

# The Huntington News

# Correspondent manual

**Welcome to The Huntington News.** The following is meant to serve as a go-to manual for newcomers to the paper. It contains basic information about The News, our style and some common challenges new writers face. We hope it helps you out. However, if you ever have questions, concerns or suggestions, don't hesitate to get in touch with your mentor, section editor, managing editor, editor-in-chief or the recruitment manager – or anybody else in the newsroom. We don't bite and we're all here to help!

## About The News

Formerly called The Northeastern News, we have been a student publication since 1926. We have always been self-supported through advertising revenue. During summer 2008, we moved from a room in the Curry Student Center to an office on Huntington Avenue. We also transitioned from being an on-campus student group to an independent community newspaper and small business, and changed our name to The Huntington News.

The News is located at **295 Huntington Ave., suite 205**. The entrance to the building is in between BHOP and Symphony Market. The front door is open Monday through Saturday until 8 p.m. On Sundays, call a member of e-board in order to get into the building.

During the fall and spring, we have a circulation of 5,400 and publish on Thursdays. We hold story budget meetings (where you come to get a story assignment) every Monday at 7 p.m., and photo budget meetings at the same time. During the summer, we have a circulation of 5,000 and publish every other Wednesday. The paper consists of five year-round sections:

- News
- Editorial
- Inside (arts and entertainment)
- Sports
- Special Interest (a year-round rotation of Food & Restaurants, Fashion& Style and Sex & Health)
- City Pulse (fall and spring only)

We are always looking for new writers, copy editors, photographers, designers and advertising representatives. You don't have to have newspaper experience or be a journalism major to write for The News, and all Northeastern undergraduates are welcome, so bring your friends!

## Important News policies

**The following points are extremely important. If a source requests that you break one of the following policies, please politely explain The News' policy. If the source persists, refer him/her to the managing editor or editor-in-chief.**

- Every student quoted must have a full name, year of graduation and major (i.e. "Blah blah blah," said Joe Bob, a middler journalism major). In Sports, every player must have a year and position (i.e. "We gave 110 percent," said Sue Jo, a senior forward.)
- Check, double-check and triple-check the spelling of names! Misspelling a name is journalism's cardinal sin. People have all crazy ways of spelling even the most typical names, so don't be afraid to ask. Write it and have them look at it, or make them spell it into your tape-recorder. NAMES ARE IMPORTANT! Put a CQ (check) next to names you've checked.
- Every Huntington News story must have at least two sources (preferably three). Please get full quotes (no "It was good" or "I liked it").
- The News does NOT send copies of questions to the interviewee prior to the interview.
- The News does NOT send copies of completed stories to our subjects for review prior to publication.
- The News does NOT conduct interviews via e-mail. Phone interviews or in-person meetings are acceptable. There are a few cases where we can break this rule, so if your source insists on an e-mail interview, please check with your section editor.
- All anonymous sources must be approved by your section editor, managing editor and editor-in-chief. Do not grant anonymity to sources before consulting your section editor.
- Don't interview your friends. That's not a good representation of the student body, and is actually pretty biased. If you're looking for students, you can scope out the Curry Student Center, Snell Library, the Marino Center, Centennial Commons or a number of other places.
- Once you have identified yourself as a reporter and somebody starts talking to you, he/she is on the record. There are no "backsies" in journalism and somebody, particularly an "expert source," cannot give you information and then say, "That was off the record."

Please use the rest of this information as a go-to guide, but rely heavily on your mentor when you have questions. You must use the mentor process for your first three stories with The News. If you were not assigned a mentor, tell your editor.

# Writing your story

Before you start your story, sit down with your mentor and lay out a game plan. What is the story about? How does it connect to Northeastern? What are the different sides of the story? Who do you need to talk to from each side? When will you talk to them? What will you ask them? Your mentor should be your go-to person for any questions you might have about your story or how to prepare for it, but use this guide as a quick reference.

## Getting your sources

*Note: Make sure to check the section on anonymous sources in The News Code of Ethics a few sections below.*

### Man-on-the-street sources

In our case, man-on-the-street sources are most often meant to gauge student reaction to a particular issue, event, trend or idea. What does an average student think? What's the vibe on campus? It's a good idea to ask at least five people and choose three good quotes, then paraphrase the trend of what people are saying.

- Don't intimidate people with an overly formal tone, but be professional. Generally it's nice to ask people if they have some time to talk before you begin asking them questions. Tell them your name, that you're from The Huntington News and it will only take a few minutes of their time. A nice little "How are you?" never hurt anybody, either.
- GET FULL QUOTES! Full sentences, complete thoughts, and so on. We have tons of reporters' notebooks for you - OR you could invest in a crappy \$15 tape recorder at Best Buy or CVS. It might not look nice, but it will serve you well.
- If you're ever stuck and people keep giving you "yes" and "no" answers, ask your subject "WHY?" It's a simple question that forces people to come up with more creative answers.

### "Expert" sources

In our case, expert sources are most often professors or administrators.

- GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR SOURCES AS SOON AS YOU GET YOUR STORY! This will help you out. People - especially professors and administrators - are busy, and sometimes it's hard to get in touch with them and coordinate time for an interview, even if it's brief. You don't have to have all your questions prepared to call or e-mail a source to set up an interview.
- When setting up an interview, please be professional. No "heys" or "dudes." Feel free to copy and paste this sucker:

SUBJECT LINE: Admissions story for The Huntington News

Professor Smith,

My name is Robert Bearington and I write for the Huntington News. I'm writing a story about the Northeastern admissions process and I was hoping you might have a few minutes to talk to me about the subject.

Please let me know some times that are good for you and a number that I can reach you at, or feel free to give me a call at 555-666-7777. Thank you.

Best,

Robert

## Basic style and story structure

*Note: Make sure to look over The News Style Guide before writing your story!*

As you know, newspaper writing is very different from essay-writing or fiction. So, follow the inverted pyramid: important information at the top, less important stuff at the bottom. Start off with the relevant and timely material, and move into background information and points of interest.

The most important stuff should go in your lede (pronounced like the verb "lead"), the first sentence of your story. Try to cover "who, what, when, where, why and how" in your lead, while still making it concise as possible.

On the topic of being concise, BE CONCISE! Remember: The less words, the better. Cut out anything that is unnecessary to the meaning of the sentence or the story.

Grafts are rarely more than three sentences.

Our style is not to stack quotes (as in, two or more consecutive paragraphs of quotes, whether they be from different people or the same person). Please make sure your transition in between quotes is more thorough than "Ryan agreed."

Finally, read your story in the paper the next day, and look at what changes were made. You will get a good idea for what usually gets cut from stories in order to keep them concise, as well as other changes for style. If you have any questions about why something got changed, please don't hesitate to contact your section editor. We've ALL experienced picking up the paper in the morning and seeing changes that to our work that we disagree with - whether it be at The News, a co-op or elsewhere - but everything gets changed for a reason. This is a student newspaper and a learning process, and we're here to help!

# Code of ethics

## Preamble

In journalism we are faced with ethical decisions nearly every day. They are sometimes black and white, but more often subtle and difficult. In a field where privacy and sensitivity tug constantly against the public's right to know, we must always be soul-searching and making sometimes painful decisions. This is particularly difficult in a college setting, where the people we cover are also the people we see in class, at the gym, or even in the buildings where we live. The line between what should be held up to public scrutiny and what should not is also often blurry. These guidelines will not cover every situation we encounter as student journalists, but they are our standards, and a guide for making the ethical decisions we invariably face.

## Truthfulness

A newspaper is nothing without its credibility. We therefore strive constantly to uphold the complete truth in all that we do. We do not omit significant facts or distort the truth. We do not fabricate sources or quotes. We do not quote sources out of context or distort their meaning. If mistakes are made, we promptly and fully acknowledge them.

## Fairness

We are fair. As reporters, we consider the fairness of our stories before we send them in. We ensure that we have represented all sides, and used their quotes fairly. As editors, we check for subtle signs of bias. We ensure that one viewpoint does not dominate most of the story. We check for whether the lede or the kicker are strongly in favor of one side, and ask ourselves whether we can tell the reporter's viewpoint from the story.

## Conflict of interest

This is a particularly difficult issue in a college settings, where our sources may invariably be the same people who live in our buildings, eat in our dining halls, and go to the same parties we do. Although we acknowledge that college is different than the professional world, we still strive to eliminate conflict of interest. Members of the Student Government Association do not serve in e-board positions, because they are such a central part of what we cover on this campus. E-board members may belong to other student groups, but may not oversee the reporting, writing, editing, or designing of stories pertaining to those student groups. Beat reporters do not socialize with the people they cover. If close relationships form in the course of their coverage, beat reporters inform their editors, and beats are rearranged. We never quote our friends as a man on the street source. We especially never quote our roommates. If our roommate has a compelling story to tell, we suggest it to an editor, who can then assign it to another reporter. There are no hard and fast rules that govern which source is a conflict of interest, but if one is suspected even slightly, an editor is alerted and the story may be reassigned.

## Gifts

We do not accept gifts from sources. Even if those gifts will not affect our coverage, we must avoid the appearance that they might. Press materials submitted for review will remain in the newsroom as part of a communal newsroom library. An exception to the gift policy is when Northeastern offers tickets, dinners or other benefits that are extended to student leaders of other groups as well. In this context we are student leaders, and can accept those benefits as long as they are extended to most major student group leaders. We also do not accept free travel. Arrangements can be made through the editor in chief for The News to cover travel expenses.

## Plagiarism

We do not use the work of others without attributing it. Ever.

## Photos

We do not alter photographs in any way that is deceptive. This includes flipping the direction of a photo, altering light beyond basic lightening and darkening, or altering the image itself. We do not stage photos. When we do stage or manipulate photos for creative purposes, they must be clearly labeled as illustrations.

## Anonymous sources

All anonymous sources must be approved by your section editor, the managing editor and editor-in-chief. Do not grant anonymity to sources before consulting your section editor. The News uses anonymous sources only when they are crucial to reporting on an important story. Before using anonymous stories, reporters make a good-faith effort to get the information on the record. The terms of an interview should be clearly discussed, so the source is aware of what information will or will not be used in the paper. If confidential sources are used, their identity is revealed to the editor in chief, and a line is included in the story explaining why the source was granted anonymity.

## Using the Internet

The Internet has made it increasingly easy to track down sources using their Facebook profiles and Instant Messenger. While these are great ways to find sources, they are not legitimate ways to conduct interviews. We conduct interviews in person or over the phone, never through Facebook messages or Instant Messenger. We try to avoid using e-mail, but when it is the only way to get the information we need, we note in the story that the interview was conducted through e-mail. This alerts the reader that the source had time to think about their answers, rather than responding off the cuff.

## Other use of stories

Stories that are budgeted or assigned by an editor for The News become the property of The News, and cannot be pitched to another publication prior to publication. After publication, pieces can only be used in other mediums if it is indicated that the piece was previously published in The News. Pieces written previously for a class may be submitted to The News, but all sources must be alerted prior to publication that their quotes are now being published, not merely seen by a teacher.

# Becoming a staff member

At the end of each semester, section editors evaluate their correspondents. They examine how many stories each reporter has written and whether they have been consistent and reliable. If they are recommended by their section editor, reporters fill out a staff application and meet with the editor-in-chief, managing editor and section editor for about 15 minutes. The same process is followed for photographers.

Becoming staff means the reporter/photographer's name is added to the masthead, their bylines or photo credits will identify them as staff members and they can vote in all subsequent elections.

# Election process

Elections are held three times a year: in the spring, before the start of fall semester, and before the start of spring semester. Anyone who is on staff can vote. However, even if you are not on staff, you are welcome – and encouraged – to come to elections. Elections are chaired by the editor-in-chief, who counts the votes, and can only vote in the event of a tie. Anybody registered as undergraduate student at Northeastern University can run in The News elections.

In a contested election between two or more candidates, one candidate will make a brief speech, answer questions from News members (not exclusive to staff), and then leave the room. The next candidate will then follow the same process. Once all candidates have presented, they leave the room, at which point News members will discuss the candidates' qualifications. (Note: It is very important that all discussion about candidates is undisclosed.) Staff can vote for a candidate, vote no confidence, or abstain. Votes are also undisclosed.

In an uncontested election, the same process is followed. Once again, staff can vote for the candidate, vote no confidence, or abstain.

# Job descriptions ... In case you were wondering!

## Editor-in-chief

- Acts as chief spokesperson and representative of The News and bears full responsibility of the news, editorial, production and business operations of the newspaper.
- Shall possess demonstrable skills in editing, news writing and layout.
- Has access to The News story lineup as required to carry out the newspaper's operation.
- Chairs all staff meetings and election proceedings.
- Shall prepare a semesterly State of the Newspaper report for presentation to the annual full-staff meeting at the end of each semester. This report will outline the goals, achievements and fiscal position of The News.
- Has authority, with the advice and consent of the Editorial Board, to alter any of the job descriptions which follow in order that the editorial needs of The News are met.
- Pay compensated through weekly warrant.

## Managing Editor

- Shall possess demonstrable skills in editing, news writing and layout.
- Shall manage and maintain all supplies and equipment.
- Shall assume all responsibility of the Editor-in-chief in event of his/her absence.
- Oversees workstudy recruitment, paperwork and scheduling.
- Pay compensated through pay warrant.

## News Editor

The News Editor shall be third in command of the newsroom and shall assign, edit and lay out the news section of The News. He/she should have experience developing hard news stories. Pay compensated through pay warrant.

## Inside Editor

The Inside Editor shall assign, edit and lay out the Inside section of The News and should have experience developing arts & entertainment, cultural and lifestyle stories. Pay compensated through pay warrant.

## Sports Editor

The Sports Editor shall assign, edit and lay out the sports section of The News and should have experience covering sports events and possess a good understanding of college sports. Pay compensated through pay warrant.

## Special Interest Editor

The Special Interest Editor is responsible for assigning and editing stories, and the layout of the three Special Interest (consisting of Food & Restaurants, Fashion and Sex & Health, which appear in this order in a three-week rotation system). This editor should have experience in assigning and editing stories. Pay compensated through pay warrant.

## Editorial Page Editor

The Editorial Page Editor shall be responsible for editing the editorial pages, staff commentaries and letters to the editor. He/she will also be responsible for assigning cartoonists and weekly outside commentaries. This editor is also responsible for the layout of the Editorial Page. Pay compensated through pay warrant.

## City Editor

The City Editor shall assign, edit, and lay out the City Pulse page of The News and should have experience developing news stories relating to the community. Pay compensated through pay warrant.

## Photo Editor

The Photo Editor shall supervise the photo staff. He/she must be well-versed in digital procedure, including digital cameras, scanners and image-editing programs. The Photo Editor will have authority over his/her staff and will decide which photo will be used in coordination with the section editors. Pay compensated through pay warrant.

## Design Editor

The Design Editor will help section editors design and layout major packages within their sections. The Design Editor is encouraged to keep up with new technology, which includes attending conferences, submitting the publication for professional critiques as well as learning how to use new design programs. The editor should be knowledgeable of publishing software, including: Quark, Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator. Pay compensated through pay warrant.

## Web Editor

The Web Editor is responsible for the upkeep and development of HuntNewsNU.com He/she is responsible for transporting copy, pictures and graphics elements from the standard printed version of the News to the online edition. He/she should be familiar with the technical aspects of online publishing, and the World Wide Web in general. Pay compensated through pay warrant.

## Advertising Manager

- Shall oversee the advertising sales effort of The News and shall be expected to sell advertising to local and national accounts.
- Shall possess a good understanding of advertising and business practices, through course work and/or experience.
- Shall maintain accurate and up-to-date advertising records.
- Shall assist with dummy layout of The News and shall be consulted before any sold advertising is pulled from the paper for any editorial or space reason.
- Pay compensated by commission.

## Business Manager

- Shall oversee the collection of all advertising revenue.
- Shall possess a good understanding of advertising and business practices, through course work and/or experience.
- Shall be responsible for maintaining up-to-date billing records.
- Shall provide budget updates every other week to the Editor-in-chief and shall present such updates at E-Board meetings.
- Shall be responsible for subscriptions.
- Pay compensated through weekly base pay.

**Deputy News**

The Deputy News Editor shall assist in the assigning and editing of all stories in the News section and assist in layout. He/she should have experience developing stories, including hard news stories. The position reports to the News Editor and is responsible for checking name spellings in all stories in the News section after they've gone on seconds.

**Deputy Inside**

The Deputy Inside Editor is to complete the calendar page each week. The calendar page includes ongoing, upcoming and current events that are held at Northeastern as well as surrounding communities. The deputy must also help develop story ideas for the budget as well as help with laying out the Inside section. He/she will also be responsible for checking name spellings in all stories in the Inside section after they've gone on seconds.

**Deputy Sports**

The Deputy Sports Editor is expected to help develop story ideas, edit stories and assist in laying out the sports section. He/she is required to help layout the section and will also be responsible for checking name spellings in all stories in the Sports section.

**Deputy Photo**

The Deputy Photo Editor shall assist in assigning and editing all photos. He/she should have experience in photography and photo editing.

**Assistant News Editor**

The assistant news editor will be appointed for fall and spring semesters by that semester's news editor. The assistant news editor will primarily assist with more difficult stories, meeting key members of the Northeastern University and learning about the news section in the process. He or she will also help the news and deputy news editors in assigning, editing and laying out stories.

**Assistant Inside Editor**

The assistant inside editor will be appointed for fall and spring semesters by that semester's inside editor. The assistant inside editor will primarily assist in picking up bigger stories in order to get a feel for the groups on campus and the Inside section. He or she will also help the inside and deputy inside editors in assigning, editing and laying out stories.

**Deputy Advertising Manager**

The Deputy Advertising Manager shall have the desire to learn more about advertising. He/she will take care of administrative duties, such as checking messages, sending out rate cards and helping around the advertising office. They will also help prepare the Advertising Manager in laying out the weekly paper. Shall possess strong communication skills and the ability to talk to advertisers via phone/mail. The deputy managing editor will be paid by commission as an advertising representative.

**Deputy Business Manager**

The Deputy Business Manager must be responsible for the mailing of invoice and tearsheets no more than a week after print. They must also mail The News' subscription list no later than the day after the issue comes out. The assistant must be willing to help the Business Manager when they deem necessary.

**Copy Editors (2)**

The Copy Editors are expected to lead the copy editing process at The News on production nights and read all smalls. They are also required to possess knowledge of News and AP Style. The elected copy editors will ensure each page is read. Pay compensated through pay warrant.

**Tech Manager**

The Tech Manager is responsible for maintaining The News computer network, as well as all computers used by The News (both PC and Mac). Such maintenance will include, but is not limited to:

- a. Updating computers' operating system software to most current versions, ensuring optimal performance.
- b. Performing anti-virus and disk/file integrity checks to keep computers "healthy."
- c. Keep the LAN utilized by The News secure from unauthorized and potentially malicious users.
- d. Solve technological/computer related problems that may occur. Examples of such issues are the sporadic "bugs" and glitches involving minor software crashes, mice unresponsiveness, and "where's the server folder?"
- e. Function as Administrator of File Server, "The Server Folder," etc.
- f. Job may also include oversight of other electronic devices in the office (i.e. radio scanner, copy machine, fax machine, etc.)
- g. Transferring text and photos from the print version of the paper to the website.
- h. Overseeing all upgrades and improvements to the website.
- i. Pay compensated through pay warrant.