

Daily Planet

Code of Ethics

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Preamble

The First Amendment protects freedom of expression. The United States Supreme Court almost, without exception, has reinforced that freedom. That freedom demands media responsibility, with priority assigned to certain standards of fairness and integrity.

The *Daily Planet* is an organization created to provide fair, informative, responsible and professional coverage of the planet. We hope to help inform the world in order to make it a better place.

Objective

The *Daily Planet* strives to be a professional, balanced news source for the world. The long-term objective of the *Daily Planet* is to reach a larger audience and eventually compete on a planetary scale.

Article I: Responsibility

Gathering and distributing news and opinion is designed to serve the community of which the *Daily Planet* is a part by enabling readers and others to fairly judge pending issues and keep them informed. Staff members should attempt to identify with those who may suffer from unfair coverage or comments, and in their actions should fairly represent the full array of experiences and perspectives present in our diverse community.

1. News print policies
 - a. The *Daily Planet* staff members are required to verify the accuracy of all information gathered and present it objectively. *The Daily Planet* will strive to fairly cover competing candidates or interests. Quotations should be used in the context they were presented. The staff should present questionable material to the Editor-in-Chief or the Publisher.
 - b. Columnists and opinion writers should adhere to the same standards of accuracy as other staff members.

2. Visual policies

- a. Photographs and graphics are to inform, not mislead. Any visuals should be used to inform our audience, not confuse. Photos and graphics are to be accurate and comprehensive in the representation of subjects.
- b. The *Daily Planet* does not digitally alter photos beyond minor adjustments. On the occasion that a photo is altered beyond minor adjustments, the photo will be labeled as a photo illustration.
- c. In photographing news, the *Daily Planet* does not stage or reenact events. Staff members will not alter, seek to alter or influence events.

3. Sources

- a. Unnamed or anonymous sources will not be allowed unless there is an overriding concern for the source's safety, whether it be physical, emotional or financial. The usage of anonymous sources should be treated delicately and must always be approved by the Editor-in-Chief and made known to the faculty adviser. The Editor-in-Chief will make the decision of whether or not to use the source.
- b. The *Daily Planet* will rarely publish an anonymous source, so the reporter should make every attempt to verify the source's information with another source.
- c. While we seldom use anonymous sources, staff members need to know that we can never promise complete confidentiality. The *Daily Planet* will keep the identity of an anonymous source confidential until we are forced to reveal it by a judge.
- d. Statements given off the record are exactly that. Knowledge gained from such statements is only to be used to further the reporter's understanding and should never be published.
- e. The *Daily Planet* will not publish a minor's name without authorization from a legal guardian, unless it's a felony or public knowledge.

4. Suspects and victims

- a. The *Daily Planet* does not, in general, print the name(s) of any victim or suspect in an ongoing investigation without their consent. In cases of sensitive crimes, The *Daily Planet* will not print the name of a victim or suspect unless given permission. If the suspect is a public figure, or if it would be beneficial to our audience to release a name, the Editor-in-Chief has discretion to use it. The *Daily Planet* will never publish the name of a criminal suspect until they have been charged with a crime.

5. Deadlines and meetings

- a. Each deadline (Art, content, etc.) is to be set by the Editor-in-Chief. The Editor-in-Chief also sets the deadline for each story. These deadlines are to be followed precisely and taken with the utmost sincerity.

- b. Meetings, such as budget and editorial, are to be set by the Editor-in-Chief. Potentially, staff meetings will be required for all employees to attend.
6. Interviews
- a. Any *Daily Planet* contributor, writer, creator, staff member, etc. will respect the privacy and wishes of any subject interviewed.
 - b. The *Daily Planet* contributor, writer, creator, staff member, etc. recognizes the importance of ethical reporting and will compose themselves in a respectful and professional way.
 - c. The *Daily Planet* does not accept bribes, compensation or any other form of reward when reporting and interviewing. Any party found to do so is subject to possible termination from the *Daily Planet*.
 - d. Before attempting to reach out to a subject, any *Daily Planet* contributor, writer, creator, staff member, etc. will pitch the idea to a Managing Editor or Editor-in-chief before reaching out. Some media requests will be reviewed before being sent to any possible subjects.
7. Media Requests
- a. *Daily Planet* contributors, writers, creators, staff members, etc. will run media inquiries by managerial staff before requesting press credentials from any company.
 - b. Each pitch will be edited and thoroughly examined before an inquiry is sent out. Any *Daily Planet* member(s) who fail to practice this could be terminated from the team.

Article II: Media Freedom

Members of the community of which the *Daily Planet* is a part have the freedom to acquire information and scrutinize opinion. In remaining responsible and accountable to our community, the *Daily Planet* must defend this freedom against encroachment.

Article III: Accuracy

News must be accurate in context and fair. All sides must be presented fairly. Opinion should also be accurate with respect to facts, but points of view may be expressed freely without fear of retribution. Significant factual errors, as well as errors of omission, should be corrected promptly.

1. Conflicts of interest
- a. If staff members feel they may have a conflict of interest, in any form, they are required to present said conflict to the Editor-in-Chief.
 - b. The *Daily Planet* encourages each staff member to be involved in other facets of their community, but they must always keep the Editor-in-Chief aware of such potential conflicts. Involvement, in any form, with an organization should be made clear, in writing, to the Editor-in-Chief.

- c. Staff members may belong to other organizations, but generally may not be officers in that organization and shall not contribute to goal-setting or policy-setting.
 - i. No staff member may cover (report, photograph, edit) an organization to which they belong.
 - ii. No staff member should be involved in any way with a protest/riot if they are covering the event for publication.
 - iii. No varsity athlete should report on any other varsity sports.
 - iv. No staff member may cover (report, photograph, etc.) their friends or coworkers. If there is a personal relationship, the staff member must bring that to the Editor-in-Chief.
- d. Exceptions may be granted by the Editor-in-Chief.

2. Expenses and gifts

- a. Employees of the *Daily Planet* should be wary of accepting gifts or receiving discounts due to their relationship with the *Daily Planet*. Items under \$10 may be accepted. Staff members may take part in any gift as long as it is presented to all media.

Article IV: Impartiality

Integrity demands clear distinction between news and opinion. Stories that contain opinion or personal interpretation should be clearly labeled or assigned space identified closely with opinion.

Article V: Integrity and Fairness

The *Daily Planet* should strive for dispassionate handling of controversial subjects. It should provide a form for the exchange of comments and criticism, particularly when such a comment is opposed to its editorial positions.

The *Daily Planet* should report the news without regard for its own interests. It should not give favored news treatment to advertisers or special interest groups, nor should it perpetuate social injustices of any kind.

Fairness in reporting and editing news is the mark of a professional and standard toward which we strive.

No member of the staff will participate in any act of plagiarism, nor falsify source or documentation material.

Traditionally marginalized groups and individuals must not be further marginalized by the news organization's activities.

Article VI: Ownership of Work

Work done for the *Daily Planet* is the property of the *Daily Planet*. Contributors may submit their work for re-publication through another media outlet, but must ensure that the publication recognizes their affiliation with the *Daily Planet*.

Article VII: Social Media

The use of @DailyPlanetDC in a bio is a designation that should only be used by contributors with our Editor-in-chief's written authorization. It implies you are an employee or part of the organization. Correspondents and contributors are freelance employees from outside the company. @DailyPlanetDC is reserved for writers who meet the selected criteria in the Daily Planet's code of ethics.

Article VII: Judgment

No code of ethics can prejudge every situation. Common sense and good judgment are required in applying ethical principles to reality.

Any staff member, continual contributor, or any other content creator that violates these guidelines will face possible termination from *Daily Planet* involvement.

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Zack Benz
Daily Planet Editor-in-chief