

SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS VIRGINIA TECH CAMPUS CHAPTER CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this organization shall be the Virginia Tech Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ).

ARTICLE II

Affiliation and Authority

This organization operates under charter of the Society of Professional Journalists, a national organization, and shall abide by its constitution and bylaws.

ARTICLE III

Purpose

SPJ is dedicated to the perpetuation of a free press as the cornerstone of our nation and our liberty. To ensure that the concept of self-government outlined by the U.S.

Constitution remains a reality into future centuries, the American people must be well informed in order to make decisions regarding their lives, and their local and national communities. It is the role of journalists to provide this information in an accurate, comprehensive, timely and understandable manner.

It is the mission of this organization to:

- To promote this flow of information.
- To maintain constant vigilance in protection of the First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and of the press.
- To stimulate high standards and ethical behavior in the practice of journalism.
- To foster excellence among journalists.
- To inspire successive generations of talented individuals to become dedicated journalists.
- To encourage diversity in journalism.
- To be the pre-eminent, broad-based membership organization for journalists.
- To encourage a climate in which journalism can be practiced freely.

ARTICLE IV

Membership

Membership will primarily consist of undergraduate or graduate students at Virginia Tech. This organization shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, veteran's status, sex, national origin, sexual orientation or disability in its selection of members. Only those who have paid national dues will be eligible for membership in the VT chapter. Only those who have shown dedication to the chapter by attending at least 3 chapter meetings in the fall (prior to initiation) can be initiated into the society.

Section One: Student

Student members shall be VT students who have a demonstrated interest in journalism or whose serious interests or career plans are within the scope of the purpose of the Society as defined in Article Three. These students must be in good academic standing. Persons who were student members but have left school before receiving a degree may retain their student membership for up to two years after leaving school. After two years, these persons are no longer eligible for membership in the VT chapter.

Section Two: Post-Graduate

Post-graduate members shall be former VT student members who have successfully graduated. Post-graduate membership is available for up to two years after the date of graduation. After two years, post-graduate members are no longer eligible for membership in the VT chapter. They may reapply for national membership according to national bylaws.

Section Three: Professional

The professional member shall be the elected chapter advisor.

Section Four: Associate

Associate members shall be local persons not eligible for other membership in the Society who support the goals of the organization. They may also be high school students who have paid national dues. All associate members must be sponsored by a current member in good standing. Associate members shall not vote or hold an elected position.

Section Five: Dues

- a. National dues are set by national headquarters. All members must pay national dues. The executive board will confirm this annually with national headquarters.
- b. Local dues shall be set by the executive board. All members must pay local dues. The treasurer shall be responsible for collecting local dues.

ARTICLE V

Officers

Section One: Positions

The officers of this chapter shall be president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and historian. A secretary-treasurer may be elected in the place of both a secretary and a treasurer. These officers will constitute the executive board. The duties of these officers are outlined in national SPJ bylaws.

Section Two: Term of Office

Officers shall serve one-year terms, beginning immediately at the start of the fall academic semester.

Section Three: Elections

Elections for the following year shall take place no later than one month prior to the end of the spring academic semester. Elections shall take place at a regular chapter meeting.

Section Four: Appointments

The executive board may appoint committee chairs to fulfill such duties as the board deems necessary. Following appointment, these chairs will be considered voting members of the executive board. Chairs may be removed by a majority vote of the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer (or secretary-treasurer), and historian.

Section Five: Vacancies

The executive board shall have the authority to appoint a member to fill any vacant position by a majority vote. These appointments will be considered temporary, and shall

expire following the next regular election. In the event all executive board positions are vacant, the chapter advisor shall have the authority to appoint an interim chapter president.

Section Six: Removal

Any officer may be removed by a two-thirds vote of all chapter members. Any member in good standing may petition for removal of an officer. Such petitions must be submitted to all parties concerned at least two weeks in advance of a special chapter meeting. Grounds for removal shall be intentional misconduct so as to bring discredit to the chapter, school or profession of journalism, dereliction of assigned duties, electoral misconduct, intentional violation of this chapter or national SPJ constitution and bylaws, and/or failure to maintain acceptable academic standards. The vacated position shall be filled in accordance with section five of this article.

ARTICLE VI

Advisor

A faculty or staff member of Virginia Tech will advise the chapter. The advisor will provide guidance and direction in relation to the policies and procedures of the university, as well as ideas for events and membership. The advisor must be a national professional member. The advisor shall be elected by a majority vote of all chapter members. The advisor shall serve until he or she resigns, retires, or is removed as advisor. The advisor may be removed by a majority vote of the executive board, provided a replacement is available for election by the chapter.

ARTICLE VII

Meetings

Section One: Time and Place

- a. Per national bylaws, the chapter shall meet regularly at least four times during the year. Time, date and place will be set by the executive board. At least two of the meetings will be professionally-oriented rather than regular chapter business meetings.
- b. The executive board shall meet regularly as needed throughout the year. Meetings shall be held at a time, date and place determined by the president and sufficient notice shall be given to the entire board.

Section Two: Quorum

A quorum of the membership shall consist of one-half of voting members present at any regular or special meeting. A quorum of the executive board shall consist of one-half of the board members present at any executive board meeting. A quorum shall be present in order for any official business to be conducted. Official business shall include election of officers, setting of dues, and any other major decisions.

ARTICLE VIII

Amendments

This constitution may be amended by a three-quarters vote of all chapter members, provided that the amendment shall have been proposed at least one meeting previous to the time of voting. Such amendments shall conform to the national bylaws of the Society of Professional Journalists.

RATIFIED: March 26, 2008