



## 2023 QUILL AND SCROLL NEWS MEDIA EVALUATION JUDGING EVALUATION FORM

School

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City/State

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News Publication Name/URL

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### TYPE OF EVALUATION

- **COMPREHENSIVE NEWS MULTIMEDIA.** These critiques include extensive comments.
- **COMPREHENSIVE SINGLE NEWS MEDIUM.** These critiques include extensive comments.
- **RATINGS ONLY NEWS MULTIMEDIA.** These critiques include no comments.
- **RATINGS ONLY SINGLE NEWS MEDIUM.** These critiques include no comments.

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This Judging Evaluation Form provides guidelines judges will use in evaluating newspapers, news magazines, online news publications or comprehensive multimedia news enterprises. During the past few years, **Quill and Scroll** has worked with the **Journalism Education Association** in developing guidelines for critique judges. We began with this:

### **GOOD CRITIQUES SHOULD**

- Apply consistent and transparent expectations from judge to judge and entry to entry.
- Include concrete, specific and thorough feedback based on recognized best practices.
- Acknowledge and encourage the idea that the best student media programs are labs for experimentation. Students may be doing something that doesn't adhere to the traditional expectations outlined in the evaluation tool. Judges should be flexible enough to allow for individual choices made by student media outlets in meeting the needs of their specific audience.
- Contain specific recommendations for improvement to student media outlets in ways that improve low-performing outlets but also challenge high-performing outlets by providing next steps for growth of the media outlet.
- Include both positive comments and constructive criticism.
- Recognize that the realities of a student classroom experience differ from that of the professional media in terms of time, budget and resources available.
- Address student freedom of expression and journalism law and ethics, including copyright, plagiarism and censorship issues that are apparent to the judge.
- Address the most basic storytelling skills (reporting and writing, photojournalism, presentation, etc.).
- Address industry-standard technical skills (software usage, media platforms, etc.).
- Address targeted areas identified by an adviser or student leaders in their introductory statement.
- Provide opportunities to demonstrate growth over time (year-to-year or within years).
- Have specific deadlines for submission and be returned in a timely manner to provide useful feedback.
- Be completed by a qualified judge.

The Quill and Scroll Board of Directors has revamped this critique form to meet those expectations. We now have five areas for evaluation. They are:

1. General Practices
2. Coverage
3. Writing and Editing
4. Visuals
5. Digital — Social Media and Website (For Online Only and Multimedia Evaluations)

Judges will attach a ranking in each area. Those rankings are:

1. Superior
2. Excellent
3. Good
4. Needs Improvement

Here are the list of awards, in order of prestige:

- George H. Gallup Award
  - This means that a publication has received a “Superior” rating overall in each of the four or five (depending on type of evaluation) areas for evaluation. Four criteria are used in the news publication ratings. Five criteria for multimedia evaluations.
- International First Place Award
  - This means that a publication has received at least one “Superior” and at least one “Excellent” rating in the four or five areas for evaluation, with the other areas rated “Good.”
- International Second Place Award
  - This means that a publication has received “Good” or better in the four or five areas for evaluation, but does not qualify for the higher awards.
- International Honor Award
  - This means the publication has received at least one “Needs Improvement” rating in the four or five areas for evaluation.

In addition to providing journalism students and their advisers valuable insight as to how to improve their student publications, Quill and Scroll uses this critique service to fulfill its core missions, to “encourage, support and recognize individual student initiative and achievement in scholastic journalism, irregardless the medium.”

## CRITERION ONE: GENERAL PRACTICES

JUDGE: PLEASE HIGHLIGHT ANY AREAS THAT STAND OUT, THEN ADD COMMENTS

1. What are 3-5 areas that the staff has worked on this year?
  - a. Staff builds on prior successes and identifies areas of improvement for each school year.
  - b. Staff follows through on recommendations from previous news media evaluations.
  - c. Staff learns from mistakes and does not repeat similar errors throughout the school year.
  - d. JUDGE'S COMMENTS
  
2. What are special challenges that the staff experienced this year? These challenges could include a change of printer, a scheduling change that reduced the size of the staff, prior review restrictions, technology barriers, etc.
  - a. Uses resources and technologies available to staff.
  - b. Demonstrates resourcefulness when faced with adversity.
  - c. Advocates on behalf of student press rights.
  - d. JUDGE'S COMMENTS
  
3. What policies are in place to ensure student journalists follow ethical practices?
  - a. Student journalists undergo ethics training and establish culture of ethical journalism throughout the school year.
  - b. Policies for clarifications, corrections and retractions for all mediums/channels are in place and followed.
  - c. Policies for when and how to use anonymous sources are in place and followed.
  - d. Clarifications, corrections and retractions are timely and transparent.
  - e. Editorial processes are in place for student editors to serve as checkpoints for ethical journalism.
  - f. Potential conflicts of interest are discussed and addressed.
  - g. Policies separate news content, opinion content and marketing/advertising content.
  - h. JUDGE'S COMMENTS
  
4. Is the journalism program a class or club? How is the staff organized? What role does the adviser play?
  - a. Appropriate policies are maintained to address media leadership, staff organization and responsibilities, as well as procedures to recruit, select and train editors, reporters and other staff members.
  - b. Staff and adviser responsibilities and authority are outlined in the staff manual, and include the process for selecting the editor-in-chief as well as the production deadlines and timelines.

- c. Advisers coach the staff members, but do not do the work for them.
- d. Follow a policy in which the media leadership and news coverage are under the general supervision of the editor-in-chief, and the specific supervision of associate editors, and/or other line editors. Media staff leadership may operate under other titles such as managers, producers or directors. Staff perform all news dissemination tasks.
- e. JUDGE'S COMMENTS

- 5. How do the editors assemble and support an inclusive staff that is representative of the school population in gender, ethnic, racial, religious, ability, sexual orientation and other diverse characteristics?

JUDGE'S COMMENTS

**JUDGE'S FINAL RATING FOR GENERAL PRACTICES**

Superior

Excellent

Good

Needs Improvement

**JUDGE'S OVERALL COMMENTS ON GENERAL PRACTICES**

## CRITERION TWO: COVERAGE

JUDGE: PLEASE HIGHLIGHT ANY AREAS THAT STAND OUT, THEN ADD COMMENTS

1. How comprehensive is your coverage, including classes, sports, extracurricular activities, student life and community/world news? Coverage includes stories that cover:
  - a. **Student experiences:** classes, sports, extracurricular activities, student life and community/world news, services available to students, including health, guidance counseling, parking, and building maintenance
  - b. **Faculty & Administrators:** including employment, development, training, policies addressing district matters such as school safety, calendars, budgets, schedules and attendance.
  - c. **District, state, and national institutions:** school boards and purchases, building repairs and construction, school board elections, calendars, taxes and budgets and their impact.
  - d. JUDGE'S COMMENTS
  
2. Do stories include diverse student voices and viewpoints?
  - a. Stories include appropriate perspectives from all types of students.
  - b. Stories include appropriate perspectives from all types of faculty, administrators, parents and/or community members.
  - c. JUDGE'S COMMENTS
  
3. Is there a range of stories, such as hard news, investigative, features, profiles and trend stories?
  - a. Topics reflect the interests of diverse readers
  - b. Staff uses relevant and credible sources to explore trends, issues and society.
  - c. Staff chooses a variety of story forms as appropriate, including hard news, investigative, features, and profiles.
  - d. Staff varies its use of alternative story forms, including briefs, features, sidebars and visuals.
  - e. Staff seizes opportunities to investigate and thoroughly report news; uses Internet and
  - f. other secondary sources primarily as background
  - g. Staff utilizes media platforms to fully engage audiences in stories covered
  - h. JUDGE'S COMMENTS

### JUDGE'S FINAL RATING FOR COVERAGE

Superior

Excellent

Good

Needs Improvement

### JUDGE'S OVERALL COMMENTS ON COVERAGE

### **CRITERION THREE: WRITING AND EDITING**

JUDGE: PLEASE HIGHLIGHT ANY AREAS THAT STAND OUT, THEN ADD COMMENTS

1. How did the staff ensure stories are factually accurate, concise, clear and fair? OPEN QUESTION
2. How well does the students' work adhere to the other hallmarks of strong journalistic writing and editing?
  - a. Stories are factually accurate.
  - b. Stories are thoroughly reported and supported by facts, anecdotes and/or research.
  - c. Stories include more than one source and provide multiple perspectives.
  - d. Writing is clear, concise and compelling.
  - e. Writer has an engaging voice.
  - f. Complex processes and technical information are clearly explained.
  - g. Stories are well organized with strong nut grafs, interesting leads and good flow.
  - h. Strong quotes add meaning, emotion and voice to stories.
  - i. Stories have been edited and do not contain errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation.
  - j. Processes are in place for editing and fact-checking.
  - k. JUDGE'S COMMENTS
3. Anything else we should know about their approach to reporting, writing and editing?  
JUDGE'S COMMENTS

#### **JUDGE'S FINAL RATING FOR WRITING AND EDITING**

Superior

Excellent

Good

Needs Improvement

#### **JUDGE'S OVERALL COMMENTS ON WRITING AND EDITING**

## **CRITERION FOUR: VISUALS**

1. Comment on the process to create the design of the publication.
  - a. Use spot color/colored pages to highlight particular stories or headlines, based on a design style, while ensuring readability.
  - b. Use special effects, such as text wraps, close ups, cut-outs, bleeds or dropped capital letters, to vary presentations. Use display headlines and color for special effect; and, when possible, use secondary heads to attract readers.
  - c. Use updated layout, editing and design software, such as InDesign, WordPress, Final Cut Pro, Audacity to achieve creative, professional results.
  - d. Include visually interesting indexes or teasers to preview key stories
  - e. JUDGE'S COMMENTS
  
2. How are photography and graphics used to enhance storytelling and design?
  - a. Photo/video subjects are in action, rather than posed.
  - b. Photo/video illustrations, dramatizations and manipulations are clearly labeled and care is taken when using computer alterations to retain proportions and original content.
  - c. Students on staff assign, take and edit all photos/videos and use various techniques, such as leading lines and framing (rule of thirds), to draw the reader's attention.
  - d. Photographers/videographers talk to reporters, producers and editors about stories prior to shooting assignments.
  - e. Staff is mindful of legal and ethical issues pertaining to photos/videos, including manipulation, copyright, and labeling stipulations.
  - f. JUDGE'S COMMENTS

### **JUDGE'S FINAL RATING FOR VISUALS**

Superior

Excellent

Good

Needs Improvement

### **JUDGE'S OVERALL COMMENTS ON VISUALS**



## **CRITERION FIVE (For Online Publication and for Comprehensive Multimedia Evaluations): DIGITAL — SOCIAL MEDIA, WEBSITE, ETC.**

1. Describe how the staff used digital platforms — such as a website, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc. How did the staff overcome any challenges or barriers in digital publication.
  - a. Recognize the full range of audio and visual production techniques available to tell stories in multimedia platforms, and make informed decisions in their storytelling applications.
  - b. Ensure lighting, sound and technical effects accentuate video and/or audio performances.
  - c. Use online formats and social media to provide timely and live coverage of events (sports, news, opinion, etc) as deemed appropriate for audiences.
  - d. As a staff, publications experiment with new social tools as they become available and pivot to include new tools into daily workflow depending on audience engagement with the content.
  - e. JUDGE'S COMMENTS
  
2. How well do digital and print content supplement rather than repeat each other?
  - a. Incorporate audio and sound effects to advance storytelling in photo slideshows, podcasts and video productions.
  - b. New/more information is made available to readers on digital platforms.
  - c. Staff utilizes the ability to hyperlink online to link to sources and spaces where audiences can find more information on a given topic.
  - d. JUDGE'S COMMENTS
  
3. Are there opportunities online for readers to engage with staff?
  - a. Uses social media to create and engage in conversations with audience, not just as a distribution channel for content.
  - b. Digital presence expands beyond just the publication's brand. Staff members are active on social media and engage with the audiences in their roles as reporters, editors, photographers, etc.
  - c. JUDGE'S COMMENTS

### **JUDGE'S FINAL RATING FOR DIGITAL MEDIA**

Superior

Excellent

Good

Needs Improvement

### **JUDGE'S OVERALL COMMENTS ON DIGITAL MEDIA**

## **SUMMARY RANKING (Highlight rating from previous pages)**

### **JUDGE'S FINAL RATING FOR GENERAL PRACTICES**

Superior/Excellent/Good/Needs Improvement

### **JUDGE'S FINAL RATING FOR COVERAGE**

Superior/Excellent/Good/Needs Improvement

### **JUDGE'S FINAL RATING FOR WRITING AND EDITING**

Superior/Excellent/Good/Needs Improvement

### **JUDGE'S FINAL RATING FOR VISUALS**

Superior/Excellent/Good/Needs Improvement

### **JUDGE'S FINAL RATING FOR DIGITAL MEDIA**

Superior/Excellent/Good/Needs Improvement

## **OVERALL RANKING**

### **JUDGE'S FINAL RATING FOR THIS PUBLICATION**

(Highlight the award to be given — Refer to Award descriptions on page 2)

George H. Gallup Award

International First Place Award

International Second Place Award

International Honor Award

### **JUDGE'S OVERALL COMMENTS FOR THIS PUBLICATION**