



Society of Professional Journalists

@Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism

Society of Professional Journalism Handbook Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism Student Chapter

PURPOSE

The Society of Professional Journalists is an international organization of reporters for broadcast, print, digital media and photojournalists who support each other and provide examples of best practices of journalism. They remind us to hold ourselves to the highest standards of ethics, integrity and getting the story right as well as advocate for the protection of First Amendment and its guarantees of freedom of speech and press.

At the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism we have a student chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, SPJ, which is also the defacto student government. All of the officers are elected at the beginning of the fall term.

ELECTIONS

The officers of this chapter shall be president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, events director, speakers director, publicity director, two webmaster, five part-time representatives, two MA one Ph.D./Knight-Bagehot/computer science representatives, general board members. These officers will constitute the board of the chapter.

THE BOARD

- *Officers*

Most chair a committee and should focus on their own committee and not be a member of another committee. Any officer not chairing a committee may service on one committee along their assigned duties.

- *General Board Members*

Have an equal vote as named officers and may serve on two committees.

- *Committee Members*

Any non-SPJ student may join a committee but only has a vote within the committee.

- *Committees*

The standing committees are: Academic, Community Service, Events, Film | Doc, Fundraising, Membership, Professional Organization Liaisons, Publicity, Speakers, Student Life, Website. Other ad hoc committees can be gathered together as needed.

- *Exec Board*

This is a smaller group of the SPJ that will be called on when quick responses are needed on an item for approval. Also, once a month, this group will meet with the Dean of Students. The Exec Board includes: President | Vice President | Speakers Director | Events Director | Treasurer | Secretary | PT Rep | MA Rep/PhD Rep | Senator

- *Adviser*

SPJ is advised by Rebecca Castillo, a graduate of the school who has been advising SPJ for many years. She handles all room and AV reservations for events at the Jscool once they have been approved by the committee's chair via submission of the event request form. She reconciles the SPJ bank account signs the SPJ checks.

MEETINGS

- *All board meetings*

These are held once a week during the fall semester and once every two weeks during the spring semester. The president runs these meetings (or vice president in his absence).

- *Committee meetings*

The chairs choose how often and the method they are organized. (Face-to-face, email, etc.) The chairs report at the All board meeting about planning and projects happening within the committees.

- *Calendar Meetings*

An SPJ board member must attend monthly calendar meetings held by the school's department of communications and events.

MEMBERSHIP

- *Membership Eligibility*

Membership is restricted to currently enrolled students at the Journalism School. All Journalism students must be eligible to join regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender or age.

- *Academic Standing/Participation Eligibility*

SPJ members, including those in leadership roles within the group, must be in good academic standing. Those who have been placed on Academic Warning or Academic Probation by the Dean of Students Office for poor performance in a particular class may not actively participate in, plan or attend SPJ events until they have fulfilled the requirements to be removed from the academic discipline status.

SPJ LISTSERV

SPJ has a listserv set up for all board members and includes Dean Melanie Huff (spj-board@lists.jrn.columbia.edu). Rebecca Castillo is the administrator and can add or remove members although everyone on the list can send messages. Please use discretion when sending out messages. The email address you registered your nomination will be used for the listserv, you can send messages from that address. There is also an exec board listserv (spjexec@lists.jrn.columbia.edu). The Exec Board includes: President | Vice President | Speakers Director | Events Director | Treasurer | Secretary | PT Rep | MA Rep/PhD Rep | Senator. Only these people can send and receive emails on this listserv.

BUDGET

SPJ begins with \$500 that is left from the prior class. This money is used for the first couple of months, until fundraising efforts begin in October. (See under Fundraising committee for fundraising possibilities.) Your treasurer will create a Budget Approval Form requests as well a Reimbursement Form. Our banking is not within the school but at an outside banking institution. For this reason we work old school with using only checks. Because selling clothing tends to push students to want to use credit cards, SPJ has PayPal account tied to our bank account. But remember PayPal takes a % for every transaction made. If you will be spending any money to get reimbursed, you will need the treasurer's and president's approval. To be reimbursed you will need to fill out the reimbursement form and include the receipt. No reimbursements will be made without the form and receipt. It is the chapter's responsibility to budget \$500 to be left for the following class. ***SPJ does NOT pay for any speakers.***

CREATING AN EVENT

Overview

It should be SPJ's goal to do most of the calendaring of events at the beginning of each semester BUT realistically about 40% of the events will be preplanned. Ideally you should request to hold an event no fewer than 10 days in advance of the event. It takes time to get reservations, permission and publicity.

If you are going to organize an event this is what you have to do:

- Need to plan and get an approved budget (possible room costs).
- Organize the project leader (usually a committee chair but can be a committee member, it must be made clear at the beginning of the project).

- Check the Jschool calendar so you can make sure it doesn't interfere with any other event.
- Request a room.
- Request AV
- Contact the Publicity Director

To begin you must fill out the SPJ event request form at <http://bit.ly/SPJreservation>.

- **Calendaring**

The Jschool official calendar is on the Jschool's website under *Events*. Make sure there is no other event at that time before submitting the event request form. NO SPJ event can overlap with another event. All start/end times must be clear from another event.

- **All events must be in an ADA COMPLAINT SPACE**

All venues (including private spaces) must be ADA accessible. To determine if a location is ADA compliant, you need to submit this form 10 days in advance so that the venue can be reviewed by the ODS office:

http://health.columbia.edu/files/healthservices/pdf/disability_Venue_Accessibility_Surveya.pdf

- **Requesting a room at the Jschool**

There is no charge to use the classrooms or the Stabile Student Center, you only need to make sure the room is available.

If you want to reserve a room you must fill out the event request form at <http://bit.ly/SPJreservation>. If your turn-around is tight send a message to the SPJ Adviser Rebecca Castillo at rc73@columbia.edu to alert her of the quick turnaround needed. She will a room request on your behalf. Turn around time is 48 hours. A note about using the World Room or Lecture Hall. To use these two rooms, the SPJ adviser must be in attendance. If it's a large scaled event, SPJ may be able to cosponsor it with another department within the school.

- **Room Setup**

If you need to have the room furniture rearranged you will need to have CU facilities move the furniture. There is a union facility charge of \$250. This charge is a UNIVERSITY charge not a Jschool charge, there must be money in the budget to have this done.

- **AV request**

The SPJ adviser will request any AV needs. In the classrooms, projection of a laptop and/or DVD is possible, in the student lounge, projection of a laptop, a DVD as well as television (with standard cable) is available as well as ONE microphone. AV requests are made via the event request form at <http://bit.ly/SPJreservation>

COMMUNICATION

On Facebook

Facebook is the official communication of SPJ to the class. The President, Vice President, Publicity Director, will be added as administrators to the group. All committees must go through the Publicity Director to post official SPJ events. Since Facebook is an official mode of communication (and has CU administrators in the group) we have to adhere to the rules of Columbia University.

Therefore, SPJ is not allowed to mention the following in descriptions for events: alcohol, beer, drinks, happy hour, top shelf or cocktails or anything alluding to alcohol. When sending information to the Publicity Director to post on Facebook, you must provide the following information:

- What the event is and who's involved.
- Who it's for and if there's an RSVP needed.
- Cost (if any).
- Where and when info
- To whom to direct questions?
- ADA compliance language

All Class Emails

SPJ adviser Rebecca Castillo is the only one who can send an all-class email on behalf of SPJ. These messages must be sent sparingly and for anything that affects the ENTIRE CLASS.

All email messages must be written out and include the following information:

- What the event is and who's involved.
- Who it's for and if there's an RSVP needed.
- Cost (if any).
- Where and when info
- To whom to direct questions?
- ADA compliance language

*The SPJ advisers needs 24 hours notice before you want it sent out so the information in your message can be fact checked.

ALCOHOL POLICY

Events at Journalism School.

- Events must have an academic or cultural focal point.
- There can be no cover charge or alcohol on sale at student group events.
- There must be a security guard present at all events with alcohol. The student group is responsible for the associated costs.
- Only currently-enrolled Journalism students may attend events with alcohol and IDs must be checked for Journalism School student status.
- Only one drink at a time may be served to each person.
- No visibly intoxicated person may be served alcohol.
- If there are any Journalism students under the age of 21 enrolled at the time of the event (check with the Office of Student Affairs), a trained alcohol event proctor must be present to check for proof of age for all attendees.

- The group adviser or other JSchool prof/dean/administrator must attend an event at which alcohol will be served. It is the responsibility of the group to book someone.
- Alcohol Training: Student groups who plan on serving alcohol at an event must have at least one group representative who is 21 years of age or older attend alcohol training. That individual must be present throughout the duration of the event and must abstain from consuming alcohol during the event. Preregistration for the training is not required. For a schedule of alcohol training sessions, visit the University Event Management website.

Events off campus

- No student event is allowed in the J-school building where the sole purpose of the event is to consume alcohol this equals to no happy hours in the building.
- All happy hours must be at an outside establishment that holds proper liquor licenses, and verifies customers' ages.

Publicizing events with alcohol:

- For flyers, the school calendar, school emails
NO MENTION of alcohol, or happy hours is allowed.
- For Facebook

We are allowed to publicize happy hours but with only the name of the establishment and the address. NO MENTION of alcohol or prices lists for drinks is allowed. It is implied with the words "Happy Hour" the drinks will be cheaper than usually.

PEOPLE YOU NEED TO KNOW

- *Student Affairs*

Ernest Sotomayor and Melanie Huff, (no intro necessary) — will fight on our behalf to the rest of the school.

Chanel Roche & Evelyn Corchado — they can help you with details like how many students there are in this graduating class and connect you to all the diversity groups at the J-School.

- *Dept. of Communication*

Elizabeth Fishman, associate dean — we may have to coordinate with her on programming that includes outside people.

Lauren Schaefer, manager of special events — she coordinates the daily and weekly emails to the students body.

Aimee Vitrak, web editor— she monitors at the elevator banks and manages the all school calendar.

- *Building*

Scott Osborn — he is the building manager and can be contacted for big event set up questions.

Thaddeus Craddock, Derek Gano and David Miller — they work in the mailroom and will give you access to a storage closet, boxes and tables for events.

SPJ COMMITTEES

Academic Committee

This committee is headed by the Vice President and it fulfills the needs of the student body of all things academic.

The chair must meet with Dean for Academic Affairs and also arrange an appearance with him/her at an SPJ meeting.

The chair must file a report each semester.

Some events from the past:

- Academic Debate (included President Bollinger)
- Town Meetings (includes all of the deans to meet with the student body)

Community Service

This committee works to fill the need of giving back to the community. Projects can be self-initiated or cosponsored with other community initiative groups.

The chair must file a report each semester.

Some projects from the past:

- Military care packages
- Volunteering at soup kitchens
- Can food/clothes drives
- Teaching journalism to junior high students

Event committee

This committee works to provide events and opportunities for students to improve their personal lives. Most events happen in the building or around campus. This committee is also in charge of organizing the annual Lucille's Ball Roast & Toast and dance.

The chair must file a report each semester.

Some events from the past:

- Lucille's Ball
- "Adult gatherings"
- Gallery crawls
- Fashion week parties
- Karaoke battles

Film | Documentary Committee

This committee works to provide events screenings that are related to films or documentaries for students. The screenings can be used as study breaks or as a way to showcase documentaries. Documentarians have been invited to speak about their work.

The chair must file a report each semester.

Some events from the past:

- Screening of documentaries with Q&A with filmmakers
- Superbowl party
- Oscar party
- Worked out passes to Tribeca Film Festival for some students

Fundraising

The largest fundraising project is sweatshirts and it's coordinated through the Swag/Fundraising Committee. They organize how they receive the submissions and narrow down the choices and bring it to the board for a vote. In case of any indecisiveness or a tie, the final decision remains with the Treasurer. The same goes for the class motto, since it gets printed on a T-shirt, the Fundraising Committee is in charge of organizing the submissions and voting for the motto. General timeline is October for sweatshirts and March for T-shirts. Asking businesses or other organizations for funding is not feasible because we cannot accept funds on behalf of the University as a tax-deductible gift, which is a requirement for most funders. Our experience is that SPJ is able to attract stellar local speakers and host terrific, well-attended events without providing honoraria, food, drinks or gifts to speakers. Columbia University mandates that anything manufactured with the Columbia University name must be produced by a University approved vendor, the treasurer will have the official list.

Membership Committee

The Membership director is in charge of assuring that the Columbia chapter upholds the requirements to be considered a national chapter. This includes holding three programs, filing an annual report each year and making sure that everyone is a member of the national organization.

- File an annual report, including a review of chapter finances, by the annual deadline.
- Conduct at least three programs in the year covered by the annual report that further the Society's mission — including freedom of information, ethics, diversity, professional development and locally important issues.
- Programs must involve a number of chapter members and engage the broader journalism community in the chapter's geographic territory. A board meeting does not qualify as one of the three programs.
- Send representatives to the regional conference or the national convention. A chapter must seek a waiver from the regional director if it cannot send a representative to either the regional conference or the national convention. National fee is \$37.50 plus \$5 chapter fee.

Professional organization liaisons

This committee networks with the professional journalism organizations in New York City on behalf of the Jscool student body. They liaison between the different SPJ

committees to help find speakers, find out event opportunities to attend, as well as job opportunities, freelance, and mentoring possibilities.

The Deadline Club (The official NYC SPJ chapter) works very closely with these liaisons. You must work with the other infinity groups so there is no major overlap in communication with their groups.

Some events from the past:

- Work with the speakers committee to bring speakers to the school.
- Organize an event with Deadline Club members to resume workshop with current students.
- Barter with professional groups to get students to attend their organization event if they volunteered at the event.

Speakers Committee

This committee works to bring speakers to the school. Most will be in the journalism field, others will be an expert in a field that is important to the student body or a current news story. SPJ does NOT pay for any speakers. We can have one speaker a month. We have to coordinate with groups that organize speakers (Career Services, DART, DOS, Communications, Academics, JSchool student associations) The chair must file a report each semester.

Some speakers from the past:

- Noam Chomsky
- Ira Glass
- Christiane Amanpour
- Anderson Cooper
- Robert Firske

Student Life Committee

This committee works to provide events and opportunities for students to improve their personal lives. Most events happen in the building or around campus.

The chair must file a report each semester.

Some events from the past:

- Ice cream social
- Back massages
- Intramural sports
- Picnics
- Quiz night
- Yoga

Web Master/Website

The webmasters work to create and UPDATE the current SPJ website. They maintain the look and content.

Included on past web sites:

- SPJ events and projects promoted

- Columns about being a Jschool student
- Columns about state of journalism

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS AND POLICIES

1. Alcohol Statement: Columbia University is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that is free. The University complies with New York State law and other applicable regulations governing alcoholic beverages for those on the University's premises or participating in its activities. The University strongly supports education and treatment programs as the most effective means to help prevent and reduce alcohol abuse. In addition, Columbia University is committed to providing an academic and social environment that supports individual freedom while promoting individual responsibility, health and safety, and community welfare. To that end: Columbia expects that those who wish to include alcohol as part of their activities will do so responsibly and lawfully. Responsible drinking includes making sound judgments about whether, when, and how much to drink, understanding the health issues related to the consumption of alcohol, and avoiding excessive or "binge" drinking or any other abuse of alcohol that negatively affects one's academic, work, social, athletic or personal activities, and health. Persons planning events on campus should be mindful of the complexities introduced into planning an event with alcohol. Event management issues the presentation of entertainment, provision of refreshments, management of the participants or audience, security, and other factors require serious attention for any event, and all the more for an event at which alcohol is served. Event organizers must fully understand the University alcohol policy and applicable laws and manage their events accordingly. They also are expected to keep the safety and well being of participants at the forefront of their planning and management of events. Staff members who advise students are expected to assist them in making responsible decisions about their events and to facilitate the enforcement of the University's alcohol policy. Organizations may not plan events that promote or encourage the consumption of alcohol, nor may event planning be based upon the assumption of abusive or illegal alcohol consumption. Persons planning events should remember that the vast majority of events at Columbia take place without alcohol, that most members of the undergraduate community are not of legal drinking age and that among those who are, many do not drink alcoholic beverages at all. Campus organizations that choose to plan events with alcoholic beverages are expected to maintain a reasonable balance in their programming between events with and those without the serving of alcoholic beverages.

2. Drug Statement: Columbia University recognizes the illegality and danger of drug abuse and, accordingly, strictly prohibits the possession, use, manufacture, or distribution of illicit drugs on University premises or as part of any University activity. Columbia affiliates (students and employees) who violate the University's policies concerning illicit drugs will face discipline through their schools or administrative units,

up to and including expulsion or termination of employment, and may also include the requirement of completing an appropriate rehabilitation program. Moreover, all students and employees should be aware that, in addition to University sanctions, they may be subject to criminal prosecution under federal and state laws that specify severe penalties, including fines and imprisonment, for drug-related criminal offenses. The seriousness of these crimes and the penalties imposed upon conviction usually depend upon the individual drug and amount involved in the crime. New York State also provides sanctions for unlawful possession or distribution of illicit drugs. For example, in New York State, unlawful possession of four or more ounces of cocaine is a class A-1 felony, punishable by a minimum of 15–25 years and a maximum of life in prison. Where appropriate or necessary, the University will cooperate fully with law enforcement agencies and may refer students and employees for prosecution.

3. Hazing Statement: Columbia University prohibits any organization from engaging in action that recklessly or intentionally endangers mental or physical health or involves the forced consumption of liquor or drugs for the purposes of initiation into or affiliation with any organization. Pursuant to Section 6450 of the Education Law of the State of New York, the above statement shall be deemed to be part of the bylaws of all organizations registered at SIPA. In addition, all students are expected to adhere to related regulations set forth by their respective inter/national, regional, or local organizations and university policies concerning practices commonly referred to as hazing. Following a proved allegation of hazing, the student organization may lose its registration. Loss of registration may begin immediately after a decision finding hazing is finalized. In New York State hazing is a Class A felony.

4. Disability Access Statement: Columbia University Policy requires that University programs be accessible to students with disabilities. All on and off-campus events must be held in a wheelchair accessible location, approved by the Office of Disability Services (ODS). The Event Registration Form includes the required information for ODS approval. If the venue needs to be reviewed, the Office of Student Affairs will forward the information to the appropriate ODS representative. Further, all publications (flyers, email announcements, etc.) advertising events must include an accessibility statement as follows:

“Columbia University makes every effort to accommodate individuals with disabilities. If you require disability accommodations to attend this event, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 212-854-2388 or disability@columbia.edu at least 10 days in advance of the event.”

Publications should also include locations and instructions for using the accessible entrance, if applicable and information about any accommodations that are pre-arranged for all participants

(e.g. ASL interpreters, large print materials, etc.). Additional information can be found in the Policy Statement on the Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action website:
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/vpaa/eoaa/docs/disability.htm>