

The Brandeis Hoot
Brandeis University's Community Newspaper Constitution
Last updated: September 20, 2019

1. Purpose

To provide the Brandeis community with a reliable, accurate and unbiased source of news and information through the regular publication of a student-run newspaper distributed on-campus and online.

2. Membership

The Hoot uses the four membership designations of "Contributor," "Staff," and "Editor," and one non-member designation of "Special to The Hoot."

2.1 Special to The Hoot and Staff

The designation "Special to The Hoot" shall be conferred on any member of the Brandeis Community or a member of the public who contributes articles, graphics, photos or advice to The Hoot for any given issue. Authors writing as "Special to The Hoot" do not represent the work of a member of The Hoot newspaper.

Once any person has made a meaningful contribution to at least three issues of The Hoot, they shall be eligible to be conferred with the designation of "Staff."

2.2 Submissions outside of The Hoot

Editors and Staff members of The Hoot may not contribute to competing Brandeis news publications, a list of which must be included in the official Ethics Policy. Submissions to other publications are allowed, but material published previously in The Hoot must be credited to The Hoot. The Hoot does not reprint material previously published in other publications.

2.3 Editor

The designation of "Editor" shall be conferred by the Editor-in-Chief with the advice of the editorial board to a staff member who is a student at Brandeis University and has shown a strong commitment to the work of The Hoot.

As many as two editors may be chosen for each section. Suggested editor positions include, but are not limited to:

1. News Editor
2. Opinions Editor
3. Arts Editor
4. Features Editor

5. Sports Editor
6. Photography Editor
7. Website and Social Media Editor
8. Copy Editor
9. Layout Editor

The designation of “Deputy Editor” will be given to a member of the staff who seeks more involvement on The Hoot but need not commit as much time as a full editor. The designation of “Senior Editor” refers to Editors who have attained a rank of seniority and have formerly acted as section editors and/or editor-in-chief or managing editor for at least one semester. The designation of “Senior Editor” shall persist as long as a person is a member in good standing.

The designation of “Editor-in-Chief” and “Managing Editor” refers to Editors who have attained a rank of seniority and leadership. The Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor must be a non-freshman staff member enrolled as an undergraduate at Brandeis University who has shown commitment to The Hoot for at least two semesters.

The “Editorial Board” shall consist of Editors, including the Editor-in-Chief, Managing Editor, section Editors, and Deputy Editors. All editors are responsible for upholding the Constitution. Each editor on the Editorial Board shall have 1 vote in all matters.

3. Printed Policies

The Hoot shall publish an Ethics Policy on its Web site and in printed form that details its commitment to ethical journalism. The Editor-in-Chief shall keep the Ethics Policy up-to-date with the advice of the Editorial Board.

The Hoot shall publish and adhere to an official Hoot Style Guide. The Editor-in-Chief shall keep this guide up-to-date with the advice of the Editorial Board based on AP Style and Hoot-specific requirements .

4. Editor Responsibilities

4.1 Editors

In order to facilitate the active teaching of all aspects of journalism and leadership, Editors will be given broad responsibility and discretion in operating their sections. In particular, editors of sections are responsible for editing articles appearing in their section for accuracy, style and grammar, as well as for laying out their section, maintaining a staff, assigning relevant articles and ensuring that their section is appropriately filled each issue.

Deputy Editors must also make a meaningful contribution to The Hoot during each production cycle. Such contributions may include, but are not limited to:

1. Writing an article or column
2. Assisting with editorial duties
3. Assisting with business operations
4. Assisting with training

4.2 Managing Editor

The role of the Managing Editor should include, but is not limited to: recruitment, business operations, outreach, organization of distribution and subscriptions, and staff management. The Managing Editor will also ensure the proper application of this Constitution, including overseeing any elections and advising in the proper conduct of dispute resolutions. In the absence of a treasurer, the Managing Editor may act as the official Financial Liaison to the Student Union.

4.3 Editor-in-Chief

The Editor-in-Chief is responsible for day-to-day operations and the entire production of the newspaper, including newspaper style, layout, content, tone, and reading and editing The Hoot prior to going to print. In order to meet all deadlines, decisions made by the Editor-in-Chief on production night are final.

The Editor-in-Chief will also be responsible for updating and enforcing the ethics policy. The Editor-in-Chief is the public voice of The Hoot and is the only person authorized to speak officially on behalf of the newspaper.

In the event of a vacancy on the Editorial Board, the Editor-in-Chief shall assume or may delegate the responsibilities of the vacant position until such time as the position is filled.

The Editorial Board and Editor-in-Chief must meet on a regular basis at a time other than on production night. The Editorial Board is responsible for advising the Editor-in-Chief during these regular meetings. The Editor-in-Chief must make every effort to follow the advice of the Editorial Board given at such meetings.

4.4 Impeachment, Suspension, and Dispute Resolution

If an editor (a) fails to consistently perform his or her duties as prescribed in this constitution and/or (b) breaks the ethics policy, he or she may be removed after meaningful deliberation and debate of the Editorial Board and the Editor-in-Chief.

Removal from office may be appealed to the Editorial Board and commuted or overturned by a 2/3-vote.

Section editors have the authority and responsibility to suspend staff members in their section for violating journalistic standards, Hoot policy or for committing plagiarism. Staff may also be suspended for violations of University policy as outlined in Student Rights & Responsibilities. A suspension may be appealed to the Editorial Board and commuted or overturned by a 2/3-vote.

Staff members with comments or criticisms regarding their experience on The Hoot are urged to approach any Editor with concerns. The Editor must then discuss the issue with the appropriate parties and work to resolve the conflict. The Managing Editor may be called upon to facilitate dispute resolution.

5. Policy on Editorials

The Hoot shall publish at least one editorial per issue on an issue of importance to the Brandeis community. An editorial may be written by anyone but, once accepted, becomes the official opinion of The Hoot. An opinion put forth in an editorial may be rejected by a majority vote of the Editorial Board, should a conflict arise.

6. Meetings

Section editors and the editorial staff shall choose the time, place and format of their meetings and communicate this information to their staff.

7. Appointments & Terms of Office

The terms of all Editors officially begin and expire during the fall semester of every academic year. Editors may be reappointed at the conclusion of their term.

A Section Editor must make every effort to designate and train a Deputy Editor to fill their position two months before they intend to conclude their term for the final time.

Editor appointments are made by the current Editor-in-Chief with the advice of the Editorial Board.

The term of Editor-in-Chief shall last no more than three semesters. The term of Managing Editor shall last no more than four semesters. No more than three students may hold the position of Editor-in-Chief or Managing Editor at any time.

8. Amendments

The entire Editorial Board must agree to any and all amendments to this Constitution. Should a dispute arise, a vote will be held to amend the Constitution. All votes to amend this Constitution will require the 2/3-agreement of the Editorial Board in a vote taken by secret ballot.

9. Statement of Non-Exclusivity

The Hoot is open to all student members of the Brandeis Community and does not discriminate against members on the basis of sex, race, religion, sexual preference, class, age, nationality, or physical ability.

10. Charter

The Hoot exists as an official chartered organization of the Brandeis University Student Union.