



The Silhouette
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MEMO

From the offices of the...

Editor-in-Chief & MSU President

TO: Student Representative Assembly
FROM: Andrew Mrozowski & Denver Della-Vedova
SUBJECT: *The Silhouette* Operating Policy Update
DATE: February 2, 2022

To The Student Representative Assembly:

At the recommendation of the Campus Media Ad-Hoc Committee, we have updated our operating policy. Much of these changes are due to the recommended reorganization of the service to include a new full-time staff member for *The Silhouette* and pivoting the student-opportunity position, Editor-in-Chief, to a part-time manager. For many years, the Silhouette SOP has criticized the role as it did not have enough support, with ourselves included in this. This is both when it comes to operation of the service, as well as training. Based on other campus media services, the committee is recommending adding full-time support to the *Sil* to help the PTM Editor-in-Chief, but also to ensure the service is meeting advertising goals and establishing a basis for historical knowledge.

The Campus Media Ad-Hoc Committee has also recommended the amalgamation of our Online and Production team, forming the Multimedia Team — this is more in-line with current media organizations.

In effort to reduce student costs and eliminate redundancies, you will notice the removal of a few positions from the Operating Policy. The Campus Media Ad-Hoc Committee believes these to be redundant positions due to historical background with the *Sil* and emerging media trends as per the *Campus Media Ad-Hoc Committee The Silhouette Report*.

We have also taken this opportunity to update some of the language within our Operating Policy to better reflect current service operations, as I do not believe the OP has been updated for quite some time.

The Campus Media Ad-Hoc Committee has taken a lot of time to ensure that these changes will allow the *Silhouette* to grow as a service. The stated changes are crucial in order to continue the 92-year legacy the *Sil* has on McMaster's campus. A lot of work has been done to ensure the *Sil* will be in line with the media industry (both campus and professional) allowing flexibility to experiment in our space, but also to ensure we are providing the highest quality content to our students.

A full OP breakdown can be found on the next pages of this document. Please note that the proposed changes have been approved by *the Silhouette* Board of Publication.

If you have any questions about the recommend changes, please do not hesitate to reach out to us, eic@thesil.ca or president@msu.mcmaster.ca.



Proposed Changes to *The Silhouette Operating Policy*:

Section 2. Operating Parameters

Most of these changes were added for clarity or to reflect current *Sil* operating practices.

2.5 — This was a change approved by the Board of Publication a couple years ago. We no longer publish three issues during the summer, opting instead for publishing one issue. This was due to not having a full-staff working on the issue, as well as a waste of resources due to the lack of students on campus.

2.7 — While we rarely get Letters to the Editor now, we wanted to update this to better reflect current media industry practices. Typically Letters to the Editor are placed so they stand out from the rest of the Editorial content so the readership does not confuse them to be written by staff. The previous wording in the Operating Policy was quite confusing, so we have updated it to be more clear.

2.12 — Addition of the Executive Editor who will help the Editor-in-Chief oversee staff.

2.13 — Addition of the Executive Editor who will have a direct role in the management of the service.

Section 3. Personnel Structure

A lot of these changes are reflective of the staffing pivot as recommended by the Campus Media Ad-Hoc Committee.

3.1.1 — The creation of the Executive Editor position. This will be a full-time position designed to help the *Silhouette* retain institutional knowledge. At current, the *Silhouette* does not have full-time guidance, but rather relies on the student opportunity position *Editor-in-Chief* with the MSU General Manager helping to fill in some blanks. It is the Campus Media Ad-Hoc Committee's belief that this lack of full-time vision has directly caused *Silhouette* viewership to plateau over the last few years. This new role would directly address this problem and serve as a body of historical knowledge, knowledge on the ever-changing media landscape, and advertising manager for the *Silhouette* staff.



3.1.2 — Re-evaluating Editor-in-Chief. With the creation of Executive Editor, some of the tasks that the current SOP has will be shifted to the new PTM role. The Operating Policy has been rewritten to emphasize the collaborative nature between the full-time Executive Editor and PTM Editor-in-Chief.

3.1.3 — Addition of the Digital Media Specialist. Although this position has been around for about five years now, it was never included in our Operating Policy. Please note that this is a shared position with 93.3 CFMU.

3.1.4 — This section was reworked for clarity as the *Silhouette* can be viewed as two distinct teams or branches, Editorial and what was originally Online & Production, now being called Multimedia. This specific section focuses on our Editorial team. The Campus Media Ad-Hoc committee has made the recommendation that Managing Editor and Features Reporter be removed from the *Silhouette* due to their redundancy within the media industry. A notable change is the removal of Section Reporters required to produce two articles a week, one for print and one for online. This has been shifted to produce one written piece and one piece of multimedia content or an article to be more in line with the *Sil*'s new focus on digital content creation.

3.1.5 — The Multimedia Team will now be helmed by an amalgamated version of the Production and Online Editor called Multimedia Editor. With the *Silhouette* drastically reducing print next year down to one issue per semester, the Campus Media Ad-Hoc Committee has recommended resources be reallocated to focus on a multimedia growth focused on the digital side of the service.

The committee has also recommended the removal of the Photo Editor (called Photographer in Operating Policy which is not reflective of the approved job description). Many photos can now be sourced from creative commons-licensed websites or be taken with a cell-phone by the reporter. We have noticed a discernable decline in photo requests because of the rising social media presence across the McMaster community. We are in the process of creating a volunteer staff position to still allow the *Silhouette* to create it's own photo content, but to focus resources on growth rather than hours.

With the amalgamation of our Online and Production branches of the service and the introduction of the Multimedia Editor, as it acts as a supervisor to the team, some name changes have had to been made in order to ensure our positions are consistent.

The Online Content Coordinator has not been hired at the *Silhouette* for at least four years, likely due to the creation of the Digital Media Specialist role. This no longer needs to be in our operating policy as we do not foresee a need for this in the future.



3.1.6 — Addition of the Executive Editor to help make decision for the service and removal of “assistant editors” as we have not had those for many years, but rather replacing that with reporters.

3.1.7 — Re-evaluating our list of Volunteer Staff. Over the last few years, and at the recommendation of the Campus Media Ad-Hoc Committee, we have updated the list of our hired volunteer staff to accurately portray who is contributing to the *Silhouette* in a more official capacity.

4. Personnel Selection

The changes within this section are to better reflect MSU hiring processes.

4.1.1 — The hiring of the Executive Editor. This addition to the operating policy is in-line with the full-time staff hiring process. It is notable that we have included the part-time manager Editor-in-Chief on the hiring process, to ensure that there is always a representative of the *Silhouette* present in these discussions. If it is the Editor-in-Chief who is applying, the senior-most Editorial Board member who is not applying for the position will sit on the hiring committee.

4.1.2 — The hiring of the Editor-in-Chief. This is a paired down version of what the hiring process was previously, with the main exception being the MSU General Manager will no longer be involved with the hiring process, which is in line with the hiring of other part-time managers. The Executive Editor will chair the hiring.

4.1.3 — Again, our Operating Policy was never updated when Digital Media Specialist was created. This is in-line with the full-time staff hiring process.

4.1.4 — Updated hiring process for part-time student staff as it was out of date!

4.1.5 — Added a Volunteer Staff hiring guide due to the heavy reliance on our volunteers!

5. The Editorial Board

Updated with Executive Editor position

5.1 — Inclusion of Executive Editor

5.2 — Inclusion of Executive Editor

5.6 — Removal of this — have not done this for many years



5.6 (new) — Inclusion of Executive Editor

5.7 — Stating that all members of the *Silhouette* are required to go to weekly Editorial Board meetings.

6. Dismissal

Very minimal changes, inclusive language and addition of Executive Editor.

6.4 — more inclusive language and inclusion of Executive Editor.

7. Vacancies

Minimal changes, updated with Executive Editor

7.1.1.2 — if there is no Editor-in-Chief for some reason, Executive Editor will assume the role and responsibilities.

8. Finances

Dividing up financial responsibilities between Editor-in-Chief and Executive Editor

8.2 — Executive Editor will be responsible for finalizing budget based on historical knowledge and Board of Publication approval

8.3 — Underground Media + Design and the Silhouette do not have revenue and expense overlap, this is a historical relic.

8.4 — Executive Editor and Editor-in-Chief will have co-signing authority. That is to say that neither individual can make a purchase without the authorization of the other. If one counterpart is not available, Board of Publication Chair or MSU General Manager will act as the co-signer.

8.5 — The Silhouette does not print bound volumes anymore.

9. Publication Schedule

Clarification on how service currently operates

9.1 — Removal of Underground Manager as they do not impact our service and addition of Executive Editor.



10. Amendments

Clarified process for service

10.1 — All amendments to the service currently go through the Student Representative Assembly

12. Grievance Application

Addition of Executive Editor

12.1.1 — Addition of Executive Editor to the process.

12.1.2 — Addition of Executive Editor to the process.

12.1.3 — Addition of Executive Editor to the process.

13. Code of Ethics

Updated to be more in-line with Section 3

13.1 — More concise and encompassing to the Silhouette's Volunteer Staff

13.3 — More concise and encompassing to the Silhouette's Volunteer Staff

13.5 — More concise and encompassing to the Silhouette's Volunteer Staff

13.6 — More concise and encompassing to the Silhouette's Volunteer Staff

13.7 — All members of the Silhouette shall operate in accordance with Canadian Press Style, a form of journalistic principles and rules that all media across the country follow

13.8 — We do not print often enough for print corrections. Online is where all corrections are placed.

13.9 — More concise and encompassing to the Silhouette's Volunteer Staff

13.10 — More concise and encompassing to the Silhouette's Volunteer Staff

13.11 — More concise and encompassing to the Silhouette's Volunteer Staff

13.12 — Inclusion of Executive Editor



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13.13 — Ensure that all Silhouette staff review policies and practices to ensure accurate reporting