

## CAREER/MAJOR RELATED PROJECT PROPOSAL

TO: Sergey Rybas, Professor  
FROM: Sarah Unger  
DATE: March 27, 2011  
SUBJECT: Career/Major Related Project Proposal

### Introduction

*The Chimes* is Capital's student-run newspaper and although it has been published since 1926, there has never been an official handbook created. Instead, each staff has had to create the paper by following rules passed down by both previous staff members and the advisor. While this process has seemed to somewhat work, it has also made it very difficult for each new editor-in-chief.

The role of *the Chimes* editor-in-chief is to not only plan the content and ads page by page and to oversee editorial decisions, but it is to also ensure that there is a style and design created that is consistent throughout the paper. In order to create consistency in the paper, it is important to have rules for not only style and design, but for the organization as a whole.

This is why, for my Career/Major Related Project, I am proposing to create a handbook for *the Chimes*. This handbook would feature not only the rules for design of the page, but it will also contain information for reporters, the business manager, and quick tips for editors and the editor-in-chief. By creating a handbook for the paper, I would essentially be making next year's staff more prepared to manage *the Chimes*.

### Basic Project Description

The handbook that I am proposing will not only include a stylebook, but it will also include any information that the staff may need to ensure that the paper will run smoothly. It will have rules, job descriptions, tips, and, most importantly, a stylebook. The handbook will be designed with my audience—*the Chimes* staff—in mind. It will not only be easy to read and include examples and pictures, but it will also use a language that the staff can understand. I want this handbook to be something that each staff member can use, whether they are a beginner reporter or the editor-in-chief. I imagine that the handbook will serve as a reference for the editor-in-chief at the beginning of the year when they are starting the position, but not really sure what to do first, as well as something for staff members to look at later in the year if they forget how to do something as basic as a jump. I will give *the Chimes* the handbook in the form

of a paper copy designed for this year's staff, but I will also provide an electronic copy (so that the next editor-in-chief can make changes as needed in the years to come).

## Table of Contents

In order for the manual to be easy to read and to serve as a reference guide, it will be split up into sections.

- Introduction to the handbook
- Table of Contents
- *Section One*: Code of Ethics
- *Section Two*: Stylebook
- *Section Three*: Job Descriptions
- *Section Four*: Reporting
- *Section Five*: Opinion Content
- *Section Six*: Editor-in-Chief
- *Section Seven*: Advertising in *the Chimes*
- *Section Eight*: Distributing the paper

## In-depth Handbook Description

### Introduction

The introduction of the handbook will discuss what can be found in the handbook and why it was created. It will note the importance of having the handbook as a reference tool for everyone on staff and will suggest to the audience that anytime they can't remember something or are feeling lost, that this is the book to look back at.

### Section One: Code of Ethics

As part of College Media Advisors and the Associated Collegiate Press, there are a few codes of ethics that *the Chimes* follows while in publication. Right now these codes are just posted on a bulletin board in the office. I think it is important for these codes to be included in the handbook as a set mission for the paper and to serve as the paper's core values. Listing these codes of ethics first creates a statement for both the newspaper and for the handbook.

### Section Two: Stylebook

Undeniably the most important chapter, and most likely the most used in the handbook, is the stylebook section. The stylebook serves as the basic rules and regulations for the design of the paper. It will tell page editors which fonts are acceptable to use, how to create bi-lines, how to properly do a jump and it will cover the basic design of the paper. Any time a page editor or the editor-in-chief has a question about style, this will be what they refer to. Currently, the Chimes

has a few set rules for style, but this stylebook will mostly be new for the paper and will serve as the basics for page editors when it comes to designing their pages each week. By having a stylebook, the paper will be more consistent.

### Section Three: Job Descriptions

This section will give the job descriptions for each member on staff. Currently, *the Chimes* only has basic descriptions for page editors and the editor-in-chief. This section will list all of the positions and give a through description for each. I'm including this section in the handbook in case someone has a question about what they're supposed to be doing or whether or not something particular is part of their position. This section will also include an example of the timesheet that all staff members must fill out each week. It will give instructions on how to fill out the sheet and where to put it when they are finished.

### Section Four: Reporting

It's hard to be a reporter without basic reporting skills or tips. This section will give reporters tips on interviewing, the top 10 AP style errors, and will let them know when deadlines are. It will also include important numbers/emails for people they should know, as well as locations of offices on campus (for example, the PR department at Capital is located on the second floor of Yochum).

### Section Five: Opinion Content

When it comes to opinion content, *the Chimes* has an editorial policy that must be followed. This section will list that policy, as well as give tips for the opinion editor—such as when it's ok to edit opinion pieces and suggested evergreen topics for opinion pieces when it's a slow week.

### Section Six: Editor-in-Chief

For the editor-in-chief of *the Chimes*, this is going to be a reference that they will use throughout the whole year. It will give the editor-in-chief tips on how to run the newsroom, the process for sending the paper to press, and even whom to give completed timesheets to.

### Section Seven: Advertising in *the Chimes*

This will give anyone from the business manager to the editor-in-chief the ad rates of the Chimes, as well as a basic overview of how selling ads works. It will show deadlines for ad sales, as well as the basic format for sending out a bill.

## Section Eight: Distributing the Paper

*The Chimes* not only distributes its papers in the purple boxes around campus, but it also conveniently places them in offices and highly populated areas of campus to make it easier for students and faculty/staff to pick up. This section will give the circulation manager instructions for pickup and delivery of the Chimes including the directions to the printer and where the papers are distributed across campus.

## **Methodology**

To create the handbook, I will be using Microsoft Publisher. By using Publisher, I will be able to have a wider range of design features and this will make it easier to incorporate visuals and examples within each section. I think that in a handbook, it is important to not only have the audience read what you're writing, but for them to see it as well. This makes the writing more clear and gets rid of any possible confusion that the reader may have.

For the content of the handbook, I will be referencing not only the style guidelines, tips, and job descriptions that were handed down to me as editor-in-chief, but I will also be referencing my current staff and advisor for suggestions on what needs to be included. By getting feedback from staff members who could potentially use the handbook, I make sure that everything included is valid and makes it so the handbook serves as a true reference.

In the past, *the Chimes* has looked at books such as those by Harrower to get ideas on design and newspaper management. Therefore, some of the books that I will be using as research tools include:

- *Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism* by Tim Harrower
- *The Art of Editing in the Age of Convergence* by Brian S. Brooks and James L. Pinson
- *The Non-Designer's Design Book* by Robin Williams
- *The Newspaper Designer's Handbook*, also by Tim Harrower

These books will serve as a reference to make sure that I include everything that could possibly be needed when it comes to a stylebook. By researching what kinds of rules are already in place for other newspapers, I am able to bring similar rules to *the Chimes*.

As for the look of the handbook, I plan on having it professionally printed and spiral-bound with each page of the booklet being letter-sized. I will also be giving the staff an electronic copy, so that as the years go by and the style and rules of the paper changes, so can the handbook.

## Justification of Worthiness

While there are many benefits to working on this project, the most important benefit for me is the fact that I'm graduating and leaving the *the Chimes* to a new editor-in-chief and staff. I know how hard that I worked this year, especially being under a new advisor, to make sure that the paper ran smoothly and that we really created a positive identity for ourselves on campus. For me, it's important to leave this handbook as a legacy to all that has changed within the paper in the last couple of years.

Recently, some of the staff went to the College Media Advisors conference in New York where our paper was critiqued. In the critique, the judge expressed a need for a more set style; to be more consistent. In order to create a paper that is more consistent, it is important to create a handbook that includes a stylebook for the whole paper as a way of making sure the paper flows nicely. It's also important to have a handbook to use as a reference, if someone on staff is unsure of how to do something; I want it so that all they need to do is refer to the handbook—this way, the paper keeps up its consistency for years to come. As *the Chimes* continues to improve, I hope that one day I see the paper win an award—that is my dream and why I think it is so important to lay down the basic gridlines now, in hopes that future editors will add on to what I have already written and continue to improve the stylebook and all-together process.

## Timeline

Due to the fact that there is not a lot of time left in the semester and I do better if I give myself deadlines, I'm proposing a very strict timeline for my project. I'm hoping to be able to accomplish at least two to three sections a week.

<i>March 27-April 2</i>	Introduction/Code of Ethics/Job Descriptions/Opinion Content
<i>April 3-9</i>	Editor-in-Chief/Distributing the Paper/Stylebook
<i>April 10-16</i>	Reporting/Advertising in <i>the Chimes</i>
<i>April 18</i>	Project due

## Risks and Constraints

One of the biggest risks and constraints to doing this handbook is the size of the project and how much work it will take. Although much of the information that will be used in the handbook is information that is already given to staff at the beginning of the year, some of the information in the book (such as the stylebook and job descriptions) is brand new and will take a little longer to create. Right now, as I'm picturing the handbook, some of the sections will be shorter than others, so this could definitely be a big benefit when it comes to doing multiple sections a week. Another risk of doing this project is the fact that it will be created, but not actually used by future staffs. While I hope that future staffs use what I have created, everyone has their own ideas and ways to run the paper, so it is not guaranteed that the handbook will actually be put to use.

## Conclusion

As an editor-in-chief who came in under a new advisor and had to work out a lot of issues for *the Chimes* on my own, I want to be able to give the next editor-in-chief and staff something a little more concrete to work with. I'm hoping that this document serves not only as a reference, but as a way to make sure *the Chimes* lives on in the way that this year's staff planned it. In the past couple of years, the paper has gone through a lot of changes and I want this handbook to reflect those changes as well as to create a more basic guidebook to the staff. I'm hoping that it will serve as an easy-to-read handbook that is not only helpful, but will last for years to come.