NC College Media Association
Newspaper Contest Guidelines

The following guidelines are provided to help you select your publication's best work for contest submission. Entries must originate from a North Carolina college or university and must be original student work.

Opinion Writing
- Can be either a column or staff editorial.
- Should express a clear point of view that is backed up with multiple arguments and facts that are cited from reputable sources.
- Should be clear and convincing.
- Should reflect original thought and focus on a topic to which readers can relate.
- Should demonstrate good grammar and usage, with minimal or no typos.

Sports Writing
- Can be a sports news story or a sports feature. Stories reported from games should be more than just recaps.
- Should be thorough and explore a topic of relevance to athletics or physical recreation at your institution.
- Should demonstrate good grammar and usage, with minimal or no typos.

News Writing
- Can be either planned reporting or a spot-news piece.
- Should include original reporting on a topic to which readers can relate.
- Should demonstrate strong newsworthiness.
- Should include quotations from multiple human sources.
- Should demonstrate thorough reporting.
- Should be clear and well-structured.
- Should demonstrate good grammar and usage, with minimal or no typos.

Feature Writing
- Can be any type of feature writing, including coverage of communities, science, art or entertainment, or profiles of a person or group.
- Should include original reporting on a topic to which readers can relate.
- Should include quotations from multiple human sources.
- Should demonstrate thorough reporting.
- Use of a creative features writing style will be considered.
- Should demonstrate good grammar and usage, with minimal or no typos.

Photography
- Entry should be a single image.
- Can be any original still: news photography, spot-news photography, environmental portrait, sports photography, etc.
- Should capture a moment or tell a story and be composed in an interesting way.
- Should demonstrate control over technical settings for the situation it was taken in.

- Should comply with photojournalistic ethics and not be posed, with the exception of an environmental portrait.
- Should be accompanied by a detailed caption that includes the names of the subjects in the image (if there are five or fewer people in the photo).

Single- or Two-Page Design
- Can be either a single page or a two-page spread (double truck).
- Can have multiple designers credited.
- Can be color or grayscale.
- Should be interesting and appealing to the eye.
- Should be clear and easy to read.
- Should maximize multiple elements available: different pieces of copy, photos, graphics, etc.
- Should directly relate to and bolster the content and its purpose.

Illustration/Graphic
- Can be an illustration created to provide a visual for an article or a graphic, intended to convey some information or data in a visual format.
- Can be digitally generated, hand-drawn or a photo illustration.
- Should be submitted within the context it was published.
- Should be clear and easy to read and comprehend.
- Intended meaning and purpose of the illustration or graphic should be clear.

Cartoon
- Should be original, and can be either a political cartoon or a comic.
- Can be hand-drawn or digitally generated, in color or grayscale, in a single panel format or a multi-panel strip, created to pair with other content or as a stand-alone image.
- Text should be easily legible.
- The message — whether political, social commentary or pure humor — should be clear.

Digital storytelling
- A single link per entry for each package of digital storytelling should be submitted.
- Entry should include two or more elements of digital storytelling: traditional articles, creative copy or sidebar content, single images, photo galleries or essays, videos, podcasts, audio slideshows, illustrations, graphics, timelines, polls, quizzes, interactive graphics, databases, supplemental documents, etc.
- Quality and execution of individual elements will be considered, as well as whether their use serves to advance the story.
- All elements on or linked to on the entry page will be considered as a package for their ability to effectively and creatively tell a story.

Best of Show

Judges will take a holistic approach to reviewing overall excellence of the selected issues, including appearance, balance of content, sense of place and the quality of writing, reporting, photography, art or graphics and design, as well as leadership on the opinion page and evidence of in-depth reporting. Judges will approach each edition like a new reader, so its ability to draw someone into the product will be considered.

<u>Best of Show Website</u>

Judges will take a holistic approach to reviewing the overall excellence of the content, writing, photography, graphics and design. They will consider:

- Overall usability of the website, usefulness to readers and ease of navigation.
- Regular flow of content with sections that are updated.
- Transparency. Readers should be able to contact editors, find related content or submit a correction easily.
- Article pages with hyperlinks, images and digital storytelling components.
- Attention to timeliness.