

## **Constitution of the Martlet Publishing Society**

1. The name of this society is the Martlet Publishing Society.

### **2. PURPOSES**

The purposes of the Martlet Publishing Society are:

1. To inform students about issues and events affecting the university community, analyze issues and events affecting the university community, and provide materials for the community's education and entertainment;
2. To cover issues and events fairly and accurately from a perspective outside that of the mainstream media, namely an alternative perspective;
3. To act as an agent of constructive social change, working to entrench civil, land, and human rights for all people and eliminate oppressive social barriers, including those based on political beliefs, sex, religion, race, colour, ethnic group, sexual preference, citizenship and socioeconomic class, and support other groups and individuals who apply these principles in their entirety;
4. To generate advertising revenue to offset the operating costs of the Society and prevent reliance upon membership fees as a source of income;
5. To provide an environment where members and staff can learn writing, editing, photography, layout and paste-up skills and become familiar with the role and objectives of the alternative student press.

### **3. PREAMBLE**

This document is the Constitution of the Martlet and is the document by which the staff of the Martlet shall govern themselves, in accordance with the Society Act, and by which by which editorial content of the paper shall be determined. This provision is unalterable.

4. The Martlet is editorially and financially independent from the UVic Students' Society. This provision is unalterable.

### **5. PRINCIPLES**

- a) As long as the Society is a member of the Canadian University Press (CUP), it adheres to the statement of principles of the student press in Canada, as published in the CUP Constitution.
  - b) As long as the Society is a member of CUP, it will adhere to the CUP Code of Ethics in all its practices. This provision is unalterable.
6. These objectives shall be carried out mainly but not exclusively by volunteers and paid part-time and full-time staff. This provision is unalterable.

## 7. DISSOLUTION

In the event of the winding up or dissolution of the Society, any assets remaining after the satisfaction of its debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to a member in good standing of Canadian University Press whose purposes are similar to those set out in section two (2) herein. This may be decided by the members of the Society at the time of the winding up or dissolution. This provision is alterable.

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### **Supplementary to the Martlet Constitution**

(From the CUP Policy Manual, Feb. 2008)

#### **1. Canadian University Press Statement of Principles**

We, the members of Canadian University Press, affirm that the student press in Canada has a vital social role. As a cooperative, we propose the following as the basis of that role, which will be expressed in a wide variety of editorial policies.

##### **a. Common Principles**

- i. We believe student publications exist as an essential component of the student communities they come from and that they should be accessible to those communities.
- ii. In addition, we believe the student press should maintain a critical perspective, and keep in mind the needs and concerns of non-students.
- iii. We believe student papers can be valuable and constructive within their communities, by providing information and analysis, and by giving a forum to individuals and groups that have little or no access to other media.
- iv. We also believe the student press should work towards environmental responsibility. We believe the student press should acknowledge its privileged position in being relatively free from commercial and managerial controls. It should strive to protect and enhance that position by defending its editorial autonomy and giving its staff the power to democratically determine the paper's advertising and financial policies. Because of its relative freedom, the student press can examine issues neglected by other media. Our mandate is to cover issues which affect students. However, we believe that no subject need fall outside the grasp of the student press, and that we best serve our purposes when we help widen the boundaries of debate on educational and social issues.
- v. Thus, we intend to defend freedom of expression, and make possible an atmosphere of critical inquiry and imaginative thought. As it recognizes the potential dangers of the concentration of corporate media ownership, CUP recognizes its responsibility to work towards and promote an atmosphere of media diversity.
- vi. In pursuit of these ideals, we shall employ educative, investigative and active methods. We also will try to recognize our own limitations, and to maintain a sense of humour and humility.

**b. Freedoms and Responsibilities**

- i. We believe our ideals can only be achieved under conditions of freedom and autonomy for the people working in the student press.
- ii. Therefore, we believe student publications should be free to determine and uphold their own editorial policies, including advertising policies, regardless of pressure from student governments, school administrations, police, any level of government, corporations or any others.
- iii. We believe student publications should be free from the implicit editorial control that results from financial control of the publication by student governments or administrators.
- iv. Because of its relative freedom and privilege, we believe that one of the roles of the student press should be to give a voice to those communities which have been marginalized or denied power in Canadian society.
- v. We believe student publications should receive in full and without delay any student levies collected on their behalf by administrations, or budgets approved by students, their governments, or their administrators. These funds should not be discontinued, withheld, or decreased by any means or under any circumstances other than those specified in the publication's constitution or in agreements between the publication and the financial body concerned.
- vi. We believe it is in the interest of all students and all educational institutions to provide space and facilities for the use of student publications without financial penalties or conditions on editorial policy.
- vii. We believe the power to control content, structure and policy should rest with the staff of the publication. Therefore, each publication should have a written constitution, and should strive to include at least the following provisions:
  - 1) That the publication defines the qualifications for voting staff members, which should be open to, but not necessarily limited to, all students;
  - 2) That the staff alone democratically determines the editorial policy of the publication, as set out in a Statement of Principles or similar document in the publication's constitution;
  - 3) That no body except the staff has exclusive power to determine the internal structure of the publication;
  - 4) That the publication guarantees regular, publicized staff meetings with an established quorum and democratic procedures;
  - 5) That no body except the staff has exclusive power to establish due process to evaluate any charges that one or more of its members have acted irresponsibly, including, but not limited to, elections, impeachments and censuring of editors, co-ordinators, or other staff positions.
  - 6) That the publication will attempt to remove barriers (both subtle and overt) to participation of marginalized groups.
  - 7) That the publication will strive to provide a working environment free of harassment or other forms of hateful action, and will have mechanisms in place to redress such incidents when they occur;
  - 8) That the publication will provide a forum for the free exchange of information, ideas and opinions among all students but not to the exclusion of others;
  - 9) That the staff or its representatives reserve the power to prohibit

- publication of material that contravenes Canadian libel or hate literature, or other material it reasonably believes has no place in its publication;
- 10) That notwithstanding the above, the staff or its representatives shall have the power to publish any material they judge appropriate;
  - 11) That the staff of the publication declares its own principles in the text of the constitution as democratically determined by the staff and will be open to continual re-evaluation and revision;
  - 12) That the staff has the power to join and participate in any organization it deems fit, and to withdraw from any organization it believes is no longer of benefit to the publication.

**c. The Role of Canadian University Press**

- i. We believe Canadian University Press can unite, strengthen and support the Canadian student press.
- ii. To avoid any undue advantage to any paper or group of appears which, because of size, location or financial situation, might otherwise dominate the organization, the Canadian University Press operates as a cooperative. As such, we can engage in dialogue, undertake projects and take positions that are in the shared interests of member publications.
- iii. We therefore believe it is our responsibility to ensure the Canadian University Press remains a cooperative and to endure its procedures and ideas evolve to suit the collective needs of all members while answering the concerns of each.
- iv. As a cooperative, it is also our responsibility to develop and promote these principles. Together, we have the responsibility to set membership criteria based upon these principles, and we should continually attempt to help each other fulfill them, taking into account the realities of student publishing.
- v. We affirm that the Statement of Principles is a living document, and only continual criticism, refinement, reevaluation and renewal can ensure it remains so.

**2. Canadian University Press Code of Ethics**

We, the members of Canadian University Press, recognize that student journalists can only be effective in their aims if their publications are credible and respected.

We also acknowledge that rigid regulations and laws cannot always anticipate the exigencies of a situation. There may be times when the public good overrides other considerations.

In general, however, we affirm the following guidelines as a minimal level of responsibility and ethical behaviour that every student journalist and publication should strive for:

**a. Bias and Honesty**

- i. Journalists' perspectives are determined by their positions within society, and will be necessarily biased. They must therefore recognize the political implications of their work, and attempt to treat their subjects fairly despite their biases.
- ii. Journalists will make every possible effort to avoid reporting on external organizations in which they are significantly involved. To further this goal,

- they, should strive to disclose all potential and actual conflicts of interest to other members of the staff. However, in the event that the journalist has no option but to report on such an organization, they will prominently disclose the conflict to readers within or alongside the printed article.
- iii. However, membership in a disadvantaged ethnic, racial, gender, sexual, class or otherwise identifiable social group shall never be construed as a conflict of interest, even when reporting on issues directly affecting the group in question.
  - iv. Bias or prejudice against members of a marginalized group should have no place in the editorial policy of any publication. An ethical publication will seek instead to publish material which helps disperse such prejudices in its readership.
  - v. Publishing material intended to promote hatred or violence against any group or person is unethical, unless for the purpose of reporting on an incident of relevance to the person or community. In the latter case, journalists should be cautious about whether they are unintentionally giving a forum to hateful material without adequately countering its effects.
  - vi. Papers will pay the costs incurred in the gathering and publishing of news, and shall not pay individuals or organizations for exclusive rights to any news story. Staff will not accept free gifts of any sort and will only accept free material or privileges for coverage on the understanding that the paper is under no obligation to the individuals or groups involved.

**b. Fairness and Accuracy**

- i. Journalists should realize fully their personal responsibility for all material submitted for publication. They should not falsify information or documents, nor distort or misrepresent facts, whether purposefully or through neglect.
- ii. So-called news communications or press releases from private and government sources should never be published without substantiation of their claims nor without seeking the opinions of people who may be affected by the issue or events in question.
- iii. In addition, journalists should not plagiarize material from other writers or other media nor should they take facts from other sources without corroboration.
- iv. Journalists should strive to seek out all points of view that they deem relevant to the issue at hand. They should especially seek out those whose views have been neglected by the mainstream press, or in previous coverage of the issue, and those who may stand to suffer by the effects of that event or decision under consideration.
- v. However, they should also give due consideration to opposing viewpoints, allowing such interests to represent themselves accurately and to best advantage in each news story.
- vi. Journalists should not report unsubstantiated opinions as fact, condemn persons or groups by innuendo or hearsay, or distort meaning by over- or under-emphasis, or by placing facts or quotations out of context, or by using headlines not warranted by the text.
- vii. Journalists should not use unattributed quotations or information unless it is absolutely necessary to protect a source, and when no other source can be

found to confirm the information. All information should be confirmed and corroborated from more than one source, unless urgency and the public interest prevent it.

- viii. Journalists should have the freedom and the responsibility to protect the anonymity of sources to whom they have given such assurances.
- ix. Journalists should normally identify themselves and their journalistic affiliations before conducting an interview.
- x. The publication should rectify in print, at the first available opportunity, all culpable mistakes, recognizing its responsibility for everything published. These corrections should be in a position of prominence comparable to the one in which the original error appeared.
- xi. Photos should not be altered in such a way that events are falsified, unless the falsehood of the photo is clear from its context. Stereotypes should not be perpetuated through photography and photographers should be sensitive to the distortions and abuses their images may promote.
- xii. Graphic material might not be strictly accurate, but artistic licence should not be used as an excuse to misrepresent an issue or make false information credible. Similar cautions should be observed in publishing satirical or fictional material.
- xiii. Publications should maintain opinion and letters sections, and strive to publish as many such pieces as space allows while reserving the right to refuse to publish pieces that compromise the editorial integrity of the publication. An open dialogue with readers should be encouraged.

### **c. Privacy and Legal Responsibility**

- i. Journalists should consistently respect the dignity, privacy, freedoms, and well-being of the people encountered while gathering and presenting information.
- ii. Any conflicts arising between an individual's privacy and the community's need to know about the conduct of vital matters should be judged by the staff of the publication.
- iii. Journalists should bear in mind the permanent effect that damaging information may have on an individual's life. However, they should also take into account the systemic and pervasive inequalities that privacy rights afford to some people over others.
- iv. Journalists should be cautious about the publication of information that may enable or assist individuals, police, government agencies or others to harass or persecute an individual or group, even if such information is not damaging in and of itself. Such cases should be judged in much the same manner as privacy issues.
- v. Journalists should be wary of sensationalizing violations of people's dignity or privacy. Publications will refrain from publishing, without consent, the names of the victims of crimes which carry a social stigma.
- vi. Publications should not publish information damaging to an individual's or group's interests or reputation without giving them a chance to reply.
- vii. Journalists should also be familiar with the laws of libel and contempt of court which exist in Canada.