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2020

### Best Practices for Student-led Publishing

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#### Dartmouth Digital Commons Citation

Corwin, Victoria, "Best Practices for Student-led Publishing" (2020). *Dartmouth Library Staff Publications*. 23.

<https://digitalcommons.dartmouth.edu/dlstaffpubs/23>

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## Best Practices for Student-Led Publishing

The Dartmouth Library engages with student writers and editors to support and advise publications. This guide was written by Victoria Corwin, Edward Connery Lathem Digital Library Fellow, in June 2020 after extensive literature reviews, interviews, and personal experience as a student Editor in Chief for three years.

This document covers some best practices for many aspects of student publishing at Dartmouth, including starting a publication, finding support, securing funding, publishing content, increasing visibility, copyright advice, and much more. The resources listed here apply to all types of publications, such as literary magazines, science journals, newspapers, blogs, and zines. This guide can and should be used in any way that best benefits your journal, as a starting point to develop your own personalized best practices and publishing styles. **Always seek more information whenever you need it, and remember to make full use of any resources available to you!**

**People are your most useful resources, and from the Library, you can contact:**

- [Scholarly Communication, Copyright, and Publishing Program](#)
  - [Stephen Krueger](#), Scholarly Publishing Librarian
  - [Shawn Martin](#), Head of Scholarly Communication, Copyright, and Publishing
- [Dartmouth Digital Commons team](#)

**Faculty, students and staff with publishing experience are often happy to share that experience.** Contact your publication's alumni or faculty director, any relevant departments or subject librarians, and **your fellow Editors in Chief from other student publications.** To learn and grow as a healthy and substantial campus publication culture, it is important to communicate and share practices with each other as peer publications!

## Starting (or Revamping) a Publication

Student publications are essential expressive outlets for the student body on any college campus, and frequently shape campus culture through both news stories and literary pieces alike. **Starting a new publication is difficult, but this should not deter new publications from beginning their journey!**

Similarly, **keeping a publication running is just as difficult as starting a new one.** Before you start a new publication, consider **reviving or revamping a defunct publication** from the College's long, rich history of student publications of all types. Most active publications today (including [Black Praxis](#), [In Your Face!](#), [The Stonefence Review](#), and [The Dartmouth Jack-o-Lantern](#)) have gone through many dormant periods and many revivals, with each new group of students providing a new spin on its historical content. It is easier to plan for content around an existing idea, and easier to garnish support for an extant journal (especially with

historical background) than a new one. Also, keeping publications alive helps keep Dartmouth's student publishing history alive!

Whether you are starting a new publication or reviving an old one, here are a few questions to consider to help shape your publication:

1. **Mission statement and Scope:** What is the purpose of this publication? In general terms, what does it cover?
2. **Subject:** What areas of inquiry does your publication cover? For instance, is it a literary magazine that publishes original fiction, prose, and poetry? Does it publish research in the social sciences or sciences? If you want ideas, refer to the [Library of Congress Classification Outline](#) and/or the [bepress Digital Commons taxonomy](#) that Dartmouth uses to categorize its own content.
3. **Type of Content:** what is the nature of the content for a substantive part of the publication? Examples are: short stories, research articles, editorials, art work, poems, conference reports, book reviews, photography.
4. **Sections of the publication:** based on the type of content, designate sections of the publication. Some examples include: Poetry, Prose, Art, Opinion, Editorial, Cartoons, Featured, Articles, Humor, Current Events, etc.
5. **Contributors:** Who can contribute to the publication? Dartmouth students only, Dartmouth alumni, faculty, or staff, people from across the state, country, or the world?
6. **Audience:** What is the primary target group, both as contributors and as readers? Undergraduates, general public, professionals?
7. **Language:** What languages are accepted? Are translations accepted?
8. **Overlap:** Is there already a Dartmouth publication with a similar scope? Would both publications be able to sustain themselves in the same environment? Is there an established publication that is dormant, that you could revive? Rauner Library has back issues of past publications available in their archives.
9. **Funding and support:** Is there a fund or endowment for the publication? Does an academic department or student organization support publication costs? Is there a faculty or staff advisor?

#### **How do we become recognized and supported by the College?**

- The [Council on Student Organizations \(COSO\)](#) has the authority to formally recognize a student organization, and provide funding and a Dartmouth email address.
  - Read about COSO's policies for student publications [here](#).
- Every organization needs a **faculty advisor** and a large enough petition of membership to be recognized (usually around 10 people).
  - Ask friends, classmates, or others interested in your publication's subject area to assemble an initial team.

#### **How do we identify a good faculty advisor?**

- Potential advisors are everywhere! Think about professors who have taught classes you enjoyed, who you have good relations with, or who share an interest in your publication's mission or content.
- Faculty advisors do **not** need to be associated with a specific department in order to be accepted. Consider faculty members outside of your relevant department who may be interested in your topics.
- Think about the **type** of faculty advisor your publication needs. Do you want them to be highly involved, or completely hands-off? Do you need their expertise in a specific subject area? Do you need someone to help with networking and advertising to a larger audience in the field, or someone to learn how to provide editing suggestions?
- Ask the faculty member directly, and tell them about your publication. If they decline, they may know of someone else more suited for the job!

## Funding

### Where can we find funding?

- **COSO** distributes funds for student publications to print or otherwise publish their media, and also provides \$100 per student organization per term for going to their 1-hour policy orientation meeting at the beginning of term--where they will also teach you how to request and use funding, interface with Engage, and other policies and procedures essential for every student organization.
  - **Go Green Initiative:** if publications are completely digital, COSO will cover costs for domain hosting, web design, and provide a \$100 incentive per term that the publication is exclusively published online.
- You may find support from a **related academic department**--check in with their administrator, or contact your publication's faculty advisor. Some departments that already support student publications in one way or another include:
  - English and Creative Writing ([Stonefence Review](#), [HUMBUG](#))
  - The Guarini Institute ([Alterity](#))
  - Sciences: Mathematics, Physics, Biology, Earth Sciences, Engineering ([Dartmouth Undergraduate Journal of Science](#))
  - Government ([Dartmouth Undergraduate Journal of Politics, Economics and World Affairs](#))
  - Other departments that may be open to supporting a publication include: Studio Art, Economics, the Office of Pluralism and Leadership, African and African American Studies, Philosophy, and Anthropology.
- **Subscription fees** are one route to take for funding outside of the college. Readers can pay for premium content, or for issues delivered directly to them.

### What can we do with our funding?

- **COSO** supports:
  - Paper printing

- Online publishing
- Travel and conferences
- Campus-wide events your publication hosts, like reading events
- You can also receive funding for food at meetings, art supplies, poetry magazine subscriptions, etc. It is your money to use in whatever way would best benefit your organization!

## Deciding what to Publish

### How do we edit submissions? Should we edit our submissions?

**This is a learned skill for every publication, but this does not mean there is no one to help you!** Your faculty advisor or other trusted faculty or staff member can provide guidance based on what type of content you publish, and you can ask other student editors for advice as well.

A clear statement of your selection and review criteria helps make transitions among editors and reviewers go more smoothly. It is important to describe the review processes, to make it clear if this includes peer review, or if it consists of editorial review by members of the editorial board, and how long it takes to hear if a contribution has been accepted. It also helps you solicit materials and engage contributors, because people know what review criteria you will be applying.

Editorial review is the more common approach in student-led publishing, although some publications may use peer review. Your criteria can be very brief or quite elaborate. You should state whether your editorial review process includes making suggestions for revisions to the work. You should be able to justify accepting as is, accepting with revisions, or rejecting a contribution.

Criteria should cover at least these points:

1. Does the work need to be original?
2. Does the work need to be unpublished?
3. Does the work fit the scope of the publication?
4. Is it clearly written in a style appropriate to the genre?
5. Does the writing match expectations in the fields covered by the publication?
6. Does it contribute to the kinds of communication intended by the publication?
7. Does the work have all the expected components for this publication, such as references to the relevant literature if it is a research article?

If you are using Digital Commons as a platform, there are manuscript editing tools to help maintain and control editing workflows for your submissions.

### **How much content should we publish?**

- This is dependent on what your publication wants, how it publishes, and how many submissions you regularly receive.
- If you publish in regular issues, consider how much of what types of content you wish to represent. Do you want a few longer stories accompanied by more poems, or a set number of each type of submission?
- If you publish intermittently, consider how much time you want to space out the content being published. Do you want daily or weekly updates, or to wait to make publishing decisions based on when you receive a specific number of submissions?
- As your readership grows and more submissions come in, you can choose to broaden the number of pieces you accept into the publication to reflect this change. More content could bring in more readers, but don't feel that you must sacrifice your editing process to accept more content!

### **What should we tell our potential contributors?**

- Make sure that somewhere (either on calls for submissions, a website's About page or Submit page, or in an automatic email to any contributors), you clearly outline what your publication does and does not do, whether it is directly editing, making suggestions, accepting content as-is, or allowing the author to submit minor changes if the content is accepted.
- Consider keeping in contact with your potential contributors, so they know their work is being reviewed. You can set an automatic email reply that confirms a submission, and that any submissions received will be reviewed, or state a timeline for publication somewhere on your call for submissions.
- If you have an editorial process, make sure you alert the author in a timely manner of any edits that should be made. If your editorial board directly edits the piece, make sure the author has a chance to review these edits.
- You should also send acceptance notices to those authors who you choose to publish. These notices can include when and where their content will be published, if there are edits to be made over time, or any other pertinent information the author may want to know.
- It is up to you to decide whether to notify those authors who you reject. If there are a large number of rejected pieces, you may choose to send a short form notice, or forego this step and make it clear that if an author does not hear back from you by a certain date, that their content has been rejected.

### **Copyright and Author Rights**

Will the journal accept content that has already been published elsewhere? Authors own copyright, but often will sign away those rights to publishers. So, keep in mind that authors may already have given their copyright to the place where the content is already published, and therefore you would need to ask permission to re-publish their content. Conversely, your journal

will also need to think about whether your authors would have permission to publish their work elsewhere, if it's published in your journal.

Generally for student led publishing, the author should retain copyright and the publication can ask that the contributors license their work under a [Creative Commons](#) license. Creative Commons is an easy to use tool that allows you to create copyright licenses with authors.

**Contact the [Scholarly Communications](#) team for advice on this issue.**

### **What is an ISSN? Do we need one?**

- An ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) is a unique and persistent identifier for publications both in print and online.
- ISSNs are used by libraries to archive, catalog, and lend publications easily.
- ISSNs make it easier for readers to search for and identify publications, much like ISBNs for books operate.
- ISSNs also make it easier for libraries and publishers to index and aggregate your journal into large databases of other journals, thus making it easier to find.
- ISSNs are not required in order to create a journal, but do make it easier to find, and hopefully to draw more readers to your journal.
- In general, if a publication exists in print and online, then it should have both an ISSN for the print version and an ISSN for the electronic version. You can register for one for free at the [ISSN website](#).

## **Publishing**

### **What format should we publish in?**

- Print, digital, or a combination of both are all viable options with Dartmouth support.
- **Print** issues are easier to distribute on a small campus, and are their own form of advertising if placed in strategic areas around campus.
- **Digital** issues are easier to produce and maintain, and come with the option of intermittent and constant publishing cycles throughout the year.
- **Combining both** can provide the opportunity to print physical issues once in a while, without the need to secure funding for large printing projects every term the publication intends to publish material.

### **How do we do Print publishing?**

- Print media can take the form of bound book copies, newspapers, pamphlets, or zines
- [COSO provides funding for printing issues](#)
- [Gnomon Copy](#) is in downtown Hanover and provides professional printing services
- The [Book Arts Studio](#) provides tools and a space for making your own books and promotional items such as posters, postcards, bookmarks, or coasters for a flexible budget
- The Thayer School of Engineering has free public color printers and bindings for small scale projects

### How can we design our physical issues?

- [InDesign](#) and other Adobe Suite programs are available in [Jones Media Center](#) for free
- Jones can also provide some support for learning these programs

### How do we do Online publishing?

- Digital media could include a website, Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook.
- [COSO provides funding for online publishing](#), and their **Go Green Initiative** covers costs for domain hosting and web design, and provides a \$100 incentive per term that the publication is exclusively published online.

### What platform should we use for online publishing?

- You can use a [Digital Commons](#) site for free with Dartmouth's support. Contact Stephen Krueger at [Scholarly Communications](#) for details and to set a site up.
  - **Digital Commons** is a common university platform for open access scholarship and creative work. You can customize almost every aspect of your website with Dartmouth's help. This platform also includes a **digital manuscript editing and handling system**, to provide feedback directly to your contributors.
  - Examples: [I2](#), [Dartmouth Undergraduate Journal of Politics, Economics, and World Affairs](#).
- Dartmouth ITC supports free [Wordpress](#) sites. Contact the [Learning Design team](#) for more information.
  - **Wordpress** is a blog-like site, with many widgets available under Dartmouth's license.
  - Examples: [The Dartmouth Jack-o-Lantern](#), [The Dartmouth Business Review](#), [The Dartmouth Undergraduate Journal of Science](#)
- Other options not supported by Dartmouth include:
  - [Squarespace](#) is a typical, flexible website experience. Example: [Stonefence Review](#).
  - [Issuu](#) provides a flippable digitized version of a print issue. Example: [Black Praxis](#).
  - [SNworks](#) is an advanced website design experience with revenue options available. Example: [The Dartmouth](#).

### How often should we publish?

- This is totally up to your publication, and how you want it to work:
  - **Termly or yearly issues** allow for a long submission window and editing process, with a finished product at the end of the period of publication to present to readers. This is more suitable for a call-for-submissions mode of publishing, where the contributing base is large and does not primarily include members of the organization, as in literary magazines.
    - Examples: [I2](#), [In Your Face!](#), [Black Praxis's main issues](#), [Stonefence Review](#).
  - **Intermittent publishing** involves rolling submissions and publication of those submissions. Typically, an intermittent publication would include occasional



articles, editorials, and the like throughout the course of the year. This is more suitable if the primary contributors are part of the organization itself, as in newspapers.

- Examples: [Black Praxis's article runs](#), [The Dartmouth Jack-o-Lantern](#), [The Dartmouth](#).

### What should we do with our back issues?

- **It is important to think about the longevity and preservation of your publication on Dartmouth's campus. To avoid losing content if executives graduate or websites expire, you should archive it.** You should take a copy of your print issues to Rauner for archiving. Contact the Rauner team [here](#).
- **Your websites (both old and current) can and should also be archived in Rauner.** Consider creating an archival website if one does not already exist, and archive it with the Rauner staff as well.
- [Digital Commons](#) can be used as a free platform to store your back issues online, as an archival site of your publication. To set up a space in Digital Commons for back issues of your publication, contact the [Scholarly Communication, Copyright, and Publishing Program](#).

## Increasing Visibility and Readership

### How do we gain visibility, readership, and contributions?

- **Open meetings** advertised to campus at the beginning of the term can be a great way to attract new people.
- [COSO](#)'s yearly **student activities fair** for incoming first-years provides a tabling opportunity to pull in new team members and raise awareness of your publication in the new first-year class.
- **Posters** hung around campus can advertise the latest issue, your website, or submission deadlines
- **Regular campus-wide emails** should advertise submission deadlines and details on how to contribute
- **Social events**, such as readings, dinner discussions, coffee hours, study breaks, creative nights, or academic debates can boost visibility and attract new team members.
- **It is important to ensure there are younger students willing to take on the publication after those in charge graduate.** Advertise to younger classes, and train first-years, sophomores, and juniors on your team to take on important leadership roles while you are still able to do so. Consider starting the elections and turnover process in the winter or spring, while there are still veteran members to mentor the new leadership.
- Consider **staying connected with young alumni** of your publication with social media groups or email updates, and encourage your alumni to continue contributing or spreading awareness of your publication. **Look at the authors included in your back issues to see who was involved and where they are now!**

## How do we build relationships with other publications, both in and outside of Dartmouth?

- **Good relationships with other publications can lead to new opportunities and networking possibilities.** Other publications are your colleagues and should be your friends!
- Approach and ask them to advertise to their readership or contributors, and offer to do the same in turn.
- Host **joint events** with other publications that would provide interesting crossover and conversation to those in attendance. Joint events usually pull more turnout by combining readership bases. This also lowers costs, and spreads readership and interest for each publication involved!
- The yearly **Student-Led Publishing Fair** run by the Dartmouth Library is a meetup for all those interested in publishing. This is an opportunity to meet other editors, exchange best practices and experiences, and talk to new people.
- **Listservs** are a very useful tool, and many are used to keep publications under the same topic in contact with each other both locally and across the country. Ask your faculty advisors and fellow editors for any contact information, whether it be from conferences, publishing fairs, or simple internet searches.