



# **Publishing Standards and Editorial Code of Practice**

## **Fall 2024**

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# 1. Independence, Ethics, and Responsibility

## Standards

Our independence as a student publication is paramount, and we strive to operate free from external pressures, be they from the administration, faculty, students, or external entities. This commitment to independence is the bedrock of our credibility and trustworthiness. It ensures that our reporting remains unbiased, our opinions remain our own, and our integrity remains intact.

We believe that a free press is essential to a thriving academic community, where ideas can be exchanged openly and without fear of censorship or reprisal. Our goal is to foster an environment where diverse perspectives are heard and valued, providing a platform for dialogue and debate on issues that matter to our readers.

Our editorial decisions are made independently by our team of dedicated student journalists, who are committed to covering stories that reflect the interests and concerns of the student body. We are not influenced by financial considerations or external pressures; our sole focus is on delivering accurate, relevant, and engaging content.

## Principles

- 1.1. The editorial team has the autonomy to make decisions regarding content, ensuring that all editorial decisions are made without undue influence or interference from outside parties.
- 1.2. Journalists must avoid situations where personal interests could compromise (or appear to compromise) their professional integrity.
- 1.3. We are dedicated to reporting factual, well-researched information. All claims, data, and quotes should be verified for accuracy. If errors are identified, we will correct them promptly and transparently.
- 1.4. We strive to provide balanced coverage, presenting multiple perspectives on issues whenever possible. All subjects of news coverage should be treated with respect and given a fair opportunity to respond to any allegations or criticisms.

- 1.5.** We believe in transparency with our audience about our editorial processes and decision-making. This includes disclosing any potential conflicts of interest and the sources of our information, except in extraordinary circumstances when confidentiality is required to protect the safety and privacy of sources.
- 1.6.** Journalists should inform sources that everything discussed is on the record unless otherwise specified. If a source wishes to set conditions for the interview, such terms must be negotiated and agreed upon at the outset.
- 1.7.** All staff members must adhere to ethical guidelines in their reporting practices. This includes avoiding plagiarism, fabricating information, or using deceptive methods to obtain information.

## 2. Quality

### Standards

We understand that in an age of information overload, the credibility and reliability of the news we provide are more important than ever. Our readers deserve nothing less than the highest standards of journalism, and we strive to meet these expectations with every story we publish.

Our journalists are dedicated to uncovering the truth, diving deep into stories, and presenting facts with accuracy and clarity. We prioritize verification and cross-checking sources to ensure that the information we disseminate is not only correct but also comprehensive and insightful.

Our editorial team plays a critical role in maintaining our standards. Each piece undergoes a rigorous editing process, where it is reviewed for accuracy, coherence, and relevance. This collaborative effort ensures that our content is polished and free from errors, providing our readers with clear, concise, and well-articulated narratives.

We are constantly evolving and seeking feedback. Quality is not a static goal but a dynamic process of continuous improvement. We actively solicit input from our readers and the community, using their insights to refine our practices and enhance our publication.

### Principles

- 2.1.** Our articles should be written clearly and concisely, avoiding jargon and complex language that may confuse readers. Every piece should aim to inform and engage our audience effectively.
- 2.2.** High-quality journalism is built on thorough research; all published stories must have a minimum of three sources.
- 2.3.** We avoid anonymous sourcing except in extraordinary circumstances. In such cases, anonymous sources must be approved by the Editor-in-Chief or the Managing Editor.

- 2.4.** Including a variety of voices and perspectives is key to the richness of our storytelling. We aim to reflect the diverse community of Pasadena City College in our reporting.
- 2.5.** High-quality journalism often extends beyond the written word. We strive to integrate visual and multimedia elements—such as photos, videos, and audio—to enhance our stories and provide a richer reader experience.
- 2.6.** Engaging with our audience helps us understand their needs and interests. Feedback from readers is invaluable in guiding our content strategy and improving the quality of our publication.
- 2.7.** We recognize the potential impact of our reporting and strive to minimize harm. This includes being sensitive to the effects of our coverage on individuals and communities and avoiding sensationalism.

## 3. Accuracy

### Standards

In a world where misinformation can spread rapidly, ensuring the precision and correctness of our reporting is of utmost importance. We owe it to our readers to deliver facts they can rely on, and we take this responsibility very seriously.

Accuracy is not just about getting the facts right; it's also about providing context. We strive to present a complete picture, offering background information and different perspectives to help our readers understand the full scope of the issues we cover. We avoid speculation and hearsay, focusing instead on substantiated facts and concrete evidence.

### Principles

- 3.1.** We rely on credible and authoritative sources for our information. Every piece of data, quote, and claim must be verified through trustworthy sources to ensure its validity.
- 3.2.** When encountering ambiguous or uncertain information, we prioritize clarification before publication. This includes reaching out to sources for additional context and confirmation.
- 3.3.** Mistakes can happen, but our commitment to accuracy means promptly addressing them. We have a clear corrections policy to rectify errors transparently and swiftly. Corrections are noted openly to maintain the trust of our readers.
- 3.4.** Proper attribution of sources is crucial. We give credit to original sources of information and ensure that readers can trace the origins of the information we present.
- 3.5.** Whenever possible, writers should record interviews to ensure that quotes and information are captured accurately. This also serves as a reference to resolve any discrepancies that may arise.
- 3.6.** Quotes must be presented accurately, without alteration or misrepresentation. If edits for clarity or brevity are necessary, they must not distort the original meaning of the speaker.

- 3.7.** We distinguish between full bylines and "contributed reporting" to accurately reflect the contributions of our staff. A byline is given to those who have significantly contributed to the creation, research, and writing of an article while "contributed reporting" credit acknowledges writers who have assisted with specific aspects of the reporting process, such as gathering information, conducting interviews, or providing additional research.
- 3.8.** We encourage feedback from our readers regarding the quality and accuracy of our reporting. Writers and editors should engage with this feedback; constructive criticism is invaluable in helping us identify areas for improvement and ensuring that we uphold our commitment to accuracy.



## 4. Corrections and Clarifications

### Standards

Our approach to corrections and clarifications is an essential component of our commitment to transparency and accountability. We recognize that, despite our best efforts, errors can occur, and when they do, it is our responsibility to address them promptly and transparently.

When an error is identified, whether through our internal review processes or brought to our attention by readers, we act swiftly to correct it. Our policy is to make corrections as visible as possible, ensuring that our audience is fully aware of the changes. Sometimes, a statement or piece of information may be accurate but potentially misleading or ambiguous. In such cases, we issue clarifications to ensure that our readers fully understand the context and meaning of our reporting.

We encourage a culture of openness and feedback within our publication. We invite our staff and readers to reach out to the editors if they spot potential errors or if they feel something needs clarification. We believe that by being open about our mistakes and the steps we take to correct them, we build greater trust with our readers.

### Principles

- 4.1.** When a factual error is identified in our content, it will be corrected as quickly as possible and a note indicating the correction will be appended to the bottom of the piece.
- 4.2.** Corrections will be clearly identified and distinguished from the original content. A correction notice will specify what was incorrect, the correct information, and the date the correction was made.
- 4.3.** The responsibility for corrections lies with both the writer and the editorial team. Writers are expected to notify editors immediately upon discovering an error in their work, and editors are responsible for ensuring that corrections are implemented swiftly and appropriately.
- 4.4.** When our reporting is unclear or could be misinterpreted, we will issue a clarification. This is to ensure that the intended meaning is accurately conveyed to our readers.

- 4.5.** Similar to corrections, clarifications will be clearly marked and added to the bottom of the article. The notice will explain the original ambiguity and provide the clarified information.
- 4.6.** Upon receiving a report of an error or a request for clarification, the editorial team will review the content in question. If the editorial team determines that the content in question is erroneous or ambiguous, the appropriate correction or clarification will be made.
- 4.7.** In addition to corrections and clarifications, The Courier is committed to providing ongoing updates to articles when new information becomes available. This ensures that our readers have access to the most current and comprehensive information on evolving stories. Each update will be clearly marked with the date and time, and a summary of what new information has been added or changed.