YEAR OF THE STUDENT PROTEST

How student journalists stepped up to cover walk-outs and protests in their communities post-Parkland
Inside this issue

COVER STORY

10 March For Our Lives
How the Student Press Law Center stepped up to support student journalists around the country as they covered their peers during massive protests in the wake of the Parkland shooting.

5 Copyright fight
With SPLC’s help, a student photojournalist who sued to retain copyright for his work is vindicated.

6 Hazelwood@30
The Hazelwood Day of Action on Jan. 31 kicked off anti-censorship activities and collaborations throughout the nation.

12 PR vs. college media
Shifting power dynamics have seen some college Public Relations offices pit themselves against student media.

REGULAR FEATURES

3 NEW VOICES
Washington became the 14th state to pass New Voices legislation after a decade of advocacy and hard work by many.

8 CHEAT SHEET
Your handy reference guide to covering DACA. Story ideas, terms and legal pitfalls to avoid in your reporting.

9 LEGAL TIP SHEET
Tear out this page and put it up in your newsroom, then refer back to it before going out to cover protests.

FIND MORE ONLINE

Don’t forget that much more SPLC content is available online at splc.org, including:

• Monthly podcasts: Learn about cybersecurity for student journalists, how to report on DACA, newsroom diversity and more. Subscribe in iTunes.

• March For Our Lives: How student journalists covered the marches and school walk-outs led by students after the shooting in Parkland, Florida.

• New Voices updates: Learn the latest about the grassroots student-led movement to give student journalists protection from censorship.
Washington became the 14th state to protect the rights of student journalists by signing New Voices legislation into law.

by Taylor Potter

A room full of student journalists and supporters — many of whom have waited more than a decade for this moment — watched on as Washington Gov. Jay Inslee signed the state’s New Voices bill, Substitute Senate Bill 5064, into law on March 21.

Among those attending the signing ceremony was Mike Hiestand, the Student Press Law Center’s senior legal counsel. He was among those who strategized for the bill over the years.

New Voices is a student-powered movement to give student journalists protection from censorship. With Washington, New Voices legislation has now passed in 14 states.

Variations of the New Voices bill have been circulating the Washington State Legislature for about a dozen years. It was killed and resurrected so often it became known as the “Zombie Bill” to some legislators.

Prior to signing the bill, Inslee praised the students and supporters’ work in promoting the legislation. “We think of this as a bill freeing students to criticize politicians, which is one of the most treasured rights in the state of Washington,” the governor said.

Fern Valentine, a retired journalism teacher who has been striving to pass versions of the New Voices bill since 1992, was on hand for the signing. She said this year’s version — the one signed by the governor — was the best she had seen because it clearly explained the students’ rights and the protections for schools and administrators.

“It’s just the perfect bill,” Valentine said. “It says the kids can talk about...any topic that is of interest to their audience, and they have the same ethical and legal responsibilities as The Seattle Times.”

Now that the bill has passed, the next step is educating students and administrators about the new law, said Kathy Schrier, the executive director for the Washington Journalism Education Association. “We do have a fair number of those type of folks who are ... very worried
about what it really means,” Schrier said. “And we need to make sure they’re clear that...it’s okay. We’re going to try to come up with some communications that will explain it very clearly so they won’t have those fears.”

During the House Judiciary Committee hearing on the bill, representatives from the Association of Washington School Principals cited concerns that the bill would take authority away from administrators.

Despite its past struggles, SSB5064 made its way through the legislature with little opposition. In January, it passed the Senate 43-5, and it passed the House 91-6 on March 2. Throughout the process, many of the longtime supporters were more optimistic than they had been in recent years.

Brian Schraum, who was heavily involved in the push to pass the bill while a college student in 2007, said “it really seems like the stars are aligning” for lobbyist and we never gave in to scare tactics from the other side. We did it the old-fashioned way. This was a fight led by students from the beginning. Today is for them and the incredible teachers they depend on. It’s a great day for student journalism in Washington and hopefully a lesson for the rest of the country.”

NEW VOICES LEGISLATION SINCE 2015

In 2015 North Dakota passed the John Wall New Voices Act and set off a new wave of states to create special legal protections for student journalists. Of the 14 states to have these kind of protections, seven have passed legislation in three years, starting with North Dakota.

Fern Valentine, a retired journalism teacher who had worked since 1992 to get New Voices legislation passed in Washington, shakes hands with Gov. Jay Inslee after he signed Substitute Senate Bill 5064.

Photo by: Jennifer Karchmer
Three years after Lewisville Independent School District told Anthony Mazur to take down his Flickr gallery, Mazur’s copyright battle came to an end in June. He voluntarily dismissed his lawsuit against LISD after the district agreed Mazur owned his photos, and promised to stop requiring students to sign an agreement giving the district ownership of their photos.

In 2015, Mazur, then a student at Flower Mound (Texas) High School, was ordered by his school administration to take down a Flickr page where he was selling school sports photos to parents. Months later, the school required all members of the yearbook class to sign an agreement that the district owns the copyright to any work they produce.

When Mazur, the photo editor for the school yearbook, The Legend, refused to sign the agreement, he was not allowed to use the school’s camera equipment. Photojournalists nationwide supported Mazur, sparking the #IAmAnthony hashtag on Twitter.

Years later, Mazur — now a student at the University of Dallas — took the battle to court. With the expertise of a attorney volunteer in Texas recruited by the Student Press Law Center, a federal lawsuit was filed on behalf of Mazur on March 21 against several school officials and LISD board members.

“LISD still, for some reason, can’t come out and officially, formally, clearly define what all their policies mean, which ones take precedence, or whether these photos are mine,” Mazur said. “We need an answer for me and other student journalists. It’s still going on, and this question needs to be resolved.”

Mazur asked the court to grant him the rights to his photos, as well as reasonable attorney’s fees, costs and expenses.

Amanda Brim, LISD’s chief communications officer, said it is not the district’s practice to comment on the specifics of pending lawsuits, but said “Lewisville ISD was surprised by the lawsuit because it has not infringed on the former student’s intellectual property rights in any way. The District looks forward to a quick resolution to this matter.”

Mazur, who said he has worked with his college newspaper, as well as the University of Dallas’ athletics department, said he has continued to see support from reporters and student journalists. He said he had been invited to speak at some high school and college journalism conferences.

The support picked up after The Dallas Morning News published a story on the lawsuit.

“There’s definitely an interest,” Mazur said. “My school newspaper actually retweeted it. I’m just getting a lot of support from students, even other photojournalists or people that I’ve worked with.”

JT Morris, an Austin-based attorney representing Mazur and member of SPLC’s Attorney Referral Network, said the lawsuit and Mazur’s story sends a message to other student journalists to “look out for this sort of treatment” from school officials.

“My focus is on vindicating Anthony’s rights, but certainly I think it will have a good effect for both students and school districts going forward,” Morris said.

Mickey Osterreicher, general counsel for the National Press Photographers Association, said if the school believed there to be an agreement in place, the student journalists should have been given the terms ahead of time.

“The journalist needs to know ahead of time what they’re agreeing to,” Osterreicher said. “For the school to then say… ‘the reason we were able to do this is because you do that,’ and there was no agreement ahead of time, I think that’s problematic, especially when it has implications for a person’s First Amendment rights.”

The lawsuit says that the LISD student handbook — at the time of the situation — said “a student shall retain all rights to work created as part of instruction or using District technology resources.”

Mazur said the process has taught him about the importance of standing up for his rights and perseverance. He said when he first decided to fight the school’s order with his parents, they agreed to take it only as far as made sense.

“But if we’re not wrong, how could we stop? The photos were clearly mine,” Mazur said.
In 1988 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that schools could censor student publications in some circumstances. The Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier decision limited many of the freedoms students had won in Tinker v. Des Moines in 1969. Much of the censorship today’s students face stems directly from the Hazelwood case.

She stunned interviewer and SPLC Senior Legal Counsel Mike Hiestand with a story about how her own son was censored in high school.

Kuhlmeier Frey’s biggest piece of advice for student journalists was to be daring and avoid self-censorship. “Do it. Write it. Run it. Push for your rights, because if you don’t you’re gonna have them walked on,” she said.

Learn more about the Hazelwood case, see how you can get involved with Hazelwood@30 and read some of the op-eds student advocates wrote for the occasion on the SPLC website.

SPLC’s first annual Hazelwood Day of Action

To kick off Hazelwood@30, an initiative to spark new action since the 1988 Hazelwood Supreme Court decision, the SPLC hosted a nationwide day of action. Students wrote op-eds, hosted events, wore #CureHazelwood bracelets and took to social media to spread the word about student free press rights.

The SPLC ran several events, including a webinar explaining how the Hazelwood case fundamentally harmed student journalism, and 11 Facebook Live events. Notable student press rights activists, legal professionals, student reporters and court case plaintiffs all participated. The hourly livestreams culminated with Cathy Kuhlmeier Frey, the plaintiff from Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier, speaking about her continued interest in student speech.

Do it. Write it. Run it. Push for your rights, because if you don’t, you’re gonna have them walked on.

— CATHY KUHLMEIER FREY

Without controversy, there is no democracy.

— MARY BETH TINKER

SPLC.org

Get involved

Hazelwood@30
NOW: On the 30th anniversary of the Hazelwood decision, student journalists and advisers across the country raised their voices to protest censorship on the Student Press Law Center’s first Hazelwood Day of Action. We’re keeping the momentum going all year for Hazelwood@30.

Ideas for action:
Work with your staff to take action against student censorship in 2018, then tell us on social media how it went.

- Post your anti-censorship message to Twitter and Instagram using #CureHazelwood and tagging @SPLC
- Distribute stickers or buttons with Hazelwood–related messages.
- Plan a rally.
- Publish an op-ed
- Host a guest speaker
- Host a “No Censorship” bake sale to support your local student publication and distribute information about the “Cure Hazelwood” campaign (maybe even sell Cure Hazelwood bracelets too.)
- See if you have a New Voices movement in your state and coordinate activities with it.
- Create live videos where students (and maybe advisers) can tell their censorship story.
- Distribute informational flyers to your student body at lunch time to educate them about Hazelwood and censorship.

Tiger Tales staff from Joliet West High School in Illinois pledged to fight against censorship.

Photos: Jennifer Galloy

Cathy Kuhlmeier Frey talks to Mike Hiestand on Facebook Live.

The staff of Rock Media from Rock Canyon High School in Colorado all wore their #CureHazelwood bracelets on Jan. 31.
CHEAT SHEET: DACA

TERMS TO KNOW:
DACA — Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program
• Created by the Obama Administration in 2012 by executive order
• Gave children brought into the US illegally by their parents some limited protections from deportation and the ability to get work permits.

DREAMers — another term for DACA recipients. The name is in reference to the DREAM Act, an immigration bill introduced in 2001, but never passed by Congress.

NEWS ANGLE:
Hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants were thrown into turmoil in September 2017 after President Donald Trump announced his decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA. As the fight over dismantling DACA plays out in federal court and in Congress, DACA stories are important to localize.

STORY IDEAS:
• Thousands of DACA recipients have become K-12 teachers. The percentages are higher in ESL and foreign language classes. Would your school district lose teachers if DACA was rolled back?
• What is your school or school district’s policy on DACA? Is your school considered a “sanctuary” school? Immigration attorney and professor Dinah Haynes explains why clarifying your administration’s stance is so important, “When campuses in particular decided whether to be sanctuary campuses, I know a lot of them specifically avoided the name because they feared that it would encourage ICE to visit them, and there’s something to that fear.”
• Many DACA recipients come from mixed-status families, where some family members are undocumented while others are U.S. citizens. How would families in your community be affected?

RESOURCES:
The Migration Policy Institute is one of the best places to find accurate estimates of people that could be impacted by ending DACA. Social media can be used to find DACA recipients and other potential sources and to monitor the conversations surrounding DACA.

Sources in favor of repealing DACA:
• The Heritage Foundation
• Immigration Reform Law Institute
• Federation for American Immigration
• Center for Immigration Studies

Sources against repealing DACA:
• Immigrant Legal Resource Center
• TheDream.US
• National Education Association
• Center for Law and Social Policy

To learn more about covering DACA, including the dangers of naming sources (even if they are willing), visit splc.org and search “Deciphering DACA.” The SPLC partnered with Education Writers Association to create a webinar answering your most pressing questions.

Photo: Flickr / Molly Adams CC by 2.0
AVOIDING (OR SURVIVING) CONFRONTATIONS

1. **Wear conspicuous press credentials**, even if they are just created by your publication. Make contact with officers when you arrive at the scene to identify yourself as a journalist.

2. **Never escalate a confrontation** by laying hands on a police officer, physically resisting the seizure of your camera or directly disobeying an order; a calm and respectful counter-argument is much more likely to succeed than a defiant one.

3. **Upload photos regularly** if your camera is wireless-enabled. Your cameras will be seized if you are arrested, and even if the memory cards are returned, images may have been (unlawfully) deleted.

4. **Consider buying disposable phones** to cover the event. If confiscated, you will not lose professional and personal contacts. In any event, back-up your device first. Turn off your phone’s fingerprint scanner when covering protests and refuse to give your password. Memorize or write important phone numbers on your arm in Sharpie. Have numbers of people you’ll call in an emergency, including several editors’ cell phones. Carry quarters in case the jail provides only a pay phone.

5. **Inventory your belongings** (cellphone, camera, audio recorder) in advance — you’ll need as much detail as possible if you are trying to reclaim an item at the jail that’s been taken from you.

6. **Call someone trusted** (editor, advisers, parent, spouse) the moment that it appears you’re about to get arrested, because it may be hours before you can get access to a phone if you’re jailed. Use Twitter and other publicly accessible channels to get the word out widely so people will know where to look for you. If a confrontation appears inevitable, consider starting a livestream. You risk sharing unblurred images of protest participants and bystanders, which could potentially endanger them.

7. **Gather all the information** you can about your arrest — record or videotape the arrest if you can, make sure you know which police agency made the arrest and, if possible, get the names of all officers involved and of any witnesses.

8. **Ask for legal representation** if you are being interrogated while at the jail — and then stop the conversation completely.

9. **Read the fine print** of anything you are asked to sign — and think very carefully before you sign a “post and forfeit” bond, because that means you are agreeing to admit what you’re charged with and waive a court appearance.

10. **Demand a court appearance** if you have been held for more than 24 hours without being taken before a judge or magistrate.
MARCH
FOR OUR LIVES

Photos by: Macy McClintock, Gabriel Greschler, Mobilus In Mobili, Roger Jones
Students walk out and the Student Press Law Center steps up

As students lead walkouts and actions across the nation to demand an end to gun violence, the Student Press Law Center — the nation’s only legal services organization dedicated solely to protecting the First Amendment rights of student journalists — launched an expanded legal hotline and resource hub to ensure safe and accurate reporting on this movement.

“Student actions matter — and student voices need to be heard. The extraordinary national movement led by Florida high school students who survived the murderous attack on Feb. 14, have led to school walk-outs, rallies, lobbying efforts and plans for a national day of action, March for Our Lives, on March 24 and a national walk-out on April 20, the anniversary of the Columbine High School massacre. While the SPLC has no position on gun control, we do strongly support the rights of student journalists to have unfettered access to cover these events without the threat of censorship.

- SPLC Executive Director Hadar Harris

“Objective coverage is the best way to give the movement exposure.”

– Oscar Zahner
The Ballard Talisman, Seattle

“Not only will my publication be recording history, but we’re going to be a part of it. I like to think that’s what we’re going to be doing.”

– Becca Schneid
The Eagle Eye, Parkland, Florida
Who tells the story of a college campus? A 2010 survey of 212 schools found annual median spending of a midsized college or university on marketing was $800,000, more than double what they spent ten years prior. At the same time, funding for independent student media is drying up.

On some campuses, student media and PR professionals have built constructive, communicative relationships, recognizing their different roles and establishing a working dynamic. But elsewhere, this shifting power dynamic has allowed college PR offices to deceptively spin stories, masquerade as news, deny student reporters access to sources, and infringe on student media’s editorial independence.

SPINNING THE STORY

Perhaps one of the most egregious examples in recent years of a PR office manipulating a narrative comes from the University of New Hampshire, which in 2016 received an unrestricted gift of $4 million after the death of a quiet librarian, Robert Morin, who had saved up the money during a lifetime of frugal spending.

As reported in an investigation by Deadspin, UNH allocated $1 million of his gift to a new scoreboard for its football stadium (compared to only $100,000 to the library). The PR office then researched his life, and upon discovering that he started watching football games while in an assisted living center, played up that fact to misleadingly imply that the allocation was made to reflect his interests, when in fact it had been decided months beforehand. The national media, at least initially, lapped it up and ran with the story as presented to them by the PR office.

Chris Evans, the president of the College Media Association and adviser to student media at the University of Vermont, said influencing media coverage is part of a PR official’s job. “If you’re doing your work well, you can create a press release and give it to a newspaper and a lazy reporter will take off your name from the byline space and put his or her name in the byline space and publish it that way,” he said. “And then you’ve had the ultimate success as a PR professional: you have had your version of events...
published as the objective version of events.”

Teresa Valerio Parrot, principal of TVP Communications, a Denver-based firm which consults for university PR offices, defended the work of PR officials by pointing to their professionalism and codes of ethics. “I don’t work with colleagues who believe in spin or who believe in lying,” she said. “We hold ourselves to high standards.”

Christian Basi, the director of the University of Missouri’s PR office, agreed. He sees his role with journalists as just ensuring that the university’s perspective is represented, and has no qualms about the ethics of his work because he supports the university’s mission.

Still, Evans said journalists have a responsibility to treat information provided by PR officials with skepticism. “A good journalist is not someone who is merely echoing or passing along what the administration wants them to say,” he said.

**MASQUERADING AS MEDIA**

Some PR offices go even further and pretend to be news outlets themselves.

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University was rebuked by its student paper, The Famuan, after university president Elmira Mangum presented an upgrade to its website as the launch of the school’s “official newspaper” in 2015. “It won’t be the FAMUAN. It’ll be a real newspaper, like the Wall Street Journal,” she reportedly told students. She later tried to quell concern, writing that “the University is not creating a ‘new’ newspaper; it is merely updating and upgrading its existing online news site.”

Doane University in Nebraska received similar criticism in November 2017 for dubbing its PR website “the official news source of Doane University.”

Many PR offices obscure their role through euphemistic titles like “communications,” “public affairs,” or even “news” instead of more direct language like “PR” or “marketing.”

Basi’s office calls itself the University of Missouri’s News Bureau. He said that the office considered changing its name, but decided against it to avoid confusing people at the university familiar with it.

Evans noted that poor media literacy among the general public can make them more susceptible to PR masquerading as news. “Colleges are definitely going to try to get out their message in a way that looks newsy,” he said. “To a certain degree, it’s on the recipients of that information to recognize it for what it is, which is a public relations publication.”

**LIMITING ACCESS**

PR offices sometimes try to block reporters from obtaining information they could use to write a negative story.

At Harvard University, The Crimson published an investigative feature in 2013 about the Harvard Public Affairs and Communications office. It explored the concern among some faculty and students that “the rise of HPAC has replaced openness with guardedness and a diverse dialogue with a homogenized message.”

Richard Parker, a media researcher at Harvard, lamented this tight control. “If anything, I think that the willingness to put under the microscope our faults as well as our successes is a measure of how great a university we are,” he told The Crimson.

Bill Jaeger, director of the Harvard Union for Clerical and Technical Workers, told the paper that, as a result of administrative pressure, over the past few years “our members have been internalizing the general idea that they best say, ‘No comment.’”

It’s not just Harvard. Many schools have taken to routing all interviews requests for staff through their office through either explicit rules or established norms.

Evans denounced this trend. “The PR office can and should be a conduit to other voices on campuses, but should never be an impediment to reaching those other voices on campus,” he said.

In June 2017, student media at Keene State University in New Hampshire pressured their administration to adopt a policy preventing such routing after enduring what they described as “a
pattern of suppression and obstruction” by the university.

PR officials also sometimes insist on sitting in on and recording student reporters’ interviews with faculty and administrators.

A 2015 resolution by the Society for Professional Journalists condemned interview monitoring. “Government agencies can misuse monitoring and pre-approval requirements as ways to chill speech, spin the message and hide wrongdoing. … When [PR officials] use pre-approval and monitoring to curtail what journalists can ask and how interviewees can answer, they exert a form of control over how reporters understand an issue and what they write — and hence the information the public receives,” it read.

Rich Bagin, the executive director of the National School Public Relations Association, which represents PR professionals at K-12 schools and boasts 33 chapters across the U.S., defended this practice. He wrote in a 2014 blog post that it was not about intimidation but accountability: “It levels the playing field and establishes proof about what you said in case a story goes astray from what you actually said during the interview.”

Sometimes universities try to prevent interviews from taking place at all.

The Columbia Missourian reported in September 2017 on an internal crisis planning document for the University of Missouri it obtained through a public records request. It notes that “Historically, the philosophy with the media, especially local media, has been to quickly respond to their request, offering access to spokespeople as requested.” However, the document, which was written in consultation with the Edelman PR firm, which was hired after campus unrest during the fall of 2015, lays out a plan to “shift this mentality to control the narrative, by respectfully providing access on our own terms.” Those terms include a heavier reliance on pre-written statements that can be more tightly controlled.

Parrot, whose firm specializes in crisis communications for universities, noted in a fall 2012 article for the American Council on Education that “there is danger in over-communicating just as there is in under-communicating. Unnecessarily adding too much emotion to a situation could inadvertently inflate it to crisis levels.”

However, in a recent interview with the SPLC, she said her firm “advocates for sharing as much information as we’re legally allowed to share,” and that while withholding information can boost an organization’s reputation in the short term, it inevitably destroys trust in the long term that can be difficult to restore.

The obstruction isn’t limited to the college level. The Education Writers Association surveyed 190 education reporters in 2014, most of whom cover K-12, and found that 76 percent agreed with the statement that “The public is not getting the information it needs because of barriers schools, institutions or departments are imposing on journalists’ reporting practices.”

An accompanying statement from the association’s Public Editor, Emily Richmond, noted that “even basic requests often require multiple phone calls and emails, negotiating terms, and attempts to limit the scope of an interview. All of these things eat up the valuable—and ever-shrinking—amount of time reporters have to get their jobs done.”

ERODING EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE

When spin and controlling access fail, some universities resort to more direct methods of influence.

The editor of the student newspaper at Colorado State University, Erin Douglas, accused the university’s PR office in September 2017 of employing intimidation tactics. “I’ve had poor experiences with the PR at this university. I’ve had them call my reporters and yell at them and tell them they’re being unethical and they’re not being true journalists,” she said. “I just find it totally inappropriate.”

The university’s spokesperson, Mike Hooker, said his office has, on occasion, talked to reporters about

“As editorial staffs shrink, there is less ability for news media to interrogate and counter the claims in press releases.

- Robert McChesney and John Nichols
inaccuracies in their work, but he said “we do that politely and we do it professionally.” He added that he considers it “a natural part of the relationship” between his office and student media, and that he urges anyone who feels mistreated to reach out to him.

At Santa Clara University in California, administrators reached out to the student paper, The Santa Clara, in March 2017 to request that it take down an article containing a quote from a donor critical of the dean of the school of engineering. The paper receives a large amount of funding from the university, and although this was never explicitly threatened, the paper’s news editor told the SPLC that the fear of financial retaliation was a consideration in their ultimate decision to remove several of the offending paragraphs.

These sorts of incidents, while troubling, do not always reflect malicious intent. According to Evans, sometimes unskilled administrators expect a newspaper to serve “as a PR arm of the college,” which can lead to conflict.

In 2015, Butler University administrators sparked controversy when they appointed Marc Allan, the News Manager for their PR office, as an interim adviser of the student newspaper without releasing him from his role as a PR official. Allan, who previously worked as a professional journalist for over two decades, said he felt he would have been able to compartmentalize his two roles, but that he understands why others perceived there to be a conflict of interest. The university quickly reversed the appointment after a national outcry.

The fact that many universities combine their PR and journalism schools into a single department can also cause problems.

At Indiana University, the Indiana Daily Student published an editorial in 2015 criticizing a proposed merger between the two schools. The university claimed the merger would allow for a partnership with the athletics department to use new technology for sports journalism, but the editors feared that the partnership would present a conflict of interest and erode their editorial independence. The merger went through.

**PAPERS OVERPOWERED BY PR**

The size of PR offices can vary widely among universities. Basi said the University of Missouri currently has five full-time employees in his office, whereas The Crimson’s 2013 report found that HPAC had over 50 employees at the time, and that similar colleges had around 30.

Student newspapers, operating with budget shortfalls and a limited staff, can sometimes struggle to compete.

“As editorial staffs shrink, there is less ability for news media to interrogate and counter the claims in press releases,” write Robert McChesney and John Nichols in their 2010 book The Death and Life of American Journalism: The Media Revolution That Will Begin the World Again. They were referring to a trend in professional media, but it also impacts colleges.

The SPLC reached out to the PR offices at Harvard, Santa Clara, and the University of North Carolina in October to request interviews, and followed up in November after receiving no response. They did not reply.
STUDENT PRESS LAW CENTER
1608 Rhode Island Ave NW, Suite 211
Washington, D.C. 20036
Phone: (202) 785-5450
Website: splc.org

The Student Press Law Center gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the following institutions and individuals who have joined in our effort to defend the rights of student journalists.

(Contributions made in 2017)

FREEDOM FIGHTERS
($10,000 or more)
Craiglist Charitable Fund, The Democracy Fund, Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation, Journalism Education Association, Robert R. McCormick Foundation, Yellow Chair Foundation

STUDENT VOICE CHAMPIONS
($5,000 - $9,999)
Herb Block Foundation, Rita Allen Foundation, Western Association of University Publication Managers

FREE PRESS PROTECTORS
($1,000 to $4,999)

STUDENT VOICE ADVOCATES
($500 to $999)

FIRST AMENDMENT FRIENDS
($100 to $499)

Gifts were received in honor of:
Cornell Daily Sun, Emily Smith, Frank LoMonte, G. Patrick Siddons, Hadar Harris, IHS Tattler, Kelsey O’Connor, Kim Green, Maira Garcia, Mary Patrick, Matt Butler, Michael Koretsky, Richard Griffiths, Sam and Max Strickberger, The Daily Orange, Tinker Tour

Gifts were received in memory of:

*Indicates monthly donor

To support our work, visit splc.org/page/donate

The SPLC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charity.