

## The Cavalier Daily's code of ethics

As an independent student newspaper, The Cavalier Daily aims to provide the University community with new, relevant and insightful information that inspires critical conversation and even action on Grounds. In the pursuit of this mission, we insist that members of The Cavalier Daily staff adhere to the highest standards of integrity, honesty and good practice. To achieve this goal, The Cavalier Daily abides by the following **values and principles**:

1. The Cavalier Daily seeks to **minimize harm** in all journalistic actions. The organization aims to inform rather than injure, treating the subjects of all coverage with respect while working to provide the public with the complete, factual information it deserves.
2. The Cavalier Daily aims to uphold **objectivity** at all times in all non-opinion content. Reporters avoid asking leading questions, and work proactively to ensure that any underlying personal biases do not color their reporting. The organization collects interviews from all sides involved in a story, an obligation that is exceptionally great in matters of potential contention or harm.
3. The Cavalier Daily recognizes a responsibility to **portray the full human experience** of all members of the University community. The organization strives to promote understanding of the diversity inherent to its community, and to actively search for nuance over homogeneity.
4. The Cavalier Daily understands its unique position as an independent student organization within the University of Virginia community. All members of the organization recognize a responsibility to **work to separate their personal experiences as students from their larger service to the organization**. In doing so, The Cavalier Daily seeks to maintain a judicious distance when covering issues which may be personally sensitive to the staff, though it is important to acknowledge the inherent difficulty of this task.
5. The Cavalier Daily strives to act as a "**watchdog**" for the University community, actively seeking out and bringing to light issues of public relevance which may otherwise go unrecognized. The organization believes members of the University community are entitled to such information, and aims to deliver it completely and accurately at all times.
6. The Cavalier Daily seeks **transparency** in its reporting. It encourages open and informed debate regarding its coverage and practices. All members of The Cavalier Daily share in a responsibility to uphold the transparency, objectivity and integrity of the organization. Every members of the staff has the responsibility not only to support each other in the maintenance of integrity, but also to challenge one another on this front when and where necessary.

To codify and implement the above values and principles, The Cavalier Daily requires all staff members to abide by the following **standards and practices**:

### 1. Accuracy

- Writers are expected to be their own principal fact checkers. Writers should double-check and thoroughly interrogate their own work, never relying upon copy editors to correct errors or inconsistencies.
- All members of The Cavalier Daily share in a responsibility to defend the integrity of the paper by questioning inaccuracies, both in their own work and in that of other staff members.

## **2. Actively challenge one's biases**

- All members of The Cavalier Daily will support an open exchange of viewpoints through their work with the organization — even those viewpoints that the journalist may not personally agree with.
- All members of the organization have the responsibility to challenge the biases they may bring to their work on the paper, both explicit and implicit. Staff members should be attuned to gaps in their own understanding and work proactively to overcome them.

## **3. Conflicts of interest**

- All members of The Cavalier Daily must work to identify any conflicts of interest. Staff members should recuse themselves from covering topics in which they are faced with a potential conflict of interest, real or perceived.
- In order to maintain the objectivity and independence of the organization, members of The Cavalier Daily's news team, junior board and managing board are asked not to run for University-wide elected positions. However, this is expected to be determined on a case by case basis, with less leniency granted to elected positions in Student Council, Honor and the University Judiciary Committee.
- Members of The Cavalier Daily should not participate in the reporting or editing of stories which cover organizations in which they directly participate. This will be determined on a case by case basis, and staff members carry the primary onus of determining what is most appropriate. However, section editors can, at their discretion, make assignment decisions based on conflict of interest concerns.
- Members of The Cavalier Daily's literary, business and operations staffs are barred from contributing to the paper's Opinion content.

## **4. Corrections**

- Any complaint, whether internal or external, about The Cavalier Daily's content should be brought promptly to the attention of one's section editor or a senior editor. Staff members are expected to immediately report any identified error, whether in their own work or in that of a peer.
- In identifying an error, staffers are expected to, where possible, ascertain sufficient information for an editor to write a comprehensive correction.
- A proper correction clearly identifies the original inaccuracy at the bottom of the article and adds the correct information and/or clarification. All such corrections must be labeled as "correction."

## **5. Images and graphics**

- Authoritative sources must be used for all images and graphics.
- All visuals must provide an accurate representation of data or events that transpired. Facts and context must never be distorted in visuals.
- All graphics and images must credit sources.
- Graphic images and images deemed offensive must carry an editor's note flagging the image for publication. Such images should only be used if their presence is integral to the complete and honest reporting of a story.

## **6. Plagiarism and fabrication**

- Plagiarism and fabrication will not be tolerated in any instance, by any members of The Cavalier Daily staff.
- Whenever possible, Cavalier Daily reporters should avoid citing other non-Cavalier Daily stories. It is highly preferable to reach out to sources oneself.
- If citing a non-Cavalier Daily source is unavoidable, writers must notify their editors that they are doing so and adequately cite these sources.

## 7. Proper representation

### As a reporter:

- Cavalier Daily reporters must clearly identify themselves as journalists when reporting and/or conducting interviews.
- Cavalier Daily reporters must seek the truth at all times in their work. They must never attempt to please the public or create a certain appearance with their coverage.

### In the public sphere:

- All members of The Cavalier Daily staff must refrain from active participation in student electoral campaigns and public endorsements of the candidates therein.
- While Cavalier Daily reporters are encouraged to develop personal relationships with sources, these relationships should at no time be allowed to interfere with the impartiality of the reporters' work or the work of the paper as a whole.
- Opinion columnists are the only members of The Cavalier Daily staff who have the right to comment on their own work. Should an Opinion columnist choose to exercise this right, he or she must use his or her full name.

## 8. Responses and fairness

- To ensure balanced and complete representation, Cavalier Daily reporters must make significant effort to reach for comment any parties who may be portrayed negatively in their coverage. This responsibility is especially great in matters of public contention or potential reputational harm.
- Reporters must give the affected party adequate time to respond to request for comment before moving forward with a story. In the case that an affected party is unable to be reached, the reporter must explain why his or her comment is not included in coverage.
- Writers must consider and present the strongest arguments on all sides of contentious matters in their reporting.

## 9. Quotes

- Quotes used in articles should, as a rule, not be altered, even for grammar or word choice.
  - To make this possible, all interviews are expected to be recorded.
- Proper and thorough context must be given for all quotations.
- Ellipses should be used sparingly, if at all, in order to preserve the intentions of the speaker.

## 10. Sources

- The Cavalier Daily *does not allow* anonymous sources.
  - An exception may sparingly be made, upon permission from one's editor, if the material is information (not opinion or speculation) and is absolutely vital to the news report. The information must not be available unless the condition of anonymity is granted, and the source must be in a position to have reliable information.

- In these cases, the senior-most editor (managing editor, executive editor) must be informed of the source's identity.
- Writers must always provide accurate and complete identification of sources in their work for The Cavalier Daily. This includes proper attribution and context for quotes.
- All published articles must use information from more than one source. This helps to ensure impartiality and a balance of perspectives in The Cavalier Daily's reporting.
- Cavalier Daily journalists should adhere to requests for an interview to be "on background," "on deep background," or "off the record" if a source makes this specification *before* the interview begins. The Cavalier Daily uses the Associated Press' definitions for "on the record," "off the record," "on background," or "on deep background."
  - On the record: The information can be used with no caveats, quoting the source by name.
  - Off the record: The information cannot be used for publication.
  - On background: The information can be published but only under conditions negotiated with the source. Generally, the sources do not want their names published but will agree to a description of their position. Reporters should object vigorously when a source wants to brief a group of reporters on background and try to persuade the source to put the briefing on the record.
  - On deep background: The information can be used but without attribution. The source does not want to be identified in any way, even on condition of anonymity.

#### **11. Vulgarity/obscenity**

- The Cavalier Daily bars the use of vulgar and/or obscene language or racial epithets, or language deemed to be generally discriminatory, in its news content unless such language is a) a part of a direct quote, and b) integral to the complete and honest reporting of a story.
- In content tending towards a more conversational tone, such as Life, Sports and Arts & Entertainment columns, as well as the Humor section, The Cavalier Daily may allow the publication of coarser language at the discretion of relevant section editors, provided that such language is not offensive or discriminatory towards any particular individual or group.