

## Introduction

*“The surest way to corrupt a youth is to instruct him to hold in higher esteem those who think alike than those who think differently.”*

-Friedrich Nietzsche

Like medicine or science students, journalism students need labs to put the knowledge of books and teachers into practice. A student-run news outlet is an essential journalism-training platform. By producing and editing their own media, students can develop their writing, reporting and editing abilities. They have the opportunity to solve ethical dilemmas that they can seldom come across in internships in newsrooms or TV stations.

Students that are not pursuing a journalism career will find in a student news outlet a place where they can develop their sense of teamwork and leadership, citizenship and social responsibility.

Student-run news outlets have three main functions in an educative institution. The first is to provide students a workshop where they can develop their communication, administration and writing abilities, as well as exercise their citizenship and social responsibility in their community. The second is to provide useful and truthful information to the university community and the third is to serve as an expression forum to students and other members of the community.

Without student journalism in schools, it becomes harder for the student community to know and understand issues happening in their school and express their opinion on them. Also, student journalists would have to get their training in professional newsrooms where they would hardly have a chance to make editorial decisions or even getting something in print.

The struggles of working for a student newspaper and a professional are almost the same. Student journalists deal with real information, ethical dilemmas sources, deadlines and audiences. However, besides producing a news outlet, student journalists have to deal with their academic responsibilities. They have to learn about journalism (and other subjects) while doing journalism.

The amateur nature of student journalists and their responsibilities and obligations as students

make their work more complex to achieve. Student news outlets are often underestimated or ignored, but when they present controversial or revealing information, government or university authorities usually take strong measures to censor or control their content. Controversial information is often labeled as products of student's naiveté or lack of sensibility. Censorship of this content is justified as measure to avoid disruption and assure a healthy discrimination, violence-free environment, but usually the true reasons behind it have more to do with the protection of university or government authorities' reputation.

Student-run news outlets are vulnerable to censorship because they run inside an educative institution whose interests might not always coincide with the information or opinions presented in them. School authorities' use their role of educators and order-keepers as a justification for teachers and administrators to ban controversial content or manipulate it to their convenience.

The situation of student journalism in the world is a reflection of the situation of free press worldwide. In the U.S., Canada and Western Europe, student journalism has flourished and students' right to free speech and press is almost always respected and legally protected.

Students in countries in Latin America, Asia and the Middle East don't enjoy the same protection and in some countries student journalism is scarce or absent. However, cases of censorship to student media had happened throughout time in several countries, even in the U.S., Australia, Canada and some countries in Europe where free speech is embraced and protected.

This thesis proposes the creation of an international nonprofit, non-governmental organization that would promote the creation of student-run media and would provide guidelines to protect student journalism from censorship. The purpose of this thesis is to establish the structural, legal, and communicative requirements to create this organization.

The design of this nonprofit includes an international network for journalism students and student-run news outlets that will provide information and advice on how to prevent, fight and denounce censorship. With this network, students would be able to create an international community in which

they will share their doubts, thoughts, experiences and knowledge on student journalism.

The global network within an international nonprofit organization can help students improve their news outlets and create new ones by following guidelines and advice from other students. At the same time, when a student or a news outlet suffers from censorship, other students, academics and professional journalists worldwide can aid them with legal advice or exposure.

This thesis presents a literature review of philosophies on freedom of speech and press, censorship, journalism and universities as markets of ideas. It will also analyze the nature purposes and importance of nonprofits and student journalism.

To understand the needs and requirements to create the organization, structured interviews were conducted to founders or directors of international nonprofit organization that advocate freedom of press, nonprofit organization that support student journalism in the U.S. and Canada, and members of student-run news outlets from several countries. These interviews were conducted from August to December 2008.

The literature review and the interviews will be the basis of the project proposal for the organization, which includes a structural and governance design and a communication strategy to introduce the project with student journalists, universities and nonprofit organizations.