

The Daily Tar Heel

staff application

FALL 2008

Fill out this application on a separate sheet of paper and return it to the DTH front office in Suite 2409 of the Student Union.

The DTH is organized by desks, and, as such, any questions you have would be best answered by the editor of the desk that interests you. If you have general questions, feel free to contact DTH Editor Allison Nichols at nallison@email.unc.edu.

There are three interest meetings where you can meet the editors and learn more about the paper:

Aug. 21: Union 3206 B at 5:30 p.m.

Aug. 27: Union 3209 at 5:30 p.m.

Sept. 2: Union 3411 at 5:30 p.m.

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY 5 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 10.

We will post the list of hired staff in the paper's front office by 8 p.m. THURSDAY, SEPT. 11.

Mandatory orientation for new staffers will be SATURDAY, SEPT. 13 at 10 a.m.

Name:

E-mail:

Phone Number:

Local Address:

Class/Year:

Major(s):

You are expected to write at least one story for each day that you work. You are expected to work two days a week. Does your schedule allow for this? YES / NO

For a description of each desk, please see the attached page. Which desk, in order of preference, would you like to work for? Please note any special interests you might like to cover.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

1. List any past journalism/writing/visual experience, including jobs and classes taken. (This is NOT a requirement — all interested students should apply.)

2. List your extracurricular activities, including jobs and leadership positions, for this semester and the next. The DTH does not discriminate against students involved in other organizations, but it does adhere to a conflict of interest policy (see attached). Failure to disclose involvement in other organizations could lead to dismissal. If you need the policy clarified, please contact Editor Allison Nichols.

3. What qualities, interests, skills, fields of expertise and viewpoints can you offer the DTH?

4. In what areas do you think the DTH can improve?

5. Attach at least one writing sample. (If you do not have published work, please write a story based on the news in one of our papers). If you are applying for the features desk, please attach two to three samples, one of which must be a feature/human interest story. If you are applying for a non-writing desk, please include two to three samples that are relevant to your area of interest.

The Daily Tar Heel

conflict of interest policy — fall 2008

PLEASE SIGN AND SUBMIT WITH YOUR APPLICATION

The following guidelines apply to ALL members of the newspaper staff:

1. No staff member may participate on any of student government's three branches or in any administrative capacity.
2. Staff members should not make the news.
 - Don't participate in rallies, protests, demonstrations or controversies. Active and public participation in political events damages the paper's credibility and destroys any chance of defending our stance as being unbiased.
 - Do not make any public comments or participate in media interviews without talking first to the editor. Staffers will be encouraged to participate in convergence reporting and give interviews related to their stories.
 - It is acceptable to sign petitions that directly influence the democratic process, e.g. a petition to get a bond referendum on the ballot; however, staff members are prohibited from signing petitions that have the sole purpose of expressing one viewpoint or that have a strong political agenda, such as a petition for a moratorium on the death penalty.
 - While on duty for an assignment, reporters may attend events but not participate in them.
 - Staff members will remember that online forums are public, too. Do not publish political views on blogs or social networking sites and profiles. This includes the Facebook "causes" application for any partisan causes. In general, avoid showing your hand.
 - The editor in chief will avoid making news except in cases directly related to the DTH.
3. Reporters cannot cover a story where they are friends with or are affiliated with anyone involved in that story. Reporters should be comfortable with their sources but should not go past a source/reporter relationship with anyone involved in that story because it can undermine the credibility of the DTH.
4. Staff members may work for other campus or community publications or news organizations, although duties must not overlap. For example, a University reporter may not cover campus issues for another publication and may not write editorials about University-related topics. Additionally, reporters must understand that working at a publication that takes a clear political stance on issues calls their objectivity as staff members of the DTH into question. As such, staff members are prohibited from working for a publication that has a stated political agenda, eg. The Carolina Review. Refer to the alternate publications policy for more information.
5. Reporters must always remember to identify themselves as DTH reporters while on assignment. Misrepresenting, or not representing, your role for an article is not acceptable.
6. The DTH takes seriously its unbiased stance and must be informed if any staff member takes a prominent leadership position in another campus group. Working at the DTH does not preclude staff members from membership in other campus groups. But we ask that no staff member or editor take on any prominent leadership position in another campus group unless cleared by the editor in chief. Though the DTH applauds student involvement in campus activities and organizations, we don't want to put ourselves into the uncomfortable position of relying on members of our own staff as sources for our stories. If a staff member applies for a leadership position that could place him or her at odds with this policy if hired, that staff member must inform his or her editor of the application to avoid the appearance of a conflict. If you become the center of a controversy, you will be asked to resign your newspaper post.

7. Some desks have individualized conflict of interest policies particularly for election season. These will be provided upon hiring.

8. Anyone who works as a back page columnist, cartoonist or Opinion Editor and/or associate editor is not eligible to join the staff as a reporter or editor. Members of the editorial board can become reporters provided that they do not cover stories or sources on which they've opined.

9. During student elections, staff members may not sign any candidate's petition and may not participate in any campaign activities. Furthermore, involvement in social activities with candidates or members of campaigns during student elections is strongly discouraged and can result in probation or termination. Though the DTH does not in any way want to restrict the political thought or social lives of staff members, student election season is a particularly sensitive time on campus, and the DTH, as the only newspaper that comprehensively covers the race, must work overtime to be as objective as possible. The paper's integrity is compromised not only when staff members express a public preference for a particular candidate but also when staff members fraternize with campaigners and/or candidates during such a pivotal time.

10. No DTH journalist is for sale. We cannot use our position at the paper to gain personal advantages or considerations not available to the general public. For those reasons, we cannot accept gifts or any form of contribution from a source or the general public (gifts can take the form of meal payments, gift bags). In all cases, journalists should politely return the gift.

11. The DTH encourages employees to become involved in community activities and to donate time to civic and charity organizations as long as they are not part of that staffers' primary coverage area. Ethical guidelines should not be regarded as a barrier to being a good citizen in the community, but we must remain steadfast in our objectivity.

12. The DTH subscribes to a full-disclosure philosophy that asks each staff member to notify his or her desk editor of all affiliations and involvements outside of the paper to help avoid conflicts of interest. Failure to disclose any involvements could result in immediate dismissal from staff.

13. It is important to remember that conflicts of interest can be avoided by simply using common sense. Ask yourself: "Does doing/saying this or being here undermine my stance as an objective reporter? Would anyone trust my objectivity less after seeing/hearing me?" Any doubts, questions or concerns should be brought to the attention of the editor in chief.

14. Desk editors have the power to fire staff members who violate the 2007-08 DTH Conflict of Interest Policy. Appeals may be made to the editor in chief, who is the final arbiter of what constitutes a conflict of interest.

Name:

Position:

Date:

The Daily Tar Heel

election season policy — fall 2008

This policy applies to all staff members of The Daily Tar Heel during the 2008-09 publication schedule. Ultimately, we do not wish to alienate any politically minded staff members, and we made decisions regarding political activity and campaign materials for the good of the paper. Our rationale, which members of management (Allison, Sara and Nicole) can explain at length to any interested staff member, is based on the paper's integrity and the need for objectivity and a nonpartisan persona during a particularly heated election season.

All staff members, except those who work on the Opinion Page, should not publicly announce their political beliefs or affiliations. This certainly does not mean that staff members cannot join organizations such as the Young Democrats or the College Republicans (although writers on the State & National Desk cannot do so, per the desk's specialized conflict of interest policy); it does mean that staff members should refrain from endorsing or lobbying for a particular candidate or speaking out publicly on particular issues in even the most mundane of visible ways. Accordingly, we ask that staff members not post their candidate preferences or political views in forums including but not limited to:

- *Bumper stickers
- *Stickers, pins, patches, etc. on a staff member's person or personal effects
- *AIM profiles or profiles used in comparable programs
- *Facebook accounts and other widely accessible online directories or Web sites
- *E-mail signatures
- *Personal blogs (see alternate publications policy)

It is acceptable to sign petitions that directly influence the democratic process, e.g. a petition to get a bond referendum on the ballot; however, staff members are prohibited from signing petitions that have the sole purpose of expressing one viewpoint or that have a strong political agenda, such as a petition for a moratorium on the death penalty.

We neither desire to nor intend to censor any member of the DTH's staff — to do so would be antithetical to the paper's mission, history and ideals. We like to think of this policy as one of common sense and self-discipline. We want you to be able to discuss issues and we don't naively assume that you are inherently objective; however, we also don't want staffers with bumper stickers or other materials or staffers with public views to lead people to identify the paper as being in any way partisan. That said, there's nothing wrong with talking to your friends about politics or with quietly attending campus- or community-based meetings. We do not begrudge anyone his or her beliefs, and we often, in fact, tend to empathize with those who feel strongly about issues. There is, however, a problem with saying or doing things in such a manner that you reveal your hand; we'd like to avoid that.

Especially now in the age of Internet campaigning there may be ways to support a campaign or cause in a way that does not publicly advertise one's political views. We understand that not all staff members are seeking to be professional journalists and don't want to needlessly limit their desire to explore other opportunities. If you are interested in getting involved in a campaign or cause, you must discuss with the editor-in-chief whether your involvement will compromise your objectivity as a journalist. The editor's decision is final in this matter, but we will seek ways to be flexible if doing so does not violate our ethical obligation to our community. Not informing the editor of these involvements is grounds for immediate termination.

All staffers, assistants and editors are required to sign this policy to demonstrate that they have seen and read it and have a full understanding of it.

Name:

Position:

Date: