

Flagler College Gargoyle
Policy Statement and Governing Document
August 7, 2007

Preamble

By authority of the President of Flagler College, this document represents the framework and governance for the College's newspaper, *The Gargoyle*.

Purpose of the Publication

The purpose of *The Gargoyle* is:

1. To serve as an extracurricular learning experience for aspiring journalists, communication majors, and other students at Flagler College.
2. To report news and provide information to the Flagler College community and other audiences in a fair, accurate, and responsible manner.
3. To serve as a forum for various opinions, perspectives, issues, and viewpoints.
4. To uphold the standards of the journalism profession and strictly adhere to all ethical guidelines to ensure the integrity and credibility of the newspaper.

Publisher

The President of Flagler College is the publisher of *The Gargoyle*.

The President has authorized the adviser of *The Gargoyle* to oversee the operations of the newspaper, as set forth in this document.

The President has established *The Gargoyle* Advisory Board to serve as a liaison between himself/herself and the College newspaper student staff and adviser. An important function of the Advisory Board is to help mediate and resolve newspaper conflicts, issues, and disputes that are brought before the board.

Adviser

The Gargoyle is prepared under the direction of an adviser who is appointed by the Director of Public Information, who, in turn, reports to the Executive Director of College Relations. The adviser should have a background in journalism.

The adviser is responsible for overseeing the operation of the newspaper, including reporting, advertising, circulating, printing, and marketing.

The adviser will select the editor(s) of the newspaper and, with the editor's input, will oversee the selection and organization of the student staff. The adviser will also be

responsible for terminating editors and staff members who fail to perform assigned duties, violate the policies and standards set forth in *The Gargoyle Staff Manual*, or participate in activities that result in disciplinary action.

The adviser will counsel and assist the student editor(s) and student staff on editorial content and coverage, advise on proper journalistic techniques, promote ethical standards and decision-making, provide instruction, act as a liaison between the newspaper and campus constituents, and uphold regulations and policies set forth in *The Gargoyle Staff Manual*.

The adviser will serve as an educator to help guide student staff members to produce a better and more informative newspaper.

The adviser will strive to inculcate the standards of responsible journalism, including adherence to the Code of Ethics of the Society of Professional Journalists.

The adviser will serve as the instructor for publication workshop classes connected to the newspaper.

The adviser will understand and appreciate the important role the College newspaper plays in the College community.

The adviser will maintain an open-line of communication with the *The Gargoyle* Advisory Board, and will work with the student staff and the Advisory Board to resolve conflicts, issues, and disputes.

Editor's Responsibility and Staff Organization

The editor of *The Gargoyle*, in consultation with the adviser, will be responsible for determining the news content and the coverage of the newspaper in an objective, balanced, ethical, and professional manner.

The editor will adhere to the same legal responsibilities imposed upon traditional news media.

The editor and student staff will adhere to the Code of Ethics of the Society of Professional Journalists, as well as all policies and standards set out in *The Gargoyle's Staff Manual*.

The editor and student staff will ensure that all news coverage is balanced and reported accurately, fairly, completely, and objectively.

The editor will seek the advice and counsel of the Advisory Board on conflicts, issues, and disputes that cannot be resolved among the student staff and the adviser.

Advisory Board

The Gargoyle Advisory Board will offer guidance, advice, and counsel to the student staff and the adviser and will serve as a sounding board for journalistic, ethical, or other questions that the student staff or the adviser may raise from time to time.

The Advisory Board will not be involved in the day-to-day operations of the newspaper, but when called upon, the board will advise and make decisions on conflicts, issues, and disputes that are brought before it.

The Advisory Board will strive to represent objectively, impartially and fairly the interests of the publisher, the adviser, and the student staff.

The Advisory Board has the authority to mediate disputes, resolve conflicts, and address issues and complaints pertaining to *The Gargoyle*, its student staff, and/or its coverage. These matters may be raised by the student staff, the adviser, the publisher, or other parties not affiliated with *The Gargoyle* or with the College.

The Advisory Board will review complaints pertaining to possible violations of ethical standards of journalism, inaccurate and misleading information, violations of *The Gargoyle* governing document, as well as accusations of libelous, slanderous, obscene, or illegal materials. Complaints may be directed to *The Gargoyle* editor, the adviser, or the publisher.

Procedure for Processing a Complaint:

1. After reviewing the complaint, if the adviser determines that he/she and the student staff are unable to resolve the complaint, he/she will then convene a meeting of the Advisory Board. A quorum is five Advisory Board members, and an affirmative vote of four board members will be required to render a decision on conflicts, complaints, issues, and disputes.
2. The Advisory Board will invite the complainant to present his/her case to the board.
3. The Advisory Board, after investigating the complaint, will render a decision that may result in a plan of action, the institution of a policy or a guideline, or some form of disciplinary action. The disciplinary action may range from a written reprimand to dismissal from the newspaper staff. In some instances, the complaint may be referred to the College Disciplinary Committee.
4. The chairman of the Advisory Board will report the board's finding(s) and ensure that all parties, including the publisher, are informed of the board's decision.
5. The student staff and/or the adviser will then enact the decisions made by the Advisory Board.

The Advisory Board will maintain a cooperative working relationship with the student staff, the adviser, and the publisher of the newspaper and will maintain an open line of communication among all parties during the academic year.

Board Membership

The Advisory Board will have the following composition:

- Presidential designee
- Gargoyle Adviser
- Gargoyle Editor
- Communication Department representative, designated by the Communication Department Chair
- Student President of the Society of Professional Journalists Chapter
- At-large faculty member, designated by the Dean of Academic Affairs
- Professional media member, selected from the Communication Department Advisory Board

If a member cannot fulfill his/her duties on the Advisory Board or if there is a vacancy, a new member will be designated to fill his/her place.

Frequency of Meetings

The Advisory Board will meet at least once an academic year.

The Advisory Board may be asked to convene for the purpose of advising, mediating, discussing, or investigating an issue or complaint by the editor, adviser, or publisher at any time during the academic year.

As issues often arise unexpectedly and require immediate attention to resolve, Advisory Board members are expected to be widely available and may meet by telephone conference or by email.