

# THE GAZETTE

## EDITORIAL POLICY

### PREAMBLE

*The Gazette* is a daily, student-funded, student-run newspaper published by University Students' Council of the University of Western Ontario ("USC") at The University of Western Ontario. The paper is published four days per week (Tuesdays through Fridays) during the academic year, and an additional four times during the non-academic year. The Gazette's core potential readership consists of approximately 32,000 students at Western. It serves the student readership by reporting the news, entertaining readers, and promoting debate on issues involving the Western community and the City of London.

### 1.00 POLICY

1.01 This Policy consists of principles of general application: the morals, scruples and rules by which all specific editorial content of *the Gazette* is judged. It is the framework upon which the editorial procedures are implemented in the day-to-day operation of the paper.

1.02 The general principles comprising the "Editorial Policy" are:

- (1) to publish *the Gazette* four times per week during Western's academic year, and four times during the non-academic year;
- (2) to continue the best traditions of *the Gazette*, including the publication of special editions, in the context of evolving journalistic standards where appropriate;
- (3) to maintain and protect *the Gazette's* status as an independent publication in all respects, and particularly in respect of editorial content, without regard to the sources of its funding by the USC or advertisers, or otherwise by virtue of Western's administration;
- (4) to ensure that *the Gazette's* editorial content is researched, written, confirmed, edited and approved for publication in accordance with professional journalistic standards and best practices, and with the goal of continuous improvement in all aspects, but without prejudice to, or the diminishment of, *The Gazette's* historic iconoclastic, humourous and lampooning style as a student newspaper;
- (5) to inform, educate, entertain, and provoke discussion and thought on the part of Western students by the publication of interesting, relevant, accurate, objective, funny, critical, satirical, creative, insightful, and well-researched articles, graphics, cartoons and photographs in *the Gazette*;
- (6) to promote the journalistic education and fulfillment of every contributing member of *the Gazette*, both on an individualistic and team basis;

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- (7) to uphold the spirit and intent of the Ontario Human Rights Code and *the Gazette's* Code of Ethics in all of its content, administration and operations, as applicable to its readership, Gazette writers, Gazette staff, the USC, the Western community and the City of London; and,
- (8) that the Editor-in-Chief, with or without consultation or consensus of the Editorial Board of *the Gazette*, shall have the final authority and responsibility for all editorial content in each paper.

## 2.00 PROCEDURES

### 2.01 Organization and Responsibilities

- (1) *The Gazette* is composed of three departments: Editorial, Advertising and Composing. The Advertising department works independently from the Editorial department, which is the student-driven side of the paper. The Composing department is responsible for compiling each paper's layout, and for working closely with the Editorial department to do so.

### 2.02 Editorial Board

- (1) The 23-member Editorial Board is headed by three (3) full-time "Front Office" positions: the Editor-in-Chief, the Deputy Editor and the Managing Editor. The remaining members of the Editorial Board are section editors, who are hired following an interview process on an annual basis by the incoming Front Office.

### 2.03 Section Editor

- (1) Section editors' responsibilities include the assignment of articles to staff and writers, editing of copy, and selection and placement of stories within their appropriate section. For sensitive issues or where there is doubt or disagreement, the Editor-in-Chief's decision is final.

### 2.04 The Editor-in-Chief

- (1) The Editor-in-Chief is responsible for the coordination of the Editorial Board and staff in the production of the newspaper. He or she makes the final decision on the total number of pages per issue and the number and location of pages allotted to each department. He or she ensures all copy is properly edited and the layout of each page is satisfactory. The Editor-in-Chief makes the final decision on the content of each paper.

### 2.05 Gazette Staff & Gazette Writer

- (1) All members of the Western community have the right to express opinions, to provide story suggestions, and to contribute to *the Gazette*.

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- (2) To become a Gazette Staff member, a student must have submitted and published five items of editorial content (excluding letters to the editor) during the current publishing year (May 1 - April 30) in *the Gazette*. Gazette Staff status is denoted in the by-line.
- (3) “Gazette Writer” indicates a contributor who has published fewer than five pieces; whereas “Gazette Staff” indicates a writer who has five or more published pieces.
- (4) *The Gazette* does not accept or print submissions from writers who have not received training in the policies and procedures of *the Gazette*.
- (5) Columns are exclusive to Editorial Board members. Gazette Staff and Gazette Writers cannot write columns, however, exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief.

### 2.06 Editorial Autonomy

- (1) The USC is the owner and publisher of *the Gazette*, and it funds a significant portion of *the Gazette's* budget through student fees. Advertising sold by *the Gazette* funds the remainder of the paper's budget.
- (2) It is *the Gazette's* responsibility to serve as a watchdog of the student government. USC involvement in day-to-day editorial decisions or policies would compromise objectivity, and the USC has therefore respected *the Gazette's* journalistic imperative to remain responsible but independent of its publisher.
- (3) Neither the USC's political members nor its corporate management are involved in the editorial process of the paper, short of an incident where the paper prints content deemed libelous, racist, sexist, or otherwise contrary to law or the *Gazette's* own policies.

### 2.07 Advisory Board

- (1) *The Gazette* Advisory Board will advise on policy and procedural matters related to *the Gazette*. The Board comprises five (5) members, including a Chairperson, each of who represent professional journalists, media lawyers, and journalism faculty. Members are appointed by the incoming Front Office members.
- (2) The Advisory Board meets at least twice annually to advise on general policy matters related to *the Gazette*. Meetings outside this schedule may occur, if the Chairperson deems it necessary.
- (3) One objective of the Advisory Board is to oversee formal complaints issued through the Complaints Procedure. The secondary objective of the Board is to act as a formal

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body of mentors in situations where editors have questions regarding issues pertinent to print journalism.

- (4) The Advisory Board should act as advisors and as overseers to the Editorial Policy. *the Gazette* editorial board maintains its right to editorial autonomy. While suggestions from the Advisory Board are welcome, the final authority over printing is solely that of the acting Front Office.

### 2.08 Content

- (1) The editorial content of *the Gazette* is at the sole discretion of the Editorial Board, and ultimately the responsibility of the Editor-in-Chief. *the Gazette* makes every effort to ensure objectivity, balance and fairness in reporting news and student affairs concerning The University of Western Ontario and the Western community. Thus, it does not permit itself to be used as a propaganda vehicle for any individual, group or entity, nor does it single out any individual, group or entity for attack or criticism.
- (2) *The Gazette* shall not publish material considered to be libelous, racist, sexist, or otherwise contrary to law or *the Gazette's* own policies by a qualified member of the Ontario Bar (as agreed upon by both the USC and *the Gazette*) or by the Editor-in-Chief.
- (3) All opinions published are strictly those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the USC, *the Gazette*, its editors or staff

### 2.09 Style and Writing Guidelines

- (1) *The Gazette* strives for accuracy and objectivity by observing the following journalistic standards and procedures:
  - i. *The Gazette* uses a modified Canadian Press style. The CP Stylebook, along with Caps and Spelling is the guide for capitalization, abbreviation, punctuation, use of titles, neutral language, and other style matters.
  - ii. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* is the authority for spelling, with some specific exceptions noted in the two volumes above.
  - iii. *The Gazette* also uses a style guide prepared for staff and writers based on The CP Stylebook incorporating Western's terms and preferences.

### 2.10 Editing

- (1) Section editors and Front Office edits all written copy. Section editors edit each piece of content at least three (3) times before submitting it to Front Office.

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- (2) Front Office edits each piece of content individually and whole pages of a section in their entirety. Every story goes through at least six (6) individual edits. The editing process includes grammar, spelling, CP and Gazette style, and fact checking.

### 2.11 Verification

- (1) Writers routinely verify copy for accuracy with their sources. If a serious dispute over content arises between a writer and a source, the writer consults the Editor-in-Chief. If all subsequent attempts at agreement between the source and the writer fail, the story will not run in the publication, or, in the case of a news story, may run but with all references to the source removed.

### 2.12 Identification

- (1) Writers may ask for information, comments and quotes from anyone at Western, but they must always identify themselves as representing *the Gazette* and make it clear that the information being provided may be used for publication. No one is required to answer questions posed by a writer from *the Gazette*. However, when pertinent to a story, *the Gazette* has the right to report that an individual declined to be interviewed, or could not be reached for comment at press time.

### 2.13 Balance

- (1) When preparing a story, particularly a news story, it is the writer's responsibility to get comments from all sides of a debate. Each story in *the Gazette* must have at least three (3) sources representing all sides of the story, with some exceptions at the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief.

### 2.14 Impartiality

- (1) A clear distinction for the reader between news and opinion is essential. Articles that contain explicit opinion or personal interpretation are printed in *the Gazette's* Opinion section or clearly identified as opinion.

### 2.15 Letters to the Editor

- (1) *The Gazette* prints letters to the editor, subject to limitations of space and the law governing libel. The Opinions editor will judge letters by their relevance to university issues and to stories published in the paper. Letters must include the contributor's name and identification (ie. Economics II, Dean of Arts). They must be typed, double-spaced, submitted on disk in Macintosh or IBM word-processing format, delivered to *the Gazette* office or emailed to [gazette.opinions@uwo.ca](mailto:gazette.opinions@uwo.ca) or [gazette.editor@uwo.ca](mailto:gazette.editor@uwo.ca). *the Gazette* reserves the right to edit letters and submissions and makes no guarantees that a letter will be published.

### 2.16 Deadlines

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(1) Deadlines for ADVERTISING during the normal publishing year are as follows:

- i. Tuesday paper: deadline is the prior Thursday before 12 p.m.
- ii. Wednesday paper: deadline is the prior Friday before 12 p.m.
- iii. Thursday paper: deadline is the prior Monday before 12 p.m.
- iv. Friday paper: deadline is the prior Tuesday before 12 p.m.
- v. The academic calendar and Holidays do affect these deadlines

(2) The Editorial department has the newspaper's layout pages two days prior to publication. The deadline for all sections, except for the news department, is two days ahead of publication by 5 p.m. The News section deadline is the day prior to publication at 5 p.m., except in the case of breaking news or special events (i.e. elections).

(3) At the end of the day, the copy is placed into the layout by the composing department, and the completed pages are sent to *the Gazette's* printers by 10:30 p.m. for printing on the evening prior to publication.

### 2.17 Corrections and Complaints

(1) If a factual error occurs, *the Gazette* shall admit its error promptly and publish a correction or clarification prominently in the following issue. Corrections must be brought to the attention of the Editor-in-Chief as soon as possible following publication.

(2) If a reader has a complaint about the editorial content of *the Gazette*, that person may file a formal complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Advisory Board.

(3) The Complaints Procedure must be adhered to in such instance.