For example, describe a source as "a high-ranking athletic department official who agreed to speak only on the condition of anonymity because he did not want to be seen as disagreeing with the University's official position."

I.16. Always question sources' motives before promising anonymity. Clarify conditions attached to any promise made in exchange for information. Keep promises.

I.16.A. Daily writers should explain to anonymous sources how the information they give will be used. Jargon such as "off the record," "not for attribution," and "on background" should not be used because its meaning is not widely known or universally agreed upon. Reporters must reveal the names of anonymous sources to the section's managing editor and the Editor in Chief before publication.

#### Identifying yourself – Undercover reporting and tape recording

I.17. Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information except when traditional open methods will not yield information vital to the public. Use of such methods should be explained as part of the story.

I.17.A. Daily reporters must properly identify themselves as such prior to interviewing a source in nearly all cases. Planned deception for the purposes of obtaining otherwise unattainable information must have prior approval by the Editor in Chief.

I.17.B. Both Michigan law and ethical journalism forbid tape recording a conversation without the consent of the source. When using a tape recorder during a phone interview, Daily reporters should ask for the source's consent at the beginning of the interview.

### *Section II: Minimize Harm*

Ethical journalists treat sources, subjects and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect.

Journalists should:

II.1. Show compassion for those who may be affected adversely by news coverage. Use special sensitivity when dealing with children and inexperienced sources or subjects.

II.2. Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or grief.

II.3. Recognize that gathering and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance.

II.4. Recognize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than do public officials and others who seek power, influence or attention. Only an overriding public need can justify intrusion into anyone's privacy.

II.5. Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity.

II.6. Be cautious about identifying juvenile suspects or victims of sex crimes.

II.7. Be judicious about naming criminal suspects before the formal filing of charges.

II.8. Balance a criminal suspect's fair trial rights with the public's right to be informed.

### *Section III: Act Independently*

Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know.

Journalists should:

Conflicts of interest

III.1. Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived.

III.1.A. Daily staff members should avoid interviewing or photographing their friends, relatives or instructors. Nor should they write articles that contain information obtained from friends, relatives or instructors.

III.1.B. Any staffer participating in an event should not deliberately set himself/herself in the focal point of action (i.e. where the photographer is most likely to shoot the picture). Both staffers and photographers should cooperate in keeping Daily staffers out of pictures. If a photographer has to ask a staffer to get out of the way, staffers should do so

immediately. If there is any alternative, pictures with Daily staffers in them will not run in the paper.

III.2. Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility.

III.2.A. The Daily's beat reporters should not reveal their bias about their beats — whether participating in demonstrations, running for campus office, wearing T-shirts or buttons, joining organizations which pertain to their beat, or speaking to other reporters for attribution (except as a knowledgeable source on matters they have reported on).† Similarly, general assignment reporters and photographers may not reveal their biases about stories they are covering. Editors may not reveal their bias about any story or issue they may assign or rewrite. News reporters and editors may not reveal personal opinions in the Daily that damage the news section's reputation of objectivity. Any staffer employed by the news section cannot write for the opinion section. Daily staff members who are not covering a specific beat, issue, or event may reveal their biases, but not as a representative of the Daily. Any Daily staffers who have identified themselves as representatives of other organizations at public events should not simultaneously or subsequently identify themselves as Daily staffers in that context.

III.2.B. No Daily staffer may be a representative or executive officer of the Michigan Student Assembly or an executive officer of any other college student government. Additionally, if a staffer's participation in any organization is considered a conflict of interest by the Editor in Chief or the staffer's managing editor, that staffer will have one week to resign from the Daily or the conflicting organization. Such a decision by the managing editor or the Editor in Chief may be overturned by two thirds of Management Desk. Barring such a decision by the Editor in Chief or the staffer's managing editor, Management Desk may also issue the ultimatum to the staffer if two thirds of the body votes to do so.

III.2.C. Any Daily staffer may submit editorial material to outside news agencies or publications if it is not information that may compromise the Daily's opportunity to obtain an exclusive. However, the Editor in Chief must give explicit permission before any staffer may contribute to or join the staff of a publication based on campus or in Ann Arbor.

III.3. Disclose unavoidable conflicts.

III.3.A. If a Daily staffer must be quoted in a Daily article, he/she should be identified as such.

Gifts and advertising

III.4. Refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel and special treatment, and shun secondary employment, political involvement, public office and service in community organizations if they compromise journalistic integrity.

III.4.A. Daily staff members should refuse or return any gift intended to influence coverage. Gifts that staffers do not refuse or return should be handed over to the Daily. The Editor in Chief may dispose of it as he or she sees fit, such as by donating it to a charity or distributing it among the staff. Staffers may keep books, albums, videos or video games that they review, unless they are requested to return them. These are considered press releases.

III.4.B. Staffers may accept tickets or passes to events or performances that will be covered in the Daily. They may not accept free travel to such events without the approval of the Editor in Chief. Daily staffers should be cautious in accepting free food. A free luncheon served at a public meeting or press conference may be acceptable, but the Daily should pay the bill when reporters and sources go out for a meal. In more ambiguous situations, consult the Editor in Chief

III.5. Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money; avoid bidding for news.

III.6. Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests and resist their pressure to influence news coverage.

III.6.A. Neither the Daily's business staff nor the Board for Student Publications and its employees have any editorial control over the Daily. All communication between the business and editorial staffs goes through the Editor in Chief, who is the Daily's liaison with the business staff and the Board for Student Publications.

#### *Section IV: Be Accountable*

Journalists are accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers and each other.

Journalists should:

IV.1. Clarify and explain news coverage and invite dialogue with the public over journalistic conduct.

IV.1.A. The only person authorized to speak for the paper is the Editor in Chief unless he/she designates someone else to do so.

IV.1.B. Daily staffers should not make internal politics a subject of publication. They should not disclose internal editorial or administrative decisions made by the Daily or members of its staff unless obligated to by law. While staffers may discuss the Daily in private, they may not express their opinions — positive or negative — about the Daily in a public forum such as a newspaper, website, speaking engagement or mass e-mail without the express approval of the Editor in Chief or a two-thirds majority of Management Desk. Staffers may discuss and explain procedure, style and other processes of the Daily.

IV.1.C. If a reporter from another publication wants to find out what the Daily has already reported or get background information, reporters and editors may speak to them in their

role as a Daily staff member. That does not include when the subject the reporter is calling about concerns the Daily. In that case, the only person authorized to speak for the Daily is the Editor in Chief unless he/she designates someone else.

IV.2. Encourage the public to voice grievances against the news media.

IV.2.A. The Daily publishes letters to the editor regularly and makes its policy regarding letters to the editor easily available to readers.

IV.3. Admit mistakes and correct them promptly.

IV.3.A. The Daily publishes corrections and its corrections policy in the same space each day, unless the Editor in Chief determines that a correction should run elsewhere. The Editor in Chief approves all corrections, clarifications and letters to readers.

IV.4. Expose unethical practices of journalists and the news media.

IV.5. Abide by the same high standards to which they hold others.

Once potential staffers become staff members, they have one week to read the Daily's bylaws and ethics code and return them signed to their section's managing editors.

Amendments: These bylaws may be amended by a three-quarters vote of Management Desk and a majority vote of an assembled staff.

Ratification: These bylaws will be ratified as those of The Michigan Daily by a majority of a complete Management Desk and a majority vote of the staff as a whole at The Michigan Daily elections of November 2, 1990.

The bylaws will take effect immediately. All documents required by these bylaws will be submitted to the Editor in Chief within one month of ratification.

Managing editors will be responsible for educating their staffs on these bylaws.

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*The Michigan Daily Bylaws*

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