



## Operating Policy - *The Silhouette*

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 *The Silhouette* shall be a student press in the McMaster University environment dedicated to the delivery of information that is comprehensive, impartial, accurate, balanced, and fair; its primary mandate is unbiased, fearless recording of fact.

### 2. Operating Parameters

- 2.1 As a means of communication, *The Silhouette* shall serve as an agent of social awareness, and give priority to informing the student population on issues of importance and interest to the McMaster community, emphasizing direct student issues;
- 2.2 *The Silhouette* shall strive to maintain the dignity and respect of all people and uphold their human rights;
- 2.3 *The Silhouette* shall strive to be relevant, informative, enlightening, and entertaining to its readers;
- 2.4 As the official publication of the McMaster students, *The Silhouette* shall be issued once a week during the regular academic term on a weekday chosen by *The Silhouette* Board of Publication (with the exception of Reading Week, holiday closures, and examination periods);
- 2.5 *The Silhouette* shall normally be published a minimum of one (1) time during the summer at the discretion of *The Silhouette* Board of Publication;
- 2.6 *The Silhouette* editors shall actively seek, collect, write, edit, and publish news, sports, arts and entertainment reports, features, reviews, opinions, editorial comment, photographs, graphics, cartoons, and announcements of interest to McMaster students;
- 2.7 *The Silhouette* shall include a “Letters to the Editor” section in any given issue, that are unedited (except for spelling and grammar errors) views of its readers, except those of a libelous nature, exceeding a specific length, or those which, in the opinion of the editorial staff, are judged to be in bad taste, or express views that have recently been expressed at length in the letters section;

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- 2.8 Prejudice, racism, sexism, or homophobia shall not be promoted in *The Silhouette*;
- 2.9 It is recognized and affirmed that the freedom of the press is essential to maintaining the free flow of information, ideas, and opinions, provided this is done in accordance with the MSU Bylaws and **Section 19 – CODE OF ETHICS** of this policy; in order that *The Silhouette* will best serve this function for McMaster students, the Editors and staff of *The Silhouette* shall remain completely autonomous in terms of the editorial content and the basic format of the newspaper;
- 2.10 *The Silhouette* shall be accountable to the SRA with regard to financial management and workplace health and safety issues;
- 2.11 *The Silhouette* Board of Publication (as outlined in **Operating Policy – The Silhouette Board of Publication**) shall advise *The Silhouette* Editorial Board on creating an advertising, circulation, and distribution policy;
- 2.12 Decisions regarding editorial content and the basic format of the newspaper shall be determined by the Editor-in-Chief, Executive Editor, and *The Silhouette* Editorial Board;
- 2.13 *The Silhouette* shall normally limit parody media to a one-page weekly humour section (i.e. The Speculator page), unless otherwise approved by the Editor-in-Chief, Executive Editor and *The Silhouette* Board of Publication. The content of this page shall comply with **Section 19 – CODE OF ETHICS** of this policy, as well as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The page shall also contain a disclaimer indicating clearly the satirical nature of the page's content. Grievances about The Speculator page shall be resolved according to Section 18 of this policy.

### 3. Personnel Structure

- 3.1 *The Silhouette* shall consist of:
  - 3.1.1 An Executive Editor who shall;
    - 3.1.1.1 Oversee the operation, management, budget and advertising of *The Silhouette*;
    - 3.1.1.2 Perform duties as outlined in *The Silhouette* Executive Editor job description.
  - 3.1.2 An Editor-in-Chief who shall;
    - 3.1.2.1 Assist the Executive Editor in supervising *The Silhouette* Editorial Board and staff, with an emphasis on coordinating each section of *The Silhouette*;

3.1.2.2 Perform duties as outlined in *The Silhouette* Editor-in-Chief job description.

3.1.3 A Digital Media Specialist who shall;

3.1.3.1 Be funded equally from the *Silhouette* and CFMU budget;

3.1.3.2 Create visual multimedia content for *The Silhouette* in conjunction with Section Editors;

3.1.3.3 Perform duties as outlined in Digital Media Specialist job description.

3.1.4 An Editorial Board consisting of:

3.1.4.1 The Section Editors of the Arts & Culture, News, Opinions, and Sports sections who shall:

3.1.4.1.1 Coordinate the separate sections of *The Silhouette*;

3.1.4.1.2 Perform duties as outlined in *The Silhouette* Departmental Editor job description.

3.1.4.2 The Section Reporters of the Arts & Culture, News, and Sports sections who shall:

3.1.4.2.1 Assist the Departmental Editors in coordinating the content of that week's section in *The Silhouette*;

3.1.4.2.2 Produce a minimum of one article and one piece of multimedia content/or article per week under the direction of the Section Editor;

3.1.4.2.3 Perform duties as outlined in *The Silhouette* Assistant Editor job description.

3.1.5 A Multimedia Team consisting of:

3.1.5.1 A Multimedia Editor who shall:

3.1.5.1.1 Provide quality in page design;

3.1.5.1.2 Copy-edit and correct all on-page layout errors after pages have been approved by Section Editors;

3.1.5.1.3 Maintain and update *The Silhouette* website;

3.1.5.1.4 Manage social media accounts in conjunction with the Social Media Coordinator;

3.1.5.1.5 Liaise with the other Editors of *The Silhouette* to plan video and multimedia content;

3.1.5.1.6 Perform duties as outlined in *The Silhouette* Multimedia Editor job description.

3.1.5.2 A Social Media Coordinator who shall:

- 3.1.5.2.1 Follow the direction of the Multimedia Editor in the management of social media platforms, and engagement of readership on said platforms;
  - 3.1.5.2.2 Use social media platforms to garner interest for the Volunteer positions;
  - 3.1.5.2.3 Liaise with the Multimedia Editor, Editor-in-Chief and Executive Editor on marketing strategies to increase student awareness about *The Silhouette*.
- 3.1.5.3 A Multimedia Coordinator who shall:
- 3.1.5.3.1 Under the direction of the Multimedia Editor, assist with page design, copy-editing and correcting all on-page layout errors after pages have been completed;
  - 3.1.5.3.2 Perform duties as outlined in *The Silhouette* Multimedia Coordinator job description.
- 3.1.6 The Executive Editor and Editor-in-Chief may, with approval of the Executive Board and Silhouette Board of Publications, alter the number and responsibilities of *The Silhouette* Editors and Reporters.
- 3.1.7 A Silhouette Volunteer Staff consisting of:
- 3.1.7.1 Casual Volunteer Contributors and Production Contributors;
  - 3.1.7.2 Formal Volunteer Staff Writers who shall:
    - 3.1.7.2.1 Perform duties depending on specified section as laid out by the specific Editor on a weekly rotational basis;
    - 3.1.7.2.2 Perform duties as outlined in *The Silhouette* Staff Writer job descriptions;
    - 3.1.7.2.3 Be hired by:
      - 3.1.7.2.3.1 The Executive Editor;
      - 3.1.7.2.3.2 The Editor-in-Chief;
      - 3.1.7.2.3.3 The specific Section Editor.
  - 3.1.7.3 Formal Volunteer Multimedia Assistants who shall;
    - 3.1.7.3.1 Perform duties assigned by the Multimedia Editor on a weekly basis;
    - 3.1.7.3.2 Perform duties as outlined in *The Silhouette* Multimedia Assistant job description.
  - 3.1.7.4 Formal Volunteer Photo Assistants who shall;
    - 3.1.7.4.1 Take photos assigned by the Multimedia Editor on a weekly basis;
    - 3.1.7.4.2 Perform duties as outlined in *The Silhouette* Photo Assistant job description.

## 4. Personnel Selection

4.1 The selection of *The Silhouette* Editorial staff shall be done in the following manner:

4.1.1 The Executive Editor shall be selected by a hiring committee according to the following guidelines:

4.1.1.1 The position shall be advertised by *The Silhouette* Board of Publication at first notification of vacancy;

4.1.1.2 Applications for the position will be accepted on the MSU Website. A minimum of five (5) business days must elapse between the advertising of the position and the application deadline;

4.1.1.3 The hiring committee shall consist of:

4.1.1.3.1 The MSU General Manager (Chair);

4.1.1.3.2 The existing Editor-in-Chief (or, if the Editor-in-Chief is applying, the most senior Editorial Board member not applying for the position);

4.1.1.3.3 The Chair of *The Silhouette* Board of Publication;

4.1.1.3.4 One MSU Full-Time staff member to be chosen upon consensus of the Hiring Committee.

4.1.2 The Editor-in-Chief shall be selected by a hiring committee according to the following guidelines:

4.1.2.1 The position shall be advertised by the Executive Editor in *The Silhouette* no later than the fourth week of January;

4.1.2.2 Applications for the position shall be accepted on the MSU Website. A minimum of five (5) business days must elapse between the advertising of the position and the application deadline;

4.1.2.3 The hiring committee shall consist of:

4.1.2.3.1 The Executive Editor (Chair);

4.1.2.3.2 The outgoing Editor-in-Chief (or, if the Editor-in-Chief is reapplying, the most senior Editorial Board member not applying for the position);

4.1.2.3.3 The Chair of *The Silhouette* Board of Publication.

4.1.3 The Digital Media Specialist shall be selected by a hiring committee according to the following guidelines:

4.1.3.1 The position shall be advertised by *The Silhouette* Executive Editor and 93.3 CFMU Administrative Director at first notification of vacancy;

- 4.1.3.2 Applications for the position will be accepted on the MSU Website. A minimum of five (5) business days must elapse between the advertising of the position and the application deadline;
- 4.1.3.3 The hiring committee shall consist of:
  - 4.1.3.3.1 The Executive Editor (Co-Chair);
  - 4.1.3.3.2 The CFMU Administrative Director (Co-Chair);
  - 4.1.3.3.3 The Editor-in-Chief; and
  - 4.1.3.3.4 One MSU Full-Time staff member to be chosen upon consensus of the *Silhouette* Board of Publications and CFMU Board of Directors.
- 4.1.4 The remaining members of the Editorial Board will be selected by a hiring committee according to the following guidelines:
  - 4.1.4.1 The first positions filled will be Section Editors and the Multimedia Editor.
  - 4.1.4.2 The hiring committee for this position shall include the outgoing Editor-in-Chief or designate, the incoming Editor-in-Chief or designate, and the Executive
  - 4.1.4.3 Editor; the committee shall be chaired by the Editor-in-Chief or designate;
  - 4.1.4.4 The hiring committee for all remaining *Silhouette* positions shall include:
    - 4.1.4.4.1 The outgoing Editor-in-Chief or designate;
    - 4.1.4.4.2 The incoming Editor-in-Chief or designate; and
    - 4.1.4.4.3 The Executive Editor
      - 4.1.4.4.3.1.1 In the event that hiring takes place mid-year, a revised hiring committee would be comprised of:
        - 4.1.4.4.3.1.2 The Editor-in-Chief;
        - 4.1.4.4.3.1.3 The Executive Editor; and
        - 4.1.4.4.3.1.4 The Chair of the Board of Publication.
  - 4.1.4.5 All paid positions for the upcoming volume of *The Silhouette* shall be filled by one (1) month following the final issue of current volume of *The Silhouette*.
- 4.1.5 *Silhouette* Volunteer Staff will be selected by a hiring committee according to the following guidelines:
  - 4.1.5.1 The hiring committee for these positions shall include the Editor-in-Chief or designate, the Executive Editor or designate, and the Section Editor; the committee shall be chaired by the Editor-in-Chief or designate

## 5. The Editorial Board

- 5.1 The Editorial Board shall consist of all paid staff members listed under Section 3, and be chaired by the Executive Editor.
- 5.2 The Editor-in-Chief and Executive Editor, shall formulate *The Silhouette* Editorial Policy as per *The Silhouette* purpose and operating parameters;
- 5.3 Members of the Editorial Board shall vote on any issue or policy submitted for its consideration; decisions shall be considered binding if passed by a majority of participating Editorial Board members;
- 5.4 There shall be at least one (1) Editorial Board meeting each week, called by the Editor-in-Chief in consultation with Editorial Board members; meetings shall be chaired by the Editor-in-Chief;
- 5.5 Quorum for such meetings shall be 50% of the Editorial Board;
- 5.6 The Editor-in-Chief and Executive Editor may, in conjunction with the support of the majority of the Editorial Board, enact, repeal, or amend portions of the Publication Policy;
- 5.7 All Editorial Board staff and hired Volunteer Staff are permitted to attend weekly Editorial Board meetings.

## 6. Dismissal

- 6.1 Any part time paid staff member may be dismissed from employment with *The Silhouette* by a three-quarters majority vote of *The Silhouette* Board of Publication. This decision shall be subject to ratification by the MSU Executive Board;
- 6.2 A member may be dismissed for any of the following reasons:
  - 6.2.1 Acting in contempt or contrary to this policy or any policy of *The Silhouette*;
  - 6.2.2 Acting in contempt or contrary to any known decision of the staff or the Editorial Board taken with quorum present;
  - 6.2.3 Abuse of rights, privileges, or duties as a *Silhouette* Staff Member.
- 6.3 The member being dismissed shall be informed of all complaints against him/her that are connected to the motion, and shall be allowed to respond to them at the meeting where the motion is brought forward;
- 6.4 Full-time positions will follow the MSU full-time employment policy procedures for dismissal.

- 6.5 A volunteer staff member or contributor may be banned from working for the paper by their section head after consultation with the Editor-in-Chief and Executive Editor. Records of this will be kept on file in *The Silhouette* office for seven years;
- 6.6 Decisions on dismissal or banning of volunteers, staff members or contributors may be appealed to *The Silhouette* Board of Publication.

## 7. Vacancies

- 7.1 In the case of resignation or dismissal, vacancies on the Editorial Board shall be filled accordingly to the following guidelines:
  - 7.1.1 If the position of Editor-in-Chief is vacated, it shall be filled accordingly:
    - 7.1.1.1 A replacement will be hired according to the procedure outlined in Section 4.1.2 of this policy with the appropriate changes to dates and deadlines;
    - 7.1.1.2 In the interim, the Executive Editor shall act as Editor-in-Chief until a replacement is found.
  - 7.1.2 Vacancies in the remaining positions on the Editorial Board will be filled according to the appropriate procedures outlined in **Section 4 – Personnel Selection**.

## 8. Finances

- 8.1 *The Silhouette* shall be a funded service of the McMaster Students Union. As such, the MSU shall maintain a regular flow of financing throughout the publication year so as to maintain the normal operation of *The Silhouette* as defined by this policy;
- 8.2 The Executive Editor, in consultation with *The Silhouette* Board of Publication, shall draft an annual budget for recommendations to the SRA. It shall include all anticipated operational and capital revenues and expenditures for the various editorial and production departments. Operational and capital funding shall be based on an SRA approved budget, as defined in **MSU Bylaw 9 – Financial Affairs**;
- 8.3 All business transactions and accounting shall be handled through the MSU Accounting Department;
- 8.4 The Executive Editor and Editor-in-Chief shall have departmental budget signing authority on all purchases subject to MSU Accounting Department procedures;
  - 8.4.1 If the Executive Editor or Editor-in-Chief is not available, the Chair of *The Silhouette Board of Publication* or General Manager of the MSU shall act as a co-signatory.



## 9. Publication Schedule

- 9.1 The annual publication schedule shall be approved by *The Silhouette* Board of Publication prior to the end of May, in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief and Executive Editor.

## 10. Amendments

- 10.1 Editorial Board members of *The Silhouette* may propose amendments to this policy. Proposed amendments shall be made by a two-thirds majority vote at a quorate Board of Publications meeting. Proposed amendments to this policy must be referred to the Student Representative Assembly for approval.

## 11. External Affiliations

- 11.1 Any agreement of affiliation with an external or non-MSU organization shall require the following guidelines:
- 11.1.1 A majority vote of the Editorial Board;
  - 11.1.2 Approval of *The Silhouette* Board of Publication, which shall advise the Editorial Board while negotiating any such agreement.

## 12. Grievance Application

- 12.1 Complaints about the content of *The Silhouette*, including any possible violation of the laws of libel, shall be resolved according to the following guidelines:
- 12.1.1 The complainant shall meet with the Executive Editor and Editor-in-Chief to discuss the matter in an attempt to find a mutually satisfactory solution;
  - 12.1.2 Should no mutually satisfactory solution be reached, *The Silhouette* Board of Publication will review the matter, making certain that the Executive Editor, Editor-in-Chief, and complainant are given the opportunity to discuss, explain, or give evidence on the matter;
  - 12.1.3 Before a final decision is rendered, *The Silhouette* Board of Publication shall, at the request of the Executive Editor and Editor-in-Chief, and after consultation with the MSU Board of Directors, seek out the opinion of the MSU lawyers;
  - 12.1.4 After this procedure has been following, *The Silhouette* Board of Publication may require *The Silhouette* to print an apology, correction, or retraction. The decision will be binding on *The Silhouette*.

## 13. Code of Ethics

- 13.1 The Editorial Board, hired Volunteers, and contributors of *The Silhouette* shall fully realize their personal responsibility for everything submitted for publication

within *The Silhouette*. They shall not falsify information or documents, nor distort or misrepresent the facts;

- 13.2 The Editorial Board, and specifically the Editor of each section, shall recognize their personal responsibility for everything published within *The Silhouette*;
- 13.3 The Editorial Board, hired Volunteers, and contributors shall strive to be fair and accurate in all reporting by seeking out, to the best of their abilities, all points of view they deem relevant to the issue being examined, reviewed, and investigated. While pure objectivity is impossible, at all times the reporter shall strive for objectivity, making certain, to the best of their abilities, that all facts, statements, and information is truthful, accurate, and above all, fair;
- 13.4 This practice of fairness, accuracy, and truthfulness precludes:
  - 13.4.1 Reporting unsubstantiated opinion as fact;
  - 13.4.2 Condemning persons or groups by innuendo or hearsay;
  - 13.4.3 Distortion of meaning by over-or under-emphasis;
  - 13.4.4 Placing facts or quotations out of context;
  - 13.4.5 Using headlines not warranted by the text;
- 13.5 The Editorial Board, hired Volunteers, and contributors of *The Silhouette* shall respect all confidences regarding sources of information and private documents, unless this intervenes with the freedom of the press or the need to inform the public on vital matters;
- 13.6 The Editorial Board, hired Volunteers, and contributors of *The Silhouette* shall be familiar with and observe the laws of libel and contempt of court that exist in Canada, and shall observe all international copyright agreements, unless this interferes with the freedom of the press or the need to inform the public on vital matters or principles of fundamental justice;
- 13.7 The Editorial Board, hired Volunteers, and contributors of *The Silhouette* shall be familiar with and operate in accordance with Canadian Press Style;
- 13.8 The Editor of the appropriate section shall rectify online, at the first available opportunity, any and all culpable mistakes, misprints, or omissions;
- 13.9 The Editorial Board, hired Volunteers, and contributors of *The Silhouette* shall adhere to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and as such, shall not allow bias or prejudice – especially that based on race, sex, sexual orientation, or religion – to have any place in the editorial policy of *The Silhouette*;
- 13.10 The Editorial Board, hired Volunteers, and contributors of *The Silhouette* shall normally identify themselves and their affiliation with *The Silhouette* prior to conducting any formal interviews. They shall conceal their identity and affiliation only when confronted with a barrier to an overriding obligation to inform the public on vital matters or redress a breach of fundamental justice;

- 13.11 The Editorial Board, hired Volunteers, and contributors of *The Silhouette* shall refrain from reporting on matters in which they deem themselves to be in direct conflict of interest. Reporters shall not be directly involved in the planning or execution of any event or incident on which they are reporting, nor shall they benefit directly from the results of any action, production, event, or incident on which they are reporting. They should strive to disclose all such conflicts of interest to other editors and members of the staff, and specifically to the Editor-in-Chief and the Editor of the appropriate section;
- 13.12 Any conflicts arising between privacy and the McMaster community's right to know about the conduct of vital matters shall be judged, in the first instance by the Editor-in-Chief, Executive Editor, and, if deemed necessary or prudent, by the Editorial Board as a whole.
- 13.13 The Editorial Board, hired Volunteers, and contributors of *The Silhouette* shall review all documented internal policies regarding Editorial practices prior to their position start date.