

## Application for Daily Illini Columnist Fall 2007

**Follow all instructions carefully. Incorrect or incomplete applications will not be considered.**

### **Points of order:**

1. News Writers may become Columnists in the future, but Columnists typically cannot become News Writers. If you are interested in writing news articles, contact the News Desk at 217.337.8350 or [news@dailyillini.com](mailto:news@dailyillini.com). If you have questions about this, please include them in your application.
2. Some topics are off-limits to Opinions Columnists. This includes sports. If you are interested in writing sports commentary, contact the Sports Desk at 217.337.8362
3. If you are interested in writing staff editorials, please contact the Opinions editor immediately as there will be a different hiring process involved.

### **Instructions:**

1. Fill out the contact information completely.
2. Read the “Expectations of a Daily Illini Columnist” contract. You must consent to follow this contract, and will be asked to initial/sign it upon hiring.
3. Complete the short answer questions in as many (or as few) words as it takes. Your answers should be typed, single-spaced, and in a separate Word document.
4. Submit writing samples. They should be typed, single-spaced and in a separate Word document.
  - a. One sample column, 650 words, on a local (campus, city, or state) issue.
  - b. One columnist bio, written in the third person, which reflects your personality and writing style.
  - c. One previously written piece. This can be anything that offers more insight into your writing or personality — a poem, short fiction, a news piece, a paper, etc. If it has been published elsewhere, please note where and when.
5. Send all your materials as attachments (either PDF or Word), in one email, to [diopinions@gmail.com](mailto:diopinions@gmail.com) by **SATURDAY, MAY 12<sup>th</sup>**. Emails should have the subject head: “Fall 2007 Columnist Application”

### **Columnist Short Answer Questions:**

1. What is the role of an opinions columnist? What responsibilities does the columnist have to their readers? To the paper?
2. Why should **you** be a Daily Illini opinions columnist? How can you contribute to the perspectives or diversity of the page?
3. You are writing a column on either (a.) Global campus, (b.) an impending tuition hike, or (c.) pedestrian safety (Pick one). Describe how you go about conducting research for this topic. What sources do you use? Who do you talk to? What are some of the important questions you might need to ask? What facts should you gather to back up your claim?
4. Who has been your favorite columnist at the Daily Illini? Why? What did you like about his or her writing? Do you typically share their beliefs or not? (Note: Columnists will be

chosen on the strength of their writing and their ability to do the job, not on political persuasion.)

5. Describe (or provide, if you wish) the worst piece of writing (from a prominent source) you've ever encountered and tell me why you think it's so bad.  
(Bonus points if you wrote it.)

## Daily Illini Columnist Contact Information Fall 2007

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Year in School \_\_\_\_\_

Major (s) \_\_\_\_\_ Minor(s) \_\_\_\_\_

### Summer Break Contact Information

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Campus Contact Information

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address  
\_\_\_\_\_

Net ID: \_\_\_\_\_@uiuc.edu Preferred Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Other

Campus and community organizations you belong to: \_\_\_\_\_

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Awards, honors and distinctions you've earned: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever written for other publications? Which ones? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever had a letter to the editor published in the DI? If so, when? What topic was it about?

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### Expectations of a Opinions Department Member

Please read and initial the following requirements:

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Columnists are required to write one column (approx.650 words) each week for the course of the semester. Cartoonists are required to submit at least two cartoons per week. Some cartoons will be held in stock for future use as the need arises.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Members are required to have at least one (ideally two) evergreen (non-dependent on current news trends) submissions on file to fill gaps and as insurance for unforeseen circumstances that may arise. These should be submitted ASAP after hiring.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Each columnist will be required to work with another columnist on Point/Counterpoint 2-3 times a semester. The pairings will be determined by the Opinions Editor at the beginning of the semester.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Each columnist will be required to contribute to the Opinions blog “Critical Mass” at least once every two weeks. Members are encouraged to contribute as much as they wish.

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. Members are required to attend an edit with the Opinions Editor for every piece they submit, two days prior to publication. Some exceptions may be made, but only with the permission of the Opinions Editor. Edits are not only for the benefit of the paper, but also to improve the skills of the authors.

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. Members are required to attend a mandatory meeting once a week with the rest of the Opinions staff and are highly encouraged to keep in regular contact with the editors and other members of the department.

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. All members must conform to the Associated College Press Model Code of Ethics and other policies as determined by the editors and Illini Media Company.

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. The Opinions Desk employs a Three Strike Policy. An accumulation of three strikes may result in termination. Strikes may include, but are not limited to, missing an edit, failure to respond via email or a phone call to the Opinions Editor, or missing deadlines.

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. Some actions (such as plagiarism) are considered grounds for immediate termination.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. Research is a vital component of the columnist position. Columnists must be prepared to back up any claims made in columns with credible evidence.

\_\_\_\_\_ 11. Being an employee of the Daily Illini is both a privilege and a responsibility. Any submission that is not to the standards of this publication will not be published.

Questions? Contact The Daily Illini Opinions Department at diopinions@gmail.com.

I have read and understand all the requirements listed above.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

