

Journalism Advisory Committee Meeting
January 10, 2024, 11:00 am

Present on Zoom: Eric Bonds, Kimberley Kinsley (chair), Juliette Landphair (*ex officio*), Marie McAllister (secretary), Farhang Rouhani, Sushma Subramanian (*ex officio*)

I. The committee welcomed Sushma back to the committee, having already expressed thanks via email for Lindley Estes-Thomas's work during Fall 2023

II. Old Business: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and public safety

This continuing question from Spring 2023 asks whether, as a matter of public safety, the student paper has the right to publish information about incidents of campus violence that have been resolved via the campus student conduct process either with or without naming names.

In the year since a particular incident of violence prompted the student newspaper to bring this issue to the committee, several things have changed. The 2022-23 editor of the student paper (who submitted FOIA requests to which the University was unresponsive) has graduated. Neither the complainant nor the accused is still at UMW. There is a new Executive Director of University Communications handling FOIA requests. Last, the student Code of Conduct has been amended to clarify the rights of complainants, which was a tangential issue last year. The Code of Conduct does not address the question of whether as a matter of public safety, the student press can obtain and publish information about violations involving violence that are handled through the conduct process.

The committee discussed whether and in what form to continue to pursue the question, believing that such incidents are likely to arise in future and that the confidentiality of campus student conduct hearings is an ongoing national issue. As our next step, we plan to consult with this year's student editor and with the new Director of Communication.

III. Spring meeting schedule

Wed. 2/28, 3:30 pm, via Zoom

Wed. 3/27, 3:30 pm, via Zoom