

# The Towerlight's Ethics Policy

*By: Caitlyn Freeman, Editor In Chief, fall 2022*

As a writer for The Towerlight, you represent not only yourself as a reporter, but us as an organization as well. The Towerlight strives to provide its readers with objective, factual information. To ensure we achieve that, below are the policies we have in place.

## Conflicts of Interest

The Towerlight aims to avoid all conflicts of interest whenever possible. If you are a member of any organization on campus, whether that be a club, sports team, or political group, **you are not allowed** to write news articles pertaining to said organization.

The Towerlight does not accept any gifts from news sources or free admission to any event that is not free to the public. The exception to this rule is in the case of reviews of theater or other shows. However, when possible, The Towerlight will pay for the tickets/admission.

## Interaction with sources

We ask that all Towerlight reporters uphold professionalism when engaging with sources. Reporters **are not allowed** to interview their friends for articles as that poses questions on ethics.

Reporters are **not allowed** to send their questions prior to interviewing them or their written story in advance prior to publication. If they are asked to do so by a source, **they must tell them no.**

## Attribution

As reporters, it is our responsibility to be as transparent with our readers as possible when it comes to how we obtain information.

We must tell our readers where and how we got the information we publish. For example, if a source tells you something via email, **it must be noted that way in the story.**

If you're describing a scene that the source is telling you, **you must attribute the source**, unless you witnessed it first hand.

If you are getting information from another news article or organization, **you must attribute it** to the source material.

### **Anonymous sources**

It is The Towerlight's goal to fully attribute all information at all times. However, there are rare circumstances where an anonymous source is needed to progress the story or provide readers with invaluable information.

A writer **must get permission** from the Editor in Chief to utilize anonymous sources. Further, the writer must tell the editor who the source is and why the information they provide is invaluable and cannot be sought out elsewhere on the record.

### **Fact checking**

Reporters are responsible for ensuring that the facts included within their story are **credible and truthful**. This includes assertions made by a source. In the event of a libel suit, the only defense is truth. So, even if a source said something happened and we publish it, that does not protect us from being sued unless the source has evidence that it is 100% true.

When a source is making claims, **ask them for their documentation/evidence**. The reporter will be asked by their editor to provide said documentation as well.

Do not, under any circumstances, misrepresent or manipulate a statistic or fact in any writing done for The Towerlight.

### **Corrections policy:**

The Towerlight is dedicated to maintaining our journalistic integrity and transparency to our readers. In doing so, we want to make sure any writing published on our website, whether it be opinion or news, is 100% factually accurate. While we strive to be right all the time, mistakes do happen.

When a correction is needed, an editor will make the change as soon as possible on the article itself. The correction will be explained at the bottom of the article.

If the error needing correction or redaction needed is egregious or harmful to a source, The Towerlight will make a public correction on social media

platforms and make an editor's note within the story.

If a source reaches out to a reporter about an error in their story, it is the reporter's duty to **notify their editor within 12 hours** of receiving the notification. Failure to do so may result in the reporter not being able to continue working with The Towerlight.

Any questions about the corrections policy can be directed to [Editor@thetowerlight.com](mailto:Editor@thetowerlight.com)