

Recommendations of the Board of Student Communication Task Force,
May 13, 2012 (rev October 4, 2012)

Introduction

Drake University has a long and proud history of championing and protecting the free expression rights of students, including freedom of the student press.

The student media provide a voice for students in the affairs of the University and a vehicle for information crucial to an engaged and informed campus community. A neutral, apolitical process for funding student media is essential for ensuring a robust, independent campus media free of the potentially censorial power of the purse strings.

The University Senate in 1969 adopted a policy of editorial freedom, modeled on AAUP guidelines, to which the Board of Student Communications must adhere (“General University Policy, Board Communications”). That policy has been incorporated into the Board’s current Rules and Regulations (see Section VI, H):

Student publications and the student press are a valuable aid in establishing and maintaining an atmosphere of free and responsible discussion and of intellectual exploration on the campus. They are a means of bringing student concerns to the attention of the faculty and institutional authorities, and of formulating student opinion on various issues on the campus and the world at large. **The University will protect editorial freedom and provide sufficient financial autonomy for student publications to maintain their integrity of purpose as vehicles for free inquiry and free expression in an academic community.** *[Emphasis added]*

Executive Summary

- The BSC should be an independent entity (with appropriate safeguards) that reports to the Provost.
- BSC student and faculty members should be appointed, respectively, by the Student and Faculty Senates.
- The Student Activity Fee should be divided by Student Senate into a Student Media Fee of \$35.75 (equivalent to the 2011-2012 BSC funding level) and a fee for student organizations.
- The BSC Reserve Account should be maintained at the 2011-2012 level of \$30,000.00.
- There should be a fair and equitable procedure for reviewing and reevaluating the funding of the BSC which includes the right of appeal and recognizes the primary role of students in determining how student funds are spent yet at the same time respects freedom of inquiry and ensures that the BSC publications operate freely and independently.
- The Recommendations should be listed in the appropriate University documents using consistent language in a manner that prevents any individual body from altering these Recommendations by unilaterally changing its bylaws or regulations.

In order to achieve the above, the BSC Task Force recommends the following:

1. To ensure that the BSC operates independently, Faculty and Student Senate rules and regulations should be reviewed and amended if necessary to ensure they reflect:
 - a. Procedures stated in the BSC Rules and Regulations for the appointment of Student and Faculty members by, respectively, the Student and Faculty Senates.
 - b. Procedures stated in the BSC Rules and Regulations for the appointment of the chair and vice-chair.

2. To ensure that the BSC operates independently, the BSC Rules and Regulations should be reviewed and amended if necessary to ensure they include
 - a. A listing of the official BSC organizations.
 - b. Procedures for the appointment of membership by the Student and Faculty Senate.
 - c. Procedures for the appointment of the BSC chair and vice-chair.
 - d. Procedures for reporting to the Provost.
 - e. Procedures for issuing yearly reports to the Student and Faculty Senates.
 - f. Procedures for making the BSC monthly budget reports available to the Student and Faculty Senates.
 - g. Procedures for periodic review of the Student Media Fee consistent with the recommendations in Item #4 of this report.
 - h. Procedures for automatic review of the Student Media Fee (see Item #4).
 - i. The Student (or Faculty) Senate President chair may request that the Chair or Vice-Chair of the BSC attend a particular Student (or Faculty) Senate meeting.
 - j. A statement that the BSC will exercise sound financial stewardship and abide by University financial procedures.
 - k. A statement describing the nature and operations of the BSC Reserve Account.

3. A BSC Policy Document should be placed on the University Policies Page containing the following:
 - a. Beginning with the 2013-2014 Academic Year, the Student Media Fee shall be \$35.75, and the BSC Reserve Account shall be capped at \$30,000.00.
 - b. The procedures for changing and reviewing the Student Media Fee stated in Section 4 below.
 - c. A statement that the BSC is an independent body over which no one body can assert control.
 - d. Student and Faculty Senates have jurisdiction over the actions of the BSC only to the extent explicitly stated in the BSC Rules and Regulations and the BSC Policy Document.
 - e. A statement that the BSC will report to the office of the Provost, who will consult with the Student and Faculty Senate Presidents as necessary.

- f. A statement that the BSC may amend its own Rules and Regulations subject to the approval of one of the following:
 - i. The Provost, who will consult with the Student and Faculty Senate presidents, or
 - ii. A vote by two-thirds of the voting membership of the BSC (and not two-thirds of votes cast) and simple majorities (of votes cast) of both the Student and Faculty Senates.
 - g. The BSC Policy Document can be amended by a vote by two-thirds of the voting membership of the BSC (and not two-thirds of votes cast) and simple majorities (of votes cast) of both the Student and Faculty Senates.
4. Recommended review procedures:
- a. The approval of two out of three bodies among the BSC, the Student Senate and the Faculty Senate shall be required before any reduction in the Student Media Fee or BSC Reserve Account can be made. Two-thirds of the total number of BSC voting members (and not two-thirds of votes cast) would constitute approval by the BSC if it were one of the two bodies that voted to reduce the Student Media Fee or BSC Reserve Account; simple majorities (of votes cast) of Student Senate and/or Faculty Senate would constitute their respective approval.
 - b. The Student Media Fee and BSC Reserve Account could be increased by a majority of the voting members of the BSC and a simple majority of the Student Senate. The request for an increase would be heard on the floor of the Student Senate in an up or down vote and would not be referred to SFAC.
 - c. Should the Student Senate seek an increase in the Student Activity Fee, the BSC and the Student Senate will jointly review and reevaluate the Student Media Fee and BSC Reserve Account.
 - d. Every five years a joint committee of the BSC and the Student and Faculty Senates (with equal membership from the BSC, Student Senate and Faculty Senate) shall be appointed to review the Student Media Fee and BSC Reserve Account. This review should take into account such things as
 - i. Whether the Student Media Fee and BSC Reserve Account are sufficient to meet the operational needs of the BSC organizations.
 - ii. The budgetary practices of the BSC.
 - iii. Changes in operational costs such as (but not limited to) staff salaries, printing and technology needs.
 - e. The Student Media Fee and BSC Account will also be reviewed by a joint committee of the BSC and the Student and Faculty Senates (with equal membership from the BSC, Student Senate and Faculty Senate) under the following conditions:
 - i. A change in the number of the BSC organizations or the frequency of publication.
 - ii. Upon the demand of two out of three bodies among the BSC, the Student Senate and the Faculty Senate should unusual circumstance arise such as (but not limited to) a significant change in the

distribution schedule of one of the BSC organizations or a significant budgetary deficit or surplus.

- f. The BSC has the right to appeal the outcome of any of the above review processes (i.e., those discussed in 4.c, 4.d and 4.e) to binding arbitration by a panel appointed by the Dean of the Law School.
5. Other recommendations:
- a. Should the Student and Faculty Senates endorse these Recommendations, we also recommend that the Provost extend the term of BSC Task Force so it can facilitate the enactment of the Recommendations and ensure that there is consistent language regarding the BSC in the following documents: the Faculty Senate Rules and Regulations, the Student Senate Bylaws, the BSC Rules, the BSC Policy Document and other appropriate University documents.
 - b. The greatest source of tension with the BSC funding arises from the fact that student fees are used to fund the BSC. If the BSC organizations could be funded by an independent trust set up by the University, these tensions could be completely avoided in a manner that ensures freedom of inquiry by the BSC organizations.
 - c. We would applaud a BSC decision to equalize its membership at three student voting members, three faculty voting members and two non-voting chairs.

Submitted to Acting Provost, Susan Wright, by the BSC Task Force (May 2012) and Provost Dee Jones (November, 2012):

Jan Wise (Director of Student Leadership Programs, ex officio member, BSC)

Sean Walsh (Journalism Student Senator, Vice-Chair, BSC, 2011-12)

Stephen Slade (Student Senate Technology Senator, BSC, 2011-12)

Bart Schmidt (Associate Professor, Librarianship, Cowles, BSC Member)

Kathleen Richardson (Associate Professor, Journalism)

Amanda Laurent (Student Senate President 2012-2013)

Gregory Larson (Student Senate President 2011-2012)

Lauren Horsch (Editor in Chief, *Times Delphic*)

Rebecca Mataloni (Journalism Student Senator, Vice-Chair, BSC 2012-13)

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Dan Alexander, Chair (Department of Mathematics, Chair BSC)