

#SaveStudentNewsrooms

The Amherst Student. The Daily Campus. The Sunflower.

Over the last few years, in the face of shrinking finances, these are just a few of the student-run publications that have had their independence jeopardized. Others have been forced to fold. Across the U.S., student-run newsrooms — just like professional newsrooms — are struggling to survive. They are hemorrhaging.

But no one is talking about it.

As professional newsrooms shrink, communities have become more dependent on student newsrooms as a source of local coverage, holding not only our universities accountable but also city governments and county administrations. And as most traditional newsrooms throw up paywalls, our journalism has remained free in the stands and online. We write these articles, attending meetings and hounding sources, while juggling classes, exams and, for many of us, part-time jobs. We do it because we're passionate and care about our communities. Freedom of the press is the freedom of the people.

But we face the same problems legacy publications do. Rising print costs are no longer offset by print ads, and the new paper tariffs will only make this worse. Because of this, more student publications are having to turn to their universities for funding. But the financial help often comes with unwanted opinions and less editorial control. In short, university funding can lead to censorship. Publications that rely on a student government for funding, for instance, feel pressured to choose between running an article to expose corruption or greed within their university and paying their staff.

The Student Press Law Center has advocated for asserting legal rights for high school and college journalists state by state with the [New Voices](#) campaign. But the conversation on helping student-run publications survive needs to continue over the years, and that's what #SaveStudentNewsrooms, a movement launched by the editors of The Alligator, is trying to achieve.

After news broke that the Daily Campus, the newspaper serving the Southern Methodist University community, would reaffiliate with its university later this year, we realized how critical it is that this conversation happens now. Student journalists cannot wait for another year to strategize — some can barely wait a month — we need to act now.

So here is our solution: In order to survive the tumultuous era of journalism, student journalists must start advocating for themselves. It's a strange concept; we are taught to write and think objectively about sources, issues and topics through the journalism college. Don't become the story. But it's important for student journalists to become advocates for themselves and to remind others how critical they are to a community. No one else will. We can't expect funding to drop from the sky or people to decry censorship if we do not. We also encourage those of you who are unaffiliated with the journalism world to pay close attention to the state of student journalism. The students who are working long hours for little pay — and sometimes for none — are the ones who want to become the future professional journalists.

In the coming days, you'll see social media posts with **#SaveStudentNewsrooms** from college journalists across the country. Pay attention, because we're just getting started. Help us save student newsrooms.