

## **Code of Ethics**

*The Correspondent* is a newspaper geared to effectively cover the news of IU Kokomo as accurately as possible. *The Correspondent* strives to present the news of all members of the IU Kokomo community including but not limited to students, faculty, administrators, staff, the board of the trustees, alumni and friends of the university. This newspaper aspires to be a soundboard for the students of IU Kokomo as it is the only media present on campus that is considered “the student voice of the IU Kokomo campus.” This organization must be permitted to operate without undue influence or control by any one of its constituent groups.

As the only student-run media, *The Correspondent* is a valuable asset to the IU Kokomo community. *The Correspondent* is an outlet for the students and a way to bring to the attention of the students regarding campus issues or world issues that they may not be aware of. In the same time, student concerns are also brought to the attention of the faculty and administration. The paper aspires to act as a forum for all parties interested in voicing their opinions or concerns about issues with IU Kokomo or other relevant concerns. *The Correspondent* staff members make all decisions regarding content and all are responsible for content.

Adherence to a journalism code of ethics will lead to a greater credibility and help *The Correspondent* fulfill its mission of covering the news as unbiased and equally as possible.

These guidelines apply to all members of *The Correspondent*.

### **1. Free Travel or Gifts**

A reporter should not accept any gift or free travel of any kind that will or can influence their non-bias free reporting. Any gift should be returned to the sender or given to a charity. If the gift is of no significant value, such as a small food item or pen, the staff member may retain the gift. The editor will determine on a case by case basis whether individuals may keep such items permanently.

### **2. Free tickets, passes, discounts**

Staffers assigned to cover a sporting event, lecture, play, concert, movie, or other entertainment event should pay for admission. Free tickets or passes may be accepted by staff members assigned to cover an event or by those attending for legitimate news purposes. Press facilities at these events may only be used by staff members who are assigned to cover the event. If the staff member assigned to the event contacts the person in charge and can get a free ticket, they may accept the free ticket. Name tags or press badges must be worn during these events. In no event should the use of complimentary tickets or material influence the staff member’s judgment or objectivity.

### **3. Ownership of Books, Records, Other products given for review**

Any materials given to the publication for review becomes the property of the publication and not of any individual staff member. The editor reserves the right to disperse the property in an equitable way.

### **4. Other Employment**

Other employment should not conflict with the staffer's first responsibilities to the publication. The staffer must report any other employment to the editor to avoid any conflicts of interest with assignments or other staff editorial or business responsibilities or influences.

### **5. Membership in Campus Organizations**

Members of the *The Correspondent* staff should report their involvement of campus organizations to the editor.

It is strongly recommended that a member not involved in a particular campus organization cover the event. However, due to the size of the IU Kokomo campus, members may cover a campus organization they belong to if they remain impartial; however, they may not participate in any editorial or business decisions regarding that organization. If the staff member believes they cannot remain impartial, they may provide leads to other staff members. It is recommended with the exception of the photo editor to maintain the role of the press as an independent watchdog of government, a staffer should not be an elected or appointed member of student government. However, due to the size of the campus if they happen to be a member of student government they may not cover anything relating student government. The business manager and the editor-in-chief should not be a part of student government whatsoever. It is really recommend that the editor-in-chief not be a part of any campus organization in order to be considered partial.

### **6. Relationships and Coverage**

Staffers must declare conflicts and avoid involvements in stories dealing with members of their families. Staff members should not cover—in words, photographs, or artwork—or make new judgments about family members or person with whom they have a financial, adversarial or close sexual or platonic relationship. Intra-staff dating is not recommended if one person assigns or evaluates the work of the other person or if one is in a position to promote the other to a higher staff position.

### **7. Use of Alcoholic Beverages While on Assignments**

Even though a staffer may be able to drink legally, no drinking is recommended to avoid any suspicion by a source or the public that the staffer's judgment, credibility or objectivity is impaired by alcohol. Being intoxicated while representing the *The Correspondent* will not be tolerated.

### **8. Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is (verbal) suggestive comments, sexual innuendos, threat, insults, jokes about sex-specific traits, sexual propositions; (nonverbal) vulgar gestures, whistling, leering, suggestive or insulting noises; (physical) touching, pinching, brushing the body, coercing sexual intercourse, assault. This conduct can be called job-related

harassment when submission is made implicitly or explicitly a condition of employment, a condition of work-related assignments, compensation and other factors, or if such conduct interferes with the staffer's performance or creates a hostile, intimidating or offensive work environment. Sexual harassment is prohibited.

#### **9. Plagiarism and Fabrication**

Plagiarism is prohibited and is illegal if the material is copyright protected.

For the purposes of this code, plagiarism is defined as the word-for-word duplication of another person's writing and shall be limited to passages that contain distinctively personal thoughts, uniquely stylized phraseology or exclusive facts. A comparable prohibition applies to the use of graphics. Information obtained from a published work must be independently verified before it can be reported as a new, original story. This policy also forbids lifting verbatim paragraphs from a wire service without attribution or pointing out that wire stories were used in compiling the story. Material that is published online, on the Internet, should be treated in the same way as if it were published in more traditional broadcast media.

The use of composite characters or imaginary situations and/or characters will not be allowed in news or feature stories. A columnist may use such an approach in developing a piece, but it must be clear to the reader that the person and/or situation is fictional and that the column is commentary and not reporting. The growth of narrative story development (storytelling devices) means that reporters and editors should be especially careful not to mix facts and fiction and not embellish fact with fictional details, regardless of their significance.

#### **10. Granting and Preserving Confidentiality to Sources**

Reporters must not promise confidentiality to a source for any reason without the permission of the editor in chief. Confidential sources should be used only in stories of vital public interest.

Confidentiality should only be granted if there is a real danger of physical, emotional or financial harm to the source should the source reveal his or her name. The reporter and editor should have the facts and the source's name before confidentiality is granted.

Confidential sources must be used with care and only when absolutely necessary.

Whenever possible, information given by a confidential source should be confirmed by at least one other credible source.

#### **11. Quoting and depicting staff members**

Working for the *The Correspondent* gives its employees a voice on campus and in the community. Reporters and photographers should avoid quoting or depicting *The Correspondent* staff members. Journalists are obligated to make an effort to identify possible violations before publication. Current *The Correspondent* staff members may be quoted or depicted only when deemed appropriate by the editor in chief. When this is done, the *The Correspondent* staff member must be identified as such.

#### **12. Underlying cultural values and biases**

Examine underlying cultural values and biases that may be in stories, photos or other content and eliminate them. Beneath what is said, there is sometimes an implied cultural

belief. They are not stated in the story, but the reader is required to understand them to get the intended meaning. Such stereotypes are apparent in racial jokes; the prejudices that make racial slurs acceptable in some groups and the biases that make other cultures' heritages seem "abnormal."

### **13. Photo illustration and alteration**

Electronically altering the content of photos for news and general feature stories or as stand-alone news and feature photos is not allowed. Exceptions to this include adjustments to contrast and similar technical enhancements that do not affect the truthfulness of the subject and context of the subject or scene. Content may be altered for creative purposes as a special effect for a feature story if the caption and creditline includes that fact and if the average reader would not mistake the photo for reality. These photos should be tagged as photo illustrations. Readers expect photos and stories to be truthful.

Set-ups or posed scenes may be used if the average reader will not be misled and if the caption and creditline tells readers that it is a photo illustration or re-enactment or re-staging of an event, including award presentations. Recording the original action is always preferred.

### **14. Use of crime photos**

Certain photographs and other graphic presentations of crime or accident news have tremendous impact on those directly involved as well as on readers. The line between acceptable intrusion into people's lives and justified news value can be difficult to determine. Care should be taken to maintain the dignity of the subject as much as possible without undermining the truth of the event, especially in regard to the use of sensitive photographs of local persons involved in such situations.

### **15. Victim/suspect identification**

As soon as a public record, such as an arrest record, is generated, a suspect may be identified. Victim's names may also be published at the time a suspect is charged. Suspects should be identified by age, address and full name.

After publication of an accused person's name, the paper should attempt to follow the case to trial and its conclusion.

The names of rape victims are not published; however some news mediums have asked rape victims to identify themselves for publication. This may be negotiated between the victims and the publication.

### **16. Scrutiny of public figures**

Conflicts exist between a person's desire for privacy and the public good and the public's right to know about a public person's life. Persons who freely choose to become public figures should expect a greater level of scrutiny of their life than a private person. This also includes a person who might find him or herself involved in a public situation. Staffers have the responsibility to make sound judgments based on the real news value of the situation, common sense and decency. Only an overriding public need can justify intrusion into anyone's privacy. One exception is those involved in criminal activity or in

court. In these instances, the reporting must be balanced between a criminal suspect's fair trial rights and with the public's right to be informed.

#### **17. Comment from all sides**

To serve the public through fair, unbiased coverage, reporters should make every effort to research and seek comment from everyone with a direct interest in the story. Should a source be unwilling to comment or unavailable for comment, the story should include that information.

#### **18. Source relations and source fact checking**

On many occasions, news sources might ask for an advance copy of an *The Correspondent* article, graphic, photograph or page design. In order to maintain the integrity and independent news judgment of the *The Correspondent*, such requests are almost always rejected. *The Correspondent* staff members are encouraged to check key quotes and paraphrases and other facts with sources, especially on difficult scientific or technical subjects, to ensure accuracy. But it is against *The Correspondent* policy to give any source prior viewing of any story, graphic, photograph or page design prior to publication.

While journalists must struggle to maintain objectivity and fairness, they must also realize they are dealing with real people who are not unfeeling sources of information. Reporters should treat people with respect and dignity.

Reporters should also realize that most people are unfamiliar with how a newspaper operates and are usually not media savvy. Reporters should be clear and straightforward with such sources to make sure they are aware of what the reporter is doing.

#### **19. Cooperation with police and other university authorities**

To be an effective watchdog on other agencies, a publication must remain independent. The publication should not take over any of the duties of an outside agency; cooperation or involvement in the work of these agencies should be restricted to what is required by law. Staffers should know any freedom of information, open meetings and shield laws that apply to their work. If a staffer thinks any public authority is interfering with the staffer's functions as a journalist, the incident should be reported to the editor. The editor should then seek advice from the publisher, news adviser and/or legal counsel.

#### **20. Obscenity and profanity**

Words, pictures or graphics commonly considered profane or obscene should not be used without careful consideration. They should not be used gratuitously or for shock value. Profanity should only be used in a justifiable, appropriate context and when alternatives have been considered. If used, the words should be used with a hyphen. For example the word damn should be d--.

When a profanity, obscenity or vulgarity is use, flag the story at the top: **Editors: Language in 3<sup>rd</sup> graf may be offensive to some readers.**

#### **Breaking laws**

Staff members should abide by all laws while performing their duties.

The more responsibility a staff member has at the *The Correspondent*, the greater responsibility the staff member has to conduct him or herself professionally. Students must remember they represent the *The Correspondent* on and off the job and act accordingly.

**21. Use of deception**

In the ordinary course of reporting, staffers must represent themselves as an employee of the *The Correspondent*. In extraordinary circumstances, when the editor in chief deems that the information cannot be acquired in any other way and the value of that information to the readers is essential, he or she may authorize a misrepresentation.

Staffers may not steal or knowingly receive stolen materials, except in situations judged by the editor in chief as extraordinary.

It is recommended that a staffer not record an interview or meeting without the interviewee's permission or the obvious placement of a recording device (not hidden) at the start of the interview or meeting in which case the interviewee or newsmakers do not object and are aware of the presence of the recording device.

**22. To help the reader separate fact-based reporting from commentary**, in the form of personal columns, editorials, analysis and similar opinion writing, all commentary should be labeled or somehow clearly and consistently identified as opinion, especially when it is outside the editorial or opinion pages and mixed with fact-based reporting.

**Regarding this code of ethics**

This code was written in 2003 adopted by Christi Hobaugh, Editor-in-Chief, at the time.

This code used the Associated Collegiate Press's "Model Code of Ethics for Collegiate Journalists" and code of ethics from the Indiana Daily Student from Indiana University.

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