

## Key:

\*Jan. 27 chapter meeting notes

\*Feb. 25 chapter meeting notes

## **SEEK TRUTH AND REPORT IT: Journalists should be honest, fair and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.**

Journalists should:

\_\_ *Test the accuracy of information from all sources and exercise care to avoid inadvertent error. Deliberate distortion is never permissible.*

Explain what constitutes as testing a source: find at least one other source online that backs up that information or verify how the source was found. When crowdsourcing on social media, send a direct message with them and contact them. Whenever possible, speak to the individual in person.

People sources and information sources. What's the process of verification? Labeling audience, community or individuals. Social media changed immediacy. Get two sources before you run with something.

\_\_ *Diligently seek out subjects of news stories to give them the opportunity to respond to allegations of wrongdoing.*

State when you try to reach the sources for comment to inform the readers that you did attempt to do so, even if the individual wouldn't comment.

Sourcing is a different animal with social media. Is an individual's social media profile a source? Is a "tweet was not returned" the same as "they didn't return multiple phone calls."

\_\_ *Identify sources whenever feasible. The public is entitled to as much information as possible on sources' reliability.*

Always think about/question the sources motives. Why does the individual want to be in the news?

\_\_ *Always question sources' motives before promising anonymity. Clarify conditions attached to any promise made in exchange for information. Keep promises.*

What's the reality of releasing information? Would they be harmed emotionally/physically? Would they be fired?

\_\_ *Make certain that headlines, news teases and promotional material, photos, video, audio, graphics, sound bites and quotations do not misrepresent. They should not oversimplify or highlight incidents out of context.*

Updates/comments on social media should not skew or sensationalize info for “clicks” either.

Add clause about SEOs? What are the ethics behind Upworthy headlines and BuzzFeed quizzes? Can multiple tweets take things out of context?

\_\_ *Never distort the content of news photos or video. Image enhancement for technical clarity is always permissible. Label montages and photo illustrations.*

General rule of thumb when editing: less is more. Never add or remove anything from a news photo.

Label borrowed images. Use Creative Commons images if possible. If an image is in the public domain/on the Internet, who owns it?

\_\_ *Avoid misleading re-enactments or staged news events. If re-enactment is necessary to tell a story, label it.*

Typically, portraits are the only appropriate situation in which to stage a photo. If re-enactment is necessary, be very blatant about the fact that it is a reenactment.

\_\_ *Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information except when traditional open methods will not yield information vital to the public. Use of such methods should be explained as part of the story.*

When conducting an investigative reporting piece, consult with a lawyer. Do not exercise devious or unethical behavior, including lying about your true identity, when attempting to receive information.

It’s okay to go “undercover” when you have to and be clear about why it was necessary, how you did it and what the benefits were. If the public is being served through the greater good, it’s acceptable to use investigative methods. It’s illegal in Illinois to record a conversation without consent.

\_\_ *Never plagiarize. Tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, even when it is unpopular to do so.*

\_\_ *Examine their own cultural values and avoid imposing those values on others.*

\_\_ *Avoid stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance or social status.*

Approach the individual and ask how the person would like to be identified, especially when covering the LGBT community. Exercise caution by treating topics sensitively. Add a section dedicated to cultural changes or how to act appropriately with cultural differences?

\_\_ *Support the open exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.*

\_\_ *Give voice to the voiceless; official and unofficial sources of information can be equally valid.*

\_\_\_ *Distinguish between advocacy and news reporting. Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresent fact or context.*

Avoid PR tactics or cheerleading. Clearly distinguish blogs or editorials from objective reporting.

\_\_\_ *Distinguish news from advertising and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two.*

If there is any question about the facts or where the information comes from, it is the journalist's responsibility to clarify. In editorial pieces or blogs, clearly state who the writer is so readers can note obvious biases.

\_\_\_ *Recognize a special obligation to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open and that government records are open to inspection.*

Needs more specification. How can journalists be held responsible for this? What if reporters are blatantly denied from meetings, negotiations, etc.?

**MINIMIZE HARM: Ethical journalists treat sources, subjects and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect.**

Journalists should:

\_\_\_ *Show compassion for those who may be affected adversely by news coverage. Use special sensitivity when dealing with children and inexperienced sources or subjects.*

Practice cultural sensitivity. Define what constitutes as an invasion of privacy, especially after considering all of the information that is widely available through social media.

\_\_\_ *Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or grief.*

\_\_\_ *Recognize that gathering and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance.*

\_\_\_ *Recognize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than do public officials and others who seek power, influence or attention. Only an overriding public need can justify intrusion into anyone's privacy.*

If information on social media is considered public knowledge, what constitutes as an invasion of privacy?

\_\_\_ *Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity.*

Avoid characteristics of tabloid journalism.

- \_\_ *Be cautious about identifying juvenile suspects or victims of sex crimes.*  
**Do NOT identify them.**  
Never say never. Say almost always. If the victim wants to be identified, it's okay.
- \_\_ *Be judicious about naming criminal suspects before the formal filing of charges.*
- \_\_ *Balance a criminal suspect's fair trial rights with the public's right to be informed.*

**ACT INDEPENDENTLY: Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know.**

Journalists should:

- \_\_ *Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived.*  
**If there is a conflict, acknowledge it.**
- \_\_ *Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility.*
- \_\_ *Refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel and special treatment, and shun secondary employment, political involvement, public office and service in community organizations if they compromise journalistic integrity.*
- \_\_ *Disclose unavoidable conflicts.*
- \_\_ *Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable.*
- \_\_ *Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests and resist their pressure to influence news coverage.*
- \_\_ *Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money; avoid bidding for news.*

**BE ACCOUNTABLE: Journalists are accountable to their readers, listeners, viewers and each other.**

Journalists should:

- \_\_ *Clarify and explain news coverage and invite dialogue with the public over journalistic conduct.*  
**Create a special social media context – Each person has the right to be heard, so**

harmless comments on discussion boards shouldn't be deleted. Someone within the publication should moderate comments, but only remove comments when necessary for the safety/wellbeing of other users. Notifying readers how comments will be moderated.

Treat comments like letters to the editor. The publication is the proprietor of the space. If it doesn't want to broadcast the comment, it's okay to remove it.

— *Encourage the public to voice grievances against the news media.*

— *Admit mistakes and correct them promptly.*

Always make corrections and clarify changes through editor's notes.

Consider proportionate response.

— *Expose unethical practices of journalists and the news media.*

— *Abide by the same high standards to which they hold others.*

Think about how social media changes transparency! → Create guidelines for proper social media conduct?