

CONSTITUTION

Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ)

University of Florida

ARTICLE I. Society of Professional Journalists

The name of this organization is Society of Professional Journalists. This organization will utilize the acronym SPJ in all publicity materials and correspondence. Society of Professional Journalists is a student chapter affiliated with the national SPJ organization. The website of the national SPJ organization is www.spj.org.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE STATEMENT

Be it known that an organization known by the name “SPJ” was established to serve the following purpose, goals and laws subject to the following rights, limitations and conditions:

- To associate journalists within the College of Journalism and Communications who share talent, truth and energy into a more intimately organized unit
- To assist members in acquiring the noblest principles of journalism and to cooperate with them in this field
- To advance the standards of journalism by fostering a higher ethical code
- To provide educational programs so journalism majors will be better able to seek employment in the job sector
- To help journalists receive real-world experiences through internships and travel as well as share those experiences with others

ARTICLE III. COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

Upon approval by the Department of Student Activities and

Involvement, the Society of Professional Journalists shall be a registered student organization at the University of Florida. The Society of Professional Journalists shall comply with all local, state and federal laws, as well as all University of Florida regulations, policies, and procedures. Such compliance includes but is not limited to the University's regulations related to Non-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment (including sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking), Hazing, Commercial Activity, and Student Leader Eligibility.

ARTICLE IV. UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS

Section A. Non-Discrimination The Society of Professional Journalists agrees that it will not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act.

Section B. Sexual Harassment The Society of Professional Journalists agrees that it will not engage in any activity that is unwelcome conduct of sexual nature that creates a hostile environment.

Section C. Hazing The Society of Professional Journalists agrees that it will not initiate, support, or encourage any events or situations that recklessly, by design, or intentionally endanger the mental or physical health or safety of a student for any purpose including but not limited to initiation or admission into or affiliation with any student group or organization.

Section D. Responsibility to Report If this organization becomes aware of any such conduct described in this article, the Society of Professional Journalists will report it immediately to Student Activities and Involvement, the Director of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, or the University's Title IX Coordinator.

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

Membership in this organization is open to all enrolled students at the

University of Florida. Non-enrolled students, spouses, faculty, and staff may be associate members; however, they may not vote or hold office. All members and associate members are free to leave and disassociate without fear of retribution, retaliation, or harassment.

ARTICLE VI. OFFICERS

-- **SPJ President:** The President shall be the Chief executive of the organization and shall preside at all the meetings. He/She shall have the authority to acquire a report from any officer of the organization at any time. The individual will be elected to a one-year term by secret ballot method. A win is constituted by a simple majority of the total ballots taken. In the event that the President cannot complete the term, the Vice President will then take over. If this is not possible, the Secretary or Treasurer will be next in line for the position.

-- **SPJ Vice President:** The Vice President shall serve as the second in command of the organization, assisting the President and conducting meetings in his/her absence. The same election procedures apply, and the Vice President shall succeed to the office of the President in the event of a vacancy in the office. In the event that the Vice President cannot complete the term, the Secretary or Treasurer will be next in line for the position.

-- **SPJ Treasurer:** The Treasurer office is responsible for the finances of the organization. This person is responsible for all receipts and disbursements, assets and liabilities. They shall handle travel expenses, collect dues and lobby relevant groups for financial support. In the event that the Treasurer cannot complete the term, the Vice President or Secretary will take over the position.

-- **SPJ Secretary:** The SPJ Secretary shall be responsible for keeping minutes at all SPJ meetings as well as informing members of pending events. If the Secretary cannot complete the term, the Vice President or Treasurer will take over the position.

-- **SPJ Webmaster:** The SPJ Webmaster is responsible for updating the Web site. In the event that the Webmaster cannot complete the term, the President will take over the position.

-- **SPJ Fundraising Chair:** The SPJ Fundraising Chair is responsible for planning and carrying out two or three fundraisers a year. In the event that the Fundraising Chair cannot complete the term, the Publicity Chair or Social Chair will take over the position.

-- **SPJ Social Chair:** The SPJ Social Chair is responsible for planning and carrying out two to four socials per year. The purpose of SPJ socials is to allow networking among members of the organization. In the event the Social Chair cannot complete the term, the Publicity Chair or Fundraising Chair will take over the position.

-- **SPJ Publicity Chair:** The SPJ Publicity Chair notifies members of upcoming meetings through fliers and by setting up tables in the journalism college. In the event the Publicity Chair cannot complete the term, the Social Chair or Fundraising Chair will take over the position.

-- Members hold these officer positions for one year and may choose to run for reelection at the second to last meeting.

-- At the second to last meeting of the year, there will be a designated time for officer elections. Any member may be nominated for the position of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Publicity Chair, Fundraising Chair, Webmaster and Social Chair. The individual must be seconded for nomination by at least one other member. The individual must meet all other previously stated requirements for membership.

-- Any officer may be removed from office if the above duties listed are not performed and a majority of the SPJ members vote for removal.

ARTICLE VII. ELECTIONS

SPJ will hold elections during its second to last meeting of the year. This will be in either March or April. Any member meeting the requirements for membership may be nominated for Secretary, Treasurer, Webmaster, Fundraising Chair, Publicity Chair and Social Chair. Members running for President or Vice President must have served on the SPJ Executive Board during the previous year. The individuals must be seconded for nomination by at least one other member. Voting will occur by secret ballot and a simply majority vote is required to elect an officer. If there are more than two candidates running and no candidate receives a majority vote, there shall be a run-off vote between the top two vote recipients at the next general meeting. No person shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

ARTICLE VIII. FACULTY ADVISER

The faculty adviser shall serve as a resource person and provide advisory support for the officers and members of SPJ. The faculty adviser shall be voted upon by the SPJ Executive Board, or all members holding an office. The faculty adviser will serve a term of one (1) academic year. In the event that the faculty advisor is unable to continue in their position, a professor in the College of Journalism and Communications will be temporarily appointed to faculty adviser while the Executive Board searches for an official adviser, or someone who wishes to oversee the organization for the rest of the year.

ARTICLE IX. FINANCE

All members are required to pay a membership fee of \$46 when joining SPJ. \$36 of the total sum is deemed as national dues, while the remaining \$10 are the local fees. The membership fee is collected annually.

All members who have either paid dues or had them waived have full rights and privileges, including voting rights.

ALL DUES AND ANY OTHER FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION WILL BE KEPT EITHER WITH THE JOURNALISM DEPARTMENT AND/OR IN AN INTEREST BEARING CHECKING ACCOUNT, subject to random audit by the Society President or Faculty Adviser.

Any case of missing funds or other impropriety will be investigated by the President or Vice President. In the event that just cause exists, the matter will be turned over to the appropriate authorities in Student Government, University Police and/or Student Judicial Affairs.

ARTICLE X. DISSOLUTION OF ORGANIZATION

In the event this organization dissolves, all monies left in the treasury, after outstanding debts and claims have been paid, shall be donated to the national Society of Professional Journalists Legal Defense Fund.

ARTICLE XI. MEETINGS

- The President shall call a meeting of the SPJ at least nine times each calendar year. The meetings can be any time except during sanctioned vacations or breaks.**
- The meeting day and time will be based upon the convenience of a majority of the members.**
- Minutes will be taken by either the Secretary or someone else acting in their absence.**
- The meetings will take place within the College of Journalism and Communications building.**
- A meeting may be cancelled if appropriate to do so. Notification will be given within 24 hours whenever possible.**
- In the event that the monthly meeting involves a visiting speaker of interest to the University, the meeting will be open for anyone interested to attend.**

ARTICLE XII. MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

- Has and maintains a minimum cumulative Grade Point Average of 2.0**
- Is enrolled and stays enrolled in a minimum of 12 credit hours in the fall and spring semesters, if registered**
- Not be in any sort of academic or conduct probation**
- Pays dues in full or has the obligation waived for financial hardship reasons**

Any member wishing to discontinue status as a member may do so at any time by giving the Secretary a brief, written statement explaining the individual's reasons for leaving SPJ. However, no dues will be refunded.

ARTICLE XIII. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

Any changes to the constitution must be voted upon by the SPJ Executive Board. Changes will be made if there is a majority vote. All changes will be submitted immediately to the Center for Student Activities and Involvement in writing for review and approval.