Politics and Ethics

**Political Coverage**

* Students should strive to remain impartial. As a journalist, it is your job to help the public distinguish fact from fiction when possible.
* Remain transparent. Develop a habit of identifying the new value of a story. During elections, it’s important to help readers understand the beliefs and support of a political candidate to help others digest information to make an informed decision.
* Editorials and columns should be clearly identified. Opinion should be clearly expressed and identified.

**Political Involvement:**

* Journalists covering politics should be aware of their actions and political involvement. As for any journalist, students should avoid any conflicts of interest.
  + *“The simplest answer is “No.” Don’t do it. Don’t get involved. Don’t contribute money, don’t work in a campaign, don’t lobby, and especially, don’t run for office yourself.” –* [*Society of Professional Journalists*](https://www.spj.org/ethics-papers-politics.asp)
* Students should refrain from publicly displaying political campaign posters, signs and other items. Personal views should remain private. Voting is an expression of support that can remain private.

**Political Ads**

* Be equal. Give all candidates equal time (radio and TV) and equal cost for political ads.
* As defined in the Student Press Law Center’s policy on Commercial Speech:
  + *“Advertising is constitutionally protected expression. Student media may accept advertising. Acceptance or rejection of advertising is within the purview of the publication staff, which may accept any ads except those for products or services that are illegal for all students. Advertisements for political candidates and ballot issues may be accepted; however publication staffs are encouraged to solicit ads from all sides on such issues.” –* [*Student Press Law Center*](https://splc.org/2015/11/splc-college-student-media-model-guidelines/)
* Advertisements that include libelous or obscene material will NOT be published.