



The Falcon Handbook

Operations for Editors and Staff - Seattle Pacific University Media
Seapacmedia.com

The Falcon

The Falcon is an independent, student-run news publication reporting on all aspects of campus and community life with honesty, transparency and inclusivity. Although The Falcon reports about Seattle Pacific University and coordinates with university curricula and departments, we strive to amplify a wide variety of voices but do not represent all the thoughts and beliefs of university leadership, faculty, staff or students. –Falcon Mission Statement

Introduction

Founded in 1934, The Falcon is Seattle Pacific University's independent student newspaper. This will establish an ongoing and living document. Each year, The Falcon's policies may be challenged, argued, created and changed in board meetings, debate, newsroom banter and inter-departmental discussions. Changes are ratified by the editorial board after which they are transcribed into this institutional handbook for future Falcon staff to use and follow. The handbook must be reviewed every other year (even years) during fall quarter to ensure that it is up-to-date. This handbook serves as a newsroom reference book for writers and editors – a concrete list of what to do and what not to do in specific situations. This book is a way to introduce new staff to The Falcon's accepted methods and protocol. More than just an internal guide, this document is compiled to provide information about the student news publications to the community at large.

General Policies

Purpose of The Falcon

The purpose of The Falcon, as stated in the Board of Student Media Bylaws, is to publish news. The publication is directed primarily at the students, faculty, and employees of Seattle Pacific University and the residents of its neighboring areas, and contains educational and informational articles not normally or frequently contained in the commercial press, along with a significant amount of news and editorial coverage and general student comments of particular interest to the greater university community. A secondary purpose of this organization is to promote interest in the art of collegiate journalism and to educate and train students at Seattle Pacific.

Operations

Location: The Falcon staff meets weekly and operates predominantly online. The Editor-In-Chief can be reached at editor@seapacmedia.com

Editorial Staff

The editorial staff makes all essential institutional decisions for The Falcon. The editorial staff is made up of the: Editor-in-Chief (EIC)

News Editor

Features Editor

Falcon Navigator/Perspectives Editor

Sports Editor

Copyeditor

Digital Media Producer

Audience Engagement Editor

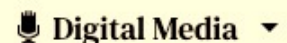
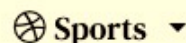
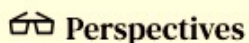
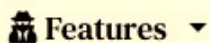
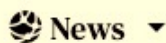
Position Descriptions and Duties

Editor-in-Chief (EIC)

- Supervise a staff of 7 editors, collaborating with CTO, CFO and Photo Director and at least a dozen of quarterly staff in producing a weekly news cycle online and once-per-quarter print edition.
- In cooperation with the Faculty Advisers, implement student media organization policies, functions and standards as recommended by BSM.
- In conjunction with the CFO and Faculty Advisers, oversee the publication's financial operations.
- Read rough drafts of staff articles and submit comments in a timely manner.
- In conjunction with the Faculty Advisers; interview, hire and/or dismiss members of the editorial staff and other staff members.
- Encourage staff reporters to take on ambitious reporting assignments and mentor them throughout the reporting/writing process
- Review JRN 1000 students' work and select articles which are appropriate for inclusion in The Falcon.
- Lead by example.
- Maintain consistent, strong academic work.
- Help to prepare for, plan, coordinate and execute community service events.
- Select final topics for The Falcon print issues, helping to edit and lay them out.
- Upload The Falcon articles to SNO sites in a timely manner.
- Establish policies and work to ensure that the processes by which The Falcon issues are created, function effectively.
- Maintain constant communication with the Faculty Advisers and with all staffers and editorial staff members.
- Work with the Faculty Advisers in a respectful and thoughtful manner to everyone's mutual benefit.
- Be receptive to critique and feedback from editorial staff members and the advisers and use it to improve work.

Section Editors: News Editor, Features Editor, Falcon Navigator/Perspectives Editor, Sports Editor, Copyeditor, Digital Media Producer and Audience Engagement Editor)

- Help reporters figure out whom to interview and prepare them for interviews.
- Mentor reporters to write articles in the correct journalistic style for the section.
- Write articles of their own when necessary and submit them in a timely manner.
- Be receptive to critique and feedback from editorial staff members and the Advisers and using it to improve their work.
- Vote on policies and work to establish sound policies as needed.
- Lead by example.
- Maintain consistent, strong academic work.
- Cover topics in a timely manner.
- Attend weekly meetings and production nights.
- Know the Associated Press style and implement it when editing articles.
- Work closely with the editors to properly headline articles.



Falcon Staff

Anti-discrimination Clause

- The Falcon does not discriminate based on age, citizenship, color, disability, gender, race, religion, national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or status as a disabled veteran. The Falcon actively seeks a diverse staff.

Eligibility

- Any Seattle Pacific University student who is carrying 8 or more credits while maintaining a GPA of 2.5 or higher is eligible to become a full and active member of the organization. Students attending any masters program housed at the SPU campus are also eligible to be full members provided they meet the GPA requirements, however, they are only eligible for editorial board positions on a guest basis. All editorial staff members who do not maintain the minimum grade point average of 2.5 shall be remanded to probationary status and dismissed from their post until the quarter grade point average is brought back up to a 2.5 at which point they may apply for the position again, however, position is not guaranteed.

Staff positions

- Writers/reporters
- Photographers/Videographers
- Social Media Creators
- Advertising Representatives
- Graphic Artists
- Audio producers

Termination

- A staff member who is deemed to have violated any part of the code or intent of the policies of The Falcon, as expressed in this manual, may be removed from their position by the EIC or by the decision of a Faculty Adviser.

The Role of Faculty Advisers

The Faculty Advisers are not responsible for the content of The Falcon. They act as mentors, sounding boards and writing and photography coaches. The adviser(s) must work to train editors, writers, designers and photographers both in specific journalism classes and during the day-to-day operations of the news publication. The adviser(s) strive to instill in Falcon staffers a sense of what constitutes good writing and good journalism practice and works to increase awareness of the history and legal issues of the press. They may review student writing when asked and, in consultation with the EIC, may work to ensure articles do not contain libelous material, inaccuracy, lack of depth in reporting, copyright infringement, or plagiarism. All messages sent to the Faculty Adviser will be redirected to Editor-in-Chief and provide assistance when asked.

SPU Leadership Participation

Each quarter all Falcon editors are required to attend the conferences hosted by the Student Leadership Development Committee. In Fall Quarter, the conference is over the course of a week. Editors must arrive back on campus prior to the start of the quarter. During the conference, they will produce their first “Welcome” edition of The Falcon. In Winter and Spring, the SLDC’s conference is one night and all editors are required to attend.



Protocols

Code of Ethics

All Falcon staff members adhere to The Falcon Code of Ethics. **(Appendix A)**

Conflict of Interest Guidelines

All Falcon staff members adhere to The Falcon Conflict of Interest Guidelines. **(Appendix B)** The EIC has final say in all situations involving possible conflicts of interest.

Dress

All reporters dress and act professionally at all meetings, games, interviews and other newsworthy events where professional attire is expected. All staff must be wearing a press badge when covering events. Badges will be given at the beginning of each quarter and returned at the end of each quarter unless the staff member is returning for the next quarter.

Petitions

To preserve transparency, writers in the News section who sign petitions may not cover any subjects related to that topic without talking to the EIC and outlining the article to make sure it is being covered fairly.

Spokesperson

No Falcon staff members may speak for The Falcon in an official capacity except for the EIC. All other staff members must acknowledge, when speaking in public and associated in any way with The Falcon, that their views are their own and not those of The Falcon.

Responsiveness

All requests for information or queries concerning posted stories or staff member information will go through the EIC and advisers.

Ownership

All article submissions made to The Falcon by students – including editors, full-time staff members, probationary staff members, non-staff contributors, freelancers and alumni contributors – automatically become property of The Falcon and may be edited and printed as the editorial staff sees fit. All submissions are final and cannot be withdrawn. Any article, drawing, photo, multimedia is considered to be submitted if it is presented to the editors for consideration in hard copy, on a computer disc, or via email. No submission is guaranteed to run in the print or online versions of The Falcon. The Falcon retains exclusive rights to submitted work. Any republication must receive proper approval from the editorial staff a note must run with the publication saying: “Originally printed in The Falcon on {date}. Reprinted by permission.” Unauthorized reprints constitute violations of copyright law and will be pursued as such.

Removal of Content

The Falcon does not remove content from our websites once it has been published unless discussed and approved by the EIC and Faculty Advisers. Factual errors can be corrected, but a correction note must be included at the bottom of the story. Typos, grammar and spelling errors can be corrected without any notification to the reader.

Divulging Unpublished Information

Information provided to The Falcon and embargoed stories must not be divulged to the public prior to publication of the article.

Coverage

Topics

The Falcon covers as many newsworthy events in the university community as possible, recognizing that coverage decisions will be based on comparative newsworthiness of story ideas and space and resource constraints. We do not refrain from covering events that already have been covered by a mainstream media outlet in the area. Coverage does not necessarily mean that The Falcon supports certain topics.

Requesting Coverage

Any campus or community member who believes they have a topic worthy of news coverage is encouraged to bring it to the attention of a member of The Falcon editorial staff; the easiest way to do so is to email with a description of the event including dates and times along with contact information. The editorial staff will evaluate all ideas brought for its consideration, and, provided there are enough human resources to do so, will assign a reporter to cover any story that is deemed newsworthy.

Complimentary Tickets

As is standard in the journalism industry, when an event planner wants to ensure that a particular event receives coverage in The Falcon, they should contact The Falcon in advance to request coverage and should provide complimentary tickets or an entrance pass for press. The provision of tickets does not ensure a “positive” article. Except in the case of opinion pieces such as reviews and editorials, all articles will be balanced in their coverage without any positive or negative bias whatsoever. Opinion pieces are the exception and represent only the personal opinion of the reviewer. All opinion pieces are clearly identified as such by appearing on the Perspectives or Reviews pages of the publication.

Participation

To preserve objectivity, staffers who cover events or groups may not participate in those events or groups. Editors must refrain from editing content relating to groups or events in which they have participated.

Interviews

Accuracy

Reporters must always attempt to verify the accuracy of their quotes and information after or during an interview or by email. If there can be any confusion with a quote or accuracy of a fact, the reporter must confirm it with the interviewee or it cannot be published. All reporters are required to sign the fact checking worksheet before articles are published.

Events

When covering large scale events such as fund-raisers, galas and performances, reporters will make every effort to interview the organizers ahead of time to get ample background information. When reporters attend events they are expected to arrive at least fifteen minutes early and stay for the entire event in order to ensure thorough reporting. They will attempt to avoid inconveniencing event participants and will not disrupt any formal proceedings. They may, however, talk to all participants as opportunities arise during the course of any event. Set interview times and places are made only for talking one-on-one with event coordinators or school administrators, faculty, staff or trustees.

Questions

Reporters will supply a list of questions to any interview subject ahead of time if requested, but additional questions may be added during the interview process. Reporters' questions are aimed solely at recording the truth in its entirety. Questions should be polite whenever possible, but may be pointed or firm if necessary.

Contacting After Business Hours

Reporters will not contact sources at home or late at night unless there is an emergency or they are invited to do so. Phone interviews need to be set up ahead of time to ensure professionalism.

Email and Text Interviews

Time constraints sometimes require that interviews be conducted via e-mail correspondence, but this method must be used only as a last resort. Face-to-face interviews are always preferable. Phone interviews are also preferable. When conducting an interview via email, the reporter must make it clear that the responses made will be “on the record” and may be quoted for the article. Email interviews must be identified as such using the phrase “In an email interview [person’s name] said” before any quote or paraphrase given in the text. Text message or social media interviews are not allowed unless cleared by EIC. **Avoid social media and text interviews.**

Advance Copies

Advance copies of articles are NEVER sent to interview subjects or University administrators for their approval under any circumstances. Furthermore, interview subjects may call or email the editor-in-chief to go over any direct quotes or paraphrases that may appear in the article to ensure accuracy. Note: the reporter must also check facts with the interview subject; if the subject believes this has not occurred, or additional information has come to light, the subject may contact the EIC and ask that the article not appear in print until fact-checking has been completed. The EIC’s response will depend largely on print deadlines.

Private Meetings

Reporters use the phrase “in an interview with The Falcon” when describing interviews with prominent figures who have met or spoken privately with Falcon reporters and/or editors. Reporters may use the phrase “in an exclusive interview with The Falcon” when The Falcon is the only member of the media interviewing that figure.

Audio recorders

Reporters may use audio recorders in addition to taking hand-written notes during interviews, but in accordance with Washington law must always ask the subject(s) for permission to record before doing so.

General Reporting Guidelines

Bomb Threats

Unlike professional news publications in large, unenclosed communities, The Falcon considers bomb threats in the university community newsworthy and reports on them.

Deaths and Suicides

Provided there are enough reporters to do so, The Falcon covers all deaths of members of the University community, even when the cause of death is suicide. In cases of suicide, the Society of Professional Journalists ethical principle of “minimizing harm” guides all coverage. Editors take special care in positioning stories, graphics and hotline information appropriately, and work diligently to ensure the focus of the story is the community, on mental health needs and resources and not on individual families’ trauma.

Cover Stories and Investigative Reporting

The front page and news pages often include investigative and longer form journalism. The Falcon has come to be known for this type of work which is the result, in part, of the change in production schedule that allows for more in-depth and group work. These stories always are made to look distinct and recognizable as features.

News Analyses and Opinions

A story that examines a news event or issue from an interpretive or critical angle must be labeled as a “News Analysis” or “Op/Ed.” These analyses generally rely on informed sources and unbiased data to illustrate a viewpoint on an issue or event.

Editorial Cartoons

Any editorial cartoon reflects only the opinion of the cartoonist, not that of the editorial staff. Syndicated cartoons are intended for entertainment only. Editorial staff has the choice to not include editorial cartoons if they feel it is not in the best interest of The Falcon.

Names & Identification

Names & Titles

When individuals are identified for the first time in an article, their professional title should be given followed by their first and last name (for example: Dean of Student Affairs, Dr. Diane Campbell). All names and titles must be double checked by reporters. When students are interviewed, their title is given as their year at SPU followed by their major (for example: sophomore Liberal Arts major, Jorge Sanders-Ramirez). When King County or other local residents are interviewed they are identified by name and residence location (for example: Sgt. Andrew Atkins of West Windsor Township).

Charged or Convicted

To provide stories that are fully informative, the names of suspects identified by the police or those charged with crimes are printed. Persons who have been convicted also will be named.

Suspects

For safety reasons, suspects at large are identified in news stories by all known characteristics, including race. Stories will refer to a suspect’s charges as “alleged” until guilt is determined by the appropriate court of law.

Victims

To avoid further public injury, the victims of assaults are not named, unless they are public figures.

Sexual Identity

Transgender and nonbinary individuals will be referred to by the pronoun of their choice.

Sources & Citations

Anonymity

Anonymity is only offered in rare circumstances. Reporters can quote sources without naming them in their stories only if they know the sources’ names, and the sources offer firsthand knowledge of an event or conversation which could not be obtained elsewhere. There must be a great reason for anonymity. Sources who offer information cannot be quoted if they refuse to give their true identities to The Falcon and cannot offer a sufficient explanation why they do not want their names to appear in the paper. Sources who make legitimate requests that their names not be used and offer important information will be cited anonymously. Their true identities will not be revealed to the outside community. Reporting based on anonymous sources has the potential to undermine credibility and should be rare. An anonymous source must be cleared by the EIC. EIC can deny if they feel reason is not good enough for anonymity.

On or Off the Record

Any information a source gives while speaking “on the record” can be cited or used in a news story. Information gathered from sources who explicitly say all or part of an interview is “off the record” cannot be attributed to that source. A reporter may, however, use the off the-record information when speaking to other sources without identifying the initial source. If those other sources confirm or give the same information as the initial source while speaking on the record, that information can then be used or cited in the story.

Contact

If a reporter repeatedly calls and leaves messages for a source without successfully making contact before deadline time, the reporter may indicate that the source “could not be reached for comment.” When a source is provided an opportunity to respond, but does not do so, the reporter will indicate this by saying “refused to comment.”

Number of sources

Reporters must cite at least two sources (at least three is preferred) in every news story. The only exception is a story that involves a subject only one source can discuss.

Editing

Process

Every article appearing in The Falcon must undergo a lengthy editing process intended to prevent all mistakes in grammar, accuracy and omission. All pieces, including those appearing in the opinion section are edited by all section editors, copy and EIC for style and content. Breaking news is the exception. It must be read by at least the copy editor, assistant news, and EIC. The story may also be read and critiqued by the faculty adviser if they ask EIC and or they are asked by the writer or EIC. Any story deemed potentially sensitive or libelous may be withheld from publication by either an editor or the Faculty Adviser(s). The EIC is responsible for all matters of taste, libel and any other potential legal issues, but may elect to convene the editorial staff to vote on whether to run a particularly sensitive story. The faculty adviser(s) may review student writing and, in consultation with the EIC, will work to ensure that any article not fit for publication for reasons of libel, inaccuracy, lack of depth in reporting, or plagiarism is not printed. These are the only reasons an adviser may interfere with the content choices of The Falcon’s EIC and other editors.

AP Stylebook - The Falcon follows the Associated Press Stylebook in all references to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and national origin. Such language reflects that conventionally considered most accurate, unbiased and representative.

Sexual Crimes - In cases of sexual crimes, the word “rape” is always used when appropriate; “Sexual assault” is used to define all forms of sexual crimes other than rape. The policy matches the police department’s policy for description of sexual crimes.

Correction & Retractions

Corrections will be printed when The Falcon has made a significant spelling, typographical, reporting or editing error. Minor typos, grammar and spelling errors can be corrected without any notification to the reader.

The Falcon will issue a **retraction** if presented with credible and verifiable information indicating that the findings or facts reported are wholly unreliable or inaccurate as a result of misconduct or honest error. Retractions are not made when stories are verifiably accurate or when a correction will suffice.

- **When to Post**

The Falcon will post all verified corrections, retractions and clarifications as soon as possible. Such corrections, retractions and clarifications will include the headline of the original story, its date of publication and the correct information. Corrections, retractions and clarifications are approved by the EIC. If a question of accuracy is raised, The Falcon is obliged to look into it with speed and diligence, but The Falcon will not correct, retract or apologize for stories that are verifiably accurate.

Letter to the Editor

The Falcon will try to print all letters received. Letters should be 250 to 300 words long. Any exceptions will be made at the discretion of the editors. We reserve the right to edit all letters submitted for brevity, grammar, content and clarity. The writer must include full name, year and major if a student, professional title if a Seattle Pacific University employee. If it is determined that a letter writer's political or professional capacity or position has a bearing on the topic addressed, then that capacity or position will be identified at the editor's discretion. Hate speech, speech which may incite violence, and speech that disparages or attempt to intimidate any person or group will not be accepted.

Complaints

At first, complaints about the behavior of a member of The Falcon staff or about the content of an article should be made in writing to the Faculty Adviser within **one month** of any incident or the publication date. The complainant must clearly identify the complainant and provide contact information if a response is anticipated.

The FA in consultation with Student Life and any other assisting advisers will consider the complaint and reply in writing within seven working days, provided the complaint is lodged by an individual or group with a direct interest.

If the complainant is unhappy with the Faculty Adviser's response and course of action, they may ask the Dean of Students of Seattle Pacific University to call a meeting of The Board of Student Media and Faculty Advisers to consider their complaint.

If no amicable settlement can be reached, the Dean of Students --in conjunction with any other administrators they deem appropriate-- will convene within fourteen working days of having received the complaint. In conjunction with the Faculty Adviser they may advocate for whatever remedy is most efficient for remediating the problem, providing it does not involve any financial penalty nor the removal from office of the Faculty Advisers, nor cause any First Amendment or other legal violation.

Where First Amendment issues are at stake, the Dean of Students is encouraged to seek counsel from the Student Press Law Center before issuing a decision.

Copyrights & Reproduction

All material featured in any edition of The Falcon (seapacmedia.com) is copyrighted and the exclusive property of The Falcon. No portion of these publications may be copied or reproduced without the express written permission of the EIC. The EIC will consult with the staff member producing the work before permission to reprint or otherwise copy a piece is given.

Article Removal and Added Statements

As a rule, The Falcon does not remove articles from any edition. A core journalistic principle is that history cannot and should never be rewritten, covered up, nor amended. Under specific circumstances a statement may be included at the bottom of a column indicating that the views expressed no longer coincide with the author's current perspective, but that news publication policy prohibits removal of the article. Former contributors can request up to three such notes and must make the request(s) within five years of the original publication date in order to be considered. The circumstances under which a note might be considered include how incendiary the original article was/is, how much potential impact on the safety or livelihood of the writer it may now have, and any other aspect as the Editorial Board deems relevant in the specific case. Final say on whether or not a statement may be added lies with the current EIC.

Reproduction of photos and articles

Reprints

The Falcon may send digital copies of pictures to other publications as a professional courtesy subject to the permission of the EIC. The publication is authorized to publish the picture only once with credit to both the photographer and The Falcon. At the photographer's discretion, staff members may send digital copies of pictures to individuals for their personal use.

Rights

All photo submissions made to The Falcon by students --including editors, full-time staff members, probationary staff members, non-staff contributors, freelancers and alumni contributors-- automatically become property of The Falcon and may be edited and printed as the editorial staff sees fit. All submissions are final and cannot be withdrawn. Any article, drawing, photo, convergence media or layout spread is considered to be submitted if it is presented to the editors for consideration in hard copy, on a computer disc, or via email. No submission is guaranteed to run in the print or online versions of The Falcon. The Falcon retains exclusive rights to submitted work for six months. Students who wish to submit the same work to other publications must wait 6 months from the date of submission to The Falcon before doing so.

Photography and Multimedia Policies

Captions

Except in the case of stock photos no photos are ever run without a caption identifying the main group, person or people featured in the photo. Unless the photo size does not permit, students are identified with their name, and title if applicable; faculty members are identified with name and title; all others are identified with name and place of residence.

Coverage

Photographers generally cover events on the basis of departmental assignments. When The Falcon receives any news tip-offs, however, the editors use their discretion in sending photographers to cover the event.

Credits

All photos and illustrations must have a “cut line” – credit given to the source of the image.

Except in the case of stock photos, credits always appear in small capital letters at the lower right-hand corner of the photograph unless the photograph is smaller than two inches.

Photo Illustrations

Any photo that is manipulated beyond cropping and color correcting must be labeled in the credit as “Photo Illustration” and are used for graphical artwork to present the general concept of a story. Except for photo portraits, all photographs are candid shots.

Timeliness

Whenever possible, photos should be taken as close to the day the story appears as possible. It is always preferable to take and publish recent photos rather than use older photos. Old or file photos are used only when it is otherwise impossible or inconvenient to use a more recent photo, or if a current high-quality photo cannot be obtained. The most recent and most relevant photo will be published. Photos taken within a week of publication or from the most recent relevant event are credited with the photographer’s name. Photos more than a week old or earlier are credited with the photographer’s name or Falcon File Photo. Sports photos of a different game than described in the article are credited with the photographer’s name or “Falcon File Photo.”

Distortion

All published photos are accurate representations of reality. Photo techniques that distort the image will be identified in the caption (e.g. multiple exposure or use of a wide-angle lens). Ideally, published photos will be in focus, exposed well and free of imperfections.

Color & Brightening

Because newsprint darkens photos, photos may be color balanced in Photoshop prior to placement.

Duplication

The same photo will never be published twice except in cases of small mug shots or file photos.

Photography of Children Under 16

Requests of parents who ask that their child photograph not be taken or used are honored, provided the child is under 16 years of age and not in a public place. Children over age 16, but not yet 18, can give (or not) their own permission.

Public Photography

When a person is in a public space (including a public community university campus) photographs may be taken and run as the law permits. Falcon photographers will not interrupt classes in progress to take photos or in any other way cause a classroom distraction. Falcon photographers may photograph security officers at any time provided their picture taking does not interfere with the security officer’s ability to carry out his or her regular duties.

Known subjects

Reporters and photographers should not interview, quote or photograph other Falcon staff members, family members, apartment-mates, roommates or friends, unless explicit permission is granted by the EIC.

Appendix A - Code of Ethics

The Falcon believes the duty of an independent student news publication is to act as a carrier of information and a forum for discussion for the University community.

WE BELIEVE the duty of student journalists, as agents of independent student news publications and as American journalists, is to serve the truth. WE BELIEVE student news publications contribute to public enlightenment, acting on their Constitutional freedom to learn and report the facts and seeking truth as a part of the University community's right to know the truth. WE BELIEVE those responsibilities carry obligations requiring student journalists to perform with intelligence, accuracy and fairness. To these ends, we declare acceptance of the standards of practice here set forth:

Responsibility

Serving the University community's right to know the truth concerning events of public importance and interest is the unifying mission of any independent student news publication. The motive behind gathering and distributing accurate news and enlightened opinion is to serve the general welfare of the University community. Student journalists who use their status as representatives of that community for selfish or other unworthy motives violate a trust without which independent student journalism cannot operate.

The First Amendment

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

Ethics

- Student journalists must be free of obligation to any interest other than the university community's right to know the truth.
- Gifts, favors, free travel, special treatment or privileges can compromise the integrity of student journalists. Nothing of value should be accepted in exchange for special coverage, free advertising or endorsements.
- Use of a position with The Falcon to gain personal advantage or to make inquiries for any other purpose than work for The Falcon is strictly prohibited.
- Staff members are not permitted to use information not yet made available to the public for personal gain.
- Staff members may not use Falcon equipment, supplies, services, resources, or other materials owned, purchased, or designated as property of The Falcon for any purpose other than work for The Falcon.
- Staff members may not threaten sources or promise favorable coverage or money in exchange for information.
- Staff members must fully disclose their identity to all sources. All members of The Falcon staff will carry a press pass issued in the quarter they are serving on the staff.
- Staff members must ask sources before recording conversations.
- Staff members must obey the law.

- Involvement in student politics, holding student government office and service in university organizations should be avoided if it compromises the integrity of student journalists. Student journalists should conduct their personal lives as university students in a way that protects them from conflict of interest.
- Press releases from government or private sources, student organizations or university officials should not be published without substantiation of their claims and evaluation of their news value.
- Student journalists will seek news that serves the university community's interest, despite the obstacles.
- They will make constant efforts to assure that the university community's business is conducted in public and those public records are open to public inspection.
- Student journalists acknowledge the ethic of protecting confidential sources of information.
- Any staff member who is found to have committed an academic integrity violation will be dismissed from The Falcon and not permitted to return.
- Plagiarism is an ultimate violation of trust and credibility with our readership and will not be tolerated at the University
- Any and all material taken from another source must be appropriately cited and attributed, including:
 - Information from press releases
 - Little-known facts from authoritative sources
 - Unique stylistic traits, devices or wording
 - Both widely available news and news not widely available obtained from other sources
 - Information from another media outlet's exclusive story or scoop
 - Information obtained through the efforts of another party or source

Accuracy and Transparency

Just as good faith with the public is the foundation of all worthy journalism, so is good faith with the University community the basis of all worthy student journalism.

- Truth is the ultimate goal.
- Transparency in reporting the news is another goal, which serves as the mark of an experienced professional. It is a standard of performance toward which we strive. We honor those who achieve it.
- There is no excuse for inaccuracies or lack of thoroughness and reporters should make every attempt to get a story right, correct it if it appears to be wrong, and note corrections.
- Headlines should be fully warranted by the contents of the articles they accompany. Graphic elements should depict an event's happenings accurately. Photographs should never be altered for any reason except for brightening when printing on newsprint.
- News reports should be free of opinion or bias and represent all sides of an issue.
- Partisanship in editorial comment, which knowingly departs from the truth, is unacceptable.

- Student journalists recognize their responsibility to offer informed analysis, comment and editorial opinion on public events and issues in the University community.
- News analyses, reviews and perspectives pieces should be labeled as such, so as not to mislead.
- Student journalists at all times will show respect for the dignity, privacy, rights and well-being of people encountered in the course of gathering and presenting news.
- The student news publication should not communicate unofficial charges affecting reputation or moral character without giving the accused a chance to reply.
- The student news publication must guard against invading a person's legal right to privacy.
- The student news publication should not pander to morbid curiosity about details of vice and crime. It is the duty of the student news publication to make prompt and complete correction of its errors.
- Student journalists should be accountable to the University community for their reports and the University community should be encouraged to voice its grievances against the student news publication. Open dialog with our readers should be fostered.
- The Falcon will make every attempt possible to prevent violations of these standards, and will encourage their observance by all members. Adherence to this code of ethics is intended to preserve the bond of mutual trust and respect between The Falcon and the Seattle Pacific University community.

NOTE: Portions of this code of ethics, as well as the following conflict of interest guidelines, were adapted from the Code of Ethics of the Society of Professional Journalists: Sigma Delta Chi, the New York Times "Ethical Journalism: Code of Conduct for the News and Editorial Departments"

Appendix B - Conflict of Interest Guidelines

This publication is committed to avoiding conflict of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest whenever and wherever possible. On a general level, this means we, as staff members, make every reasonable effort to be free of obligation to news sources and special interest groups. Although collegiate journalism sometimes deviates from mainstream news publication work, we strive for the highest level of professionalism. There are particulars associated with collegiate journalism that require more specific guidelines. Certain restrictions are more binding than others. Staff members who sense they may be in a potentially conflicting situation are expected to discuss the circumstance with the editor-in-chief immediately. Decisions are made in correspondence with the following guidelines:

Outside Activities

- Staff at all levels should not cover or write about events in which they play official roles or organizations in which they are members. (Examples: Members of any student group cannot write about that student group. Members of a sports team cannot write about that sport.)
- Reporters should not be affiliated with the ASSP in any capacity.
- If reporters or photographers acquire or intend to acquire leadership roles within other organizations (such as RAs, SMCs, officers in clubs) who advocate positions on university or other policy, they must inform the EIC.

- Any appearance of bias will not be tolerated in restaurant reviews, fashion columns, music and movie reviews/previews, and any other feature story regarding University events or groups, particularly upcoming events. The strictest care must be taken to avoid conflicts of interest in these areas, and to avoid even the appearance of “advertising” or in any other way promoting one event and/or group over another, even if actual participation in the group or event has not occurred.
- All ideas for these stories should be generated in-house, and suggestions for story ideas from outside sources must be thoroughly scrutinized by the appropriate editor before a balanced decision is made on coverage choices.
- Freelance writers and photographers and guest columnists appearing in The Falcon are also bound to these rules.

Work for Other Publications

Freelance work for media organizations outside the University community is permissible as long as it does not interfere with responsibilities to The Falcon and is not completed with information or resources made available to the staffer through his or her work for The Falcon. If freelance work becomes frequent (more than once a month, for example), staff members should discuss the work and any potential conflicts of interest with the EIC.

