

# **POLICY FOR THE CENTRAL PUBLICATION FOR NASA**

(Approved by the Reps Council Meeting February 13, 2001)

---

## **Introduction**

This policy will establish a regularly produced central publication (i.e., newsletter, magazine or newspaper) that will provide a source of information on a wide variety of topics to our diverse membership.

A form of “elected editorial participation” shall be established to guarantee that the membership is involved in the publication (beyond just approving the budget necessary to produce it). This will be the Editorial Board. This policy outlines the basic framework as well as the decision-making process for the volunteers and staff who are involved in our central publication.

The NASA “Editorial Principles” define the rights and responsibilities that come with an open press. Issues pertaining to members’ rights to contribute, as well as responsibilities to protect the union from charges of libel, for example, are covered by these principles.

## **1. The Contents of the Publication**

The publication’s primary focus is communicating information about the business and activities of the union. It will be an educational and mobilising tool, include news from other organisations, and address social issues that affect the lives of working people.

The publication will also be a means for communication to, from and between members. An open invitation to participate by contributing to the paper must be ongoing. The Editorial Board must be proactive in seeking out experiences and opinions of the members.

The publication will fill a number of information needs with the contents based on the four essential categories listed below (see **Appendix 1** for a more detailed outline of topics under each category):

- I – Information about our Collective Agreement and its impact on us
- II – Union Business
- III – Other News Affecting our Members or Relevant to NASA
- IV – Our Members – Their Ideas and Contributions

## **2. The Editorial Board – Structure and Function**

In order to facilitate good communication and representation from all levels of the union in our publication, NASA shall establish an Editorial Board for the purpose of guiding the central publication. It shall consist of five NASA members selected annually as follows:

- one Executive member elected by the Executive
- one Rep elected by Reps Council
- one steward elected by the stewards
- two members elected by the Annual General Meeting
- and an appointed staff advisor (Managing Editor, see below)

The two members elected by the Annual General meeting shall be by nominations from the floor. If more than two candidates are nominated and stand, a secret ballot will be held. Executive Officers have significant mandated responsibilities as outlined in the bylaws as well as additional duties they perform as part of the Executive. Therefore, voting members of the Executive are not eligible to hold the positions of the two members selected by the general membership.

Should a vacancy occur during the year in either of these Editorial Board positions elected by a general meeting, Reps Council shall be empowered to elect a NASA member to fill the position for the balance of the term of office. These Board members may be removed from that position by Special Resolution passed by 50% +1 of those members attending and eligible to vote at a duly constituted General Meeting.

The selection process followed by Executive, Council and the stewards for their representatives shall be by procedures as set out by those bodies, insofar as they do not contradict adopted NASA general meeting policies. Any of these three Board members may be replaced by their respective bodies.

### **The Editor-in-Chief**

The voting members of the Editorial Board shall elect from among themselves the Editor-in-Chief. The Editor-in-Chief (or his/her designate from the Board) shall chair Board meetings and shall sit in an ex-officio non-voting capacity on the Executive. The Chair's vote shall only be used in the event of a tie.

### **The Staff Advisor/Managing Editor**

The Business Manager shall assign responsibility for managing the production of the central publication to a member of the staff. That person shall be known as the Managing Editor, and shall sit on the Editorial Board as the Staff Advisor (non-voting). He/she brings the perspective of the union staff on what priorities the publication should address and this input will be essential in building a successful publication. The Editorial Board shall work in co-operation with the NASA staff assigned responsibility for the general management of production of the central publication.

### **Function of the Editorial Board**

The Board's main task will be to see that the publication achieves the goals set out for it in publication policies and directives adopted by the membership. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that members' contributions that are published adhere to the Editorial Principles.

It is crucial that the Board maintain its independence befitting a democratic press and it shall not editorialize advocating any particular point of view. The Board members, while elected to represent their constituent bodies, must focus their collective attention towards the members' interest as a whole.

The Board's responsibility is first and foremost to the membership and their needs for communication. They must be responsive to members' feedback and input. Each Board member shall be required to sign the NASA "Oath of Office", through which they recognise their responsibility to "lead, by example in maintaining the aims and objectives of the Association."

The Board shall provide overall editorial direction for the central publication. They shall meet at least twice a year to discuss that direction, as well as set out measurable goals for a successful publication (proposed themes, development of sections or columns, outreach strategies, as well as the length of contributions, number of issues, size of the publication, deadlines, etc.).

The Board shall also meet as required to discuss concerns related to specific editions of the publication (i.e., letters to the editor, selection of articles). These meetings, as much as is possible, must be responsive to the deadlines that are set to maintain the regularity of the publication.

Decisions shall be by majority vote and quorum for the Board meetings shall be three elected members. They shall maintain minutes for their meetings and shall submit a written report to the Annual General Meeting.

The Board shall submit to the Treasurer, in a timely fashion, annual budget proposals for the publication, for presentation and consideration by the membership. Once endorsed, the Editorial Board shall be responsible for approving payments for those expenditures related to the publications process based on the budget. With the recommendation of the Business Manager, the Executive shall ratify such expenditures (as is required by our bylaws). However, editorial direction is the responsibility of the Editorial Board.

The Managing Editor shall have final responsibility for the technical, production and basic editing and proofing tasks necessary for successfully producing the publication. It will be his/her responsibility to ensure that the content of the central publication does not violate NASA Editorial Principles, policies or bylaws and to advise the Board on such matters.

When the Managing Editor believes the principles, policies or bylaws of the union may be violated, he/she shall also advise the Business Manager with a written recommendation – cc: to the Board – on any appropriate action (i.e., replace or remove an offending item). The Business Manager shall continue to have the final authority on whether any union publication is printed.

### **3. Editorial Principles**

NASA's central publication will be governed by the principles of pluralism and democracy. The Editorial Board will oversee that these principles are always served. While we are all members of one "association", we have different responsibilities, goals and expectations. We all must be represented in the publication.

An essential principle of unionism is to protect members who come forward with information that may be used in the publication.

The NASA Editorial Principles define the rights and responsibilities that come with an open press. Issues pertaining to members' rights to contribute as well as responsibilities to protect the union from charges of libel are covered by these principles. Common sense and good faith can and should be expected in the activities of those members who volunteer to help put out this member publication.

### **Statement of Editorial Principles**

The purpose of the central publication is to provide members of the Non-Academic Staff Association with timely, accurate information from the union, the university and the broader community that is of relevance to the membership at large.

Its purpose is also to promote the free flow of communication that reflects the opinions, thoughts and feelings of the membership, both majority and minority groups. Controversial issues are essential to the impact and vitality of communications and should be encouraged in a democratic organization like NASA. Members have the right to make contributions to the publication as long as they are consistent with editorial policies that may be adopted from time to time by general meetings.

Along with these rights come certain responsibilities for a free and democratic press. Fascist, sexist, racist, obscene, discriminatory or anti-worker content will NOT be printed in any NASA publication. NASA will not publish solicited articles or reports containing unsubstantiated information, nor will we publish any deliberate falsification. The written material should promote the dignity and respect of all members and staff.

## **APPENDIX 1: CONTENT CATEGORIES**

The following categories will be reflected in the regular contents of each issue of the publication. Each edition shall be able to cover a wide variety of topics derived from these categories, such as, but not limited to the following (not all the topics at once, of course):

### **Category I – Information about our Collective Agreement and its impact on us**

- Interpreting the Collective Agreement (making it easier to understand)
- Grievance updates (real life case from which we can learn)
- Stewards' corner
- Health and Safety column

### **Category II – Union Business**

- Regular listings on the different services that NASA provides
- Meeting notices and calendar of events
- An item covering Meeting Rules of Order (Tip sheets for members to help them participate in NASA meetings)
- NASA directory for members to use for contacting the union staff, officers and representatives
- Periodic reports from Executive Officers
- A commentary from the President of NASA
- A regular message from the Business Manager
- Reps Council's "Voice"
- Committee activities, updates – postings for vacant positions
- Our history – building on NASA's past

### **Category III – Other News Affecting our Members or Relevant to NASA**

- What's happening that will affect us (developments at the U of A, the broader community, labour legislation, other unions' bargaining successes)
- Solidarity and unity – acknowledging the importance of workers' stories in other workplaces
- Reviews of books that are relevant to workers

### **Category IV Our Members – Their Ideas and Contributions**

- Letters to the Editor, opinions and articles, allowing opposing views
- Member profiles (including those retiring or who may have received awards)
- Community general interest stories by members
- Volunteer appreciation corner (recognition of our members' involvement in NASA)

## **POLICY FOR QUICK RESPONSE AND REQUIRED PUBLICATIONS**

From time to time, it will be necessary for NASA to communicate with members on issues of immediate concern or distribute statutorily-required information. Our central publication, due to its publication schedule, cannot provide us with the necessary quick response times. For instance, notice for general meetings and minutes, and other communication set out in our bylaws that must be sent to the membership shall go out as necessary. During negotiations, the staff and Focus Group are responsible for the direct and prompt communications to the members as events during bargaining warrant. It is absolutely essential that emergency health and safety alerts must be broadcast immediately.

Some communications of this type do not necessarily go to the entire general membership. Sometimes NASA has to reach members in particular departments on Campus or in certain job classifications. These “burning issues” have to get out to the members promptly and the NASA Office will be required to develop quick turn-around production routines and establish delivery service commitments for these time-dependent publications. In some cases, this may even be produced through an outside (union) print shop.

The following types of publications and distribution techniques are examples of what NASA can do to ensure that we get the “burning issues” out to members on time:

- Single-page bulletins written for immediate distribution
- Posters around Campus to highlight NASA issue, meetings and announcements
- Quick-Response information contact/delivery network (using hand-to-hand delivery, phone-trees, email lists, bulletin boards)
- Paid advertisements in appropriate publications (i.e. *Gateway*, *Folio*)

Due to their timeliness, these publications must be the responsibility of our union staff. While the immediate decisions to publish shall rest with the Business Manager, these forms of day-to-day communications initiatives would be under the overall guidance of the Executive.

---

### **Summary resolution (for minutes):**

NASA General Meetings, as necessary, shall set and amend overall communications, publications and editorial policies (guidelines, objectives and the Editorial Principles). This meeting endorses the “Policy for The Central Publication for NASA” and the “Policy for Quick Response and Required Publications for NASA”.