

The Ursuline School Model United Nations Conference

# PRESS CORPS

Background Guide

Delegates,

Welcome to TUSMUNC IV!! I am so ecstatic that you will be joining us on November 13th and I am looking forward to meeting every one of you! My name is Ayla Itak and I am one of your two directors of the Press Corps committee. A little bit about me: I am a Junior at Ursuline, I've been participating in MUN coming up now on three years and I currently have been trying to teach myself how to play the guitar. Though this Press Corps committee will be, due to COVID - 19 circumstances, completely online again - I can assure you that you will grow in your writing techniques and simultaneously have fun with many laughs along the way! For those returning and new delegates alike, these are our goals for Press Corps: to understand how powerful writing can be, especially when playing a decisive role in bringing about large-scale change, to be equipped with the skills as a writer needed to influence and give rise to such change, and to determine individually where exactly this immense power, which is simply at the tip of your pen, needs applying.

In this committee, you will encounter a fast-paced environment where you will learn to devise written work, both drafts and final copies alike, receive feedback from those pieces of work, and learn to be adaptable and versatile in writing situations where information is limited and rapidly evolving. On top of all of that, as a delegate of Press Corps there is no doubt you will also learn along the way and gain a better understanding of how you, as a writer, can captivate audiences - both small and large. It should be noted that the Press Corps committee at TUSMUNC **does not** require the submission of written position papers. Research on your individual reporting committee, however, is still strongly encouraged. Don't hesitate to reach out if you ever don't understand something during committee or are lost, we are here to help you guys!! If you have any more questions about Press Corps, totally reach out! You got this, Delegates. Good Luck!

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## **What is journalism?**

Journalism is the lynchpin of a democratic society. Journalists aid with the gathering, analyzing, and dispersing of factual information. When the rest of society is able to digest this information, they're given the chance to react, either positively or negatively. Thus, journalists have always been instrumental in effecting change over the course of history, with countless revolts and wars being started over news reports and the information they contain.

Around the world, journalists are faced with different challenges due to the social and political climates they are reporting in. In many places, the safety of journalists is threatened, purely because they release sensitive information to the public. In America, journalists are privileged with freedom of the press, meaning that the government is unable to place restrictions upon or forcefully edit news releases. However, this isn't a universal phenomenon: a 2017 study showed that only thirteen percent of the countries internationally actually have a free press. These unjust situations continue to threaten the wellbeing of both the journalists and the public: journalists get killed for spreading information while citizens are forced into oblivion by their oppressive governments.

For the purpose of the committee, every delegate will operate as if they are working under a free press, keeping in mind the unique responsibility a free press organization operates under.

## **Goals of Committee**

Delegates in Press Corps will have two major agendas throughout the course of the conference: to advance their respective news organization and to affect palpable change in other committees. These should go hand-in-hand – when delegates publish well-written and relevant material, they will instantly increase the popularity of their organization. The more linguistically savvy and pertinent to committee a piece is, the more likely it is to be distributed to members of other committees. Once in circulation, pieces have the power to change minds, reveal truths, and alter the course of the receiving-committee. It should also be noted that the popularity of newspapers will be determined by a few factors, including the overall quality of the piece, relevance of the content being discussed, and how loyal the work is to the delegate's position (factors here include writing for your target audience, adhering to your organization's stylistic preferences, backing the established political positions of your newspaper, etc.). Delegates should aim to publish at least one cover story per committee session, time-permitting.

## Format of Committee

Committee will take place in a different fashion than the expected format for a crisis or GA committee, with more delegate freedoms and a larger need for initiative than in typical committee format. Delegates will have workstations set up inside of the central press corps headquarters where they will work on papers and hold conferences with members of other committees. Delegates will also have the option to attend unmoderated caucuses, debates, and trials for the committees they've been assigned to report on. Delegates can filter in and out of press HQ as frequently as necessary, granted that they have been given permission or are accompanied by a member of the Press Corps Staff. It is up to individual delegate parties to decide what information needs to be collected, which delegates need to be interviewed, what topics would be appealing to readers, and which events need to be shared with the general public. So as long as a clear initiative is shown, the delegates of the Press Corps have permission to go basically anywhere and meet with anyone.

Delegates of crisis committees will be told to message Press Corps on Slack which will then allow them to arrange meetings and request articles from the Press Corps. You can choose to accept or deny a meeting/assignment, but we do recommend an initial meet-up with delegates before rejecting an alliance or commission offer.

Crisis updates will serve as press conferences, and since delegates are the representatives of their news organizations, attendance at these updates is mandatory. Delegates will also always be informed when unmoderated caucuses are taking place, so they can interview and make any additional announcements, but attendance during unmods is not a requirement. Delegates may also sit in on a moderated caucus **if given permission by the committee chair.**

Photos will not be a part of this Press Corps committee. Drawings, however, are strongly encouraged to provide a visual representation for your piece, and will be greatly appreciated by the directors. Some things you can, in fact, do in committee (although you are not limited to this list) are written below. Once again, pretty much anything goes, but here are a few good starters and suggestions for the committee:

- Find the most scandalous, exclusive, or exciting information about committee that can possibly propel public interest in your newspaper
- Write intensive, well-organized articles that showcase your skills. These above-average articles will be published and delivered to committee, which will give you extra credit in the literary world due to the exposure distributing your work to crisis delegates grants in the real world.
- Privately interviewing delegates and prominent figures in committee to get “dirt”
- Publicly interviewing (or interrogating) delegates and prominent figures for the sake of publishing these transcripts in your newspaper.

## **Guidelines for Newspapers**

Press releases can take three general forms: short Tweets, medium-length articles, and cover stories. Tweets are short and direct, making them a good way to quickly update the public on events occurring in the committee. Tweets are the best at giving your news organization a quick but less broad scoping popularity burst. Medium-length articles are more in-depth pieces that center around a specific issue. While they do briefly cover the context of the issue, the primary focus remains the current issue. Cover stories explain and analyze a topic, including the background of an issue, the key players, and the predicted outcome of the situation. Thus, the difference between medium-length articles and cover stories is primarily how in-depth each delves.

Keep in mind that for more modern committees, the format of your press organization will look a little different and provide separate information than delegate positions in fantasy or historical simulations, like “Percy Jackson” or “Battle of the Queens”. These modern simulations will test your accuracy in what you report on and how well you can stick to the style of your news organization, as well as what interest level and influentiality you can generate with each piece. Fantasy and historical committee-reporters must pay attention to their audiences and constantly keep in mind the different and unusual circumstances of the committee. Interest level and influentiality is important to these committees as well, while maintaining the reporting/political style of your news position is as well, but less so. For TUSMUNC IV, Amazon: Board of Directors is considered modern.

## **Positions**

*Percy Jackson*

### **The Olympus Weekly**

The Olympus Weekly has been around since the beginning and is a newspaper that has a unique audience: the Olympians. Of the many topics that can be seen on a column of The Olympus Weekly, a few are: updates and major changes that might occur at Camp Half-Blood, information on the progress of campers both in and outside of battle training, and at times - requests that campers have for the gods as means to catch their attention. The Olympus Weekly does have variation; at times this newspaper does reports on information and events occurring in the outside world. It should be noted though, The Olympus Weekly only occasionally reports on stories such as these, and usually only when outside events are major. During times of war, The Olympus Weekly's main focus will turn to the ever-developing events and discourses related to that warfare while, all the while also remaining as it naturally is... humorous and a bit lighthearted. This indeed balances out the gloominess of war in times like such. The Olympus Weekly does not shy away from controversial topics that might be controversial for gods, but when writing this type of news, writers tend to usually "softens the edge" of such controversy so if any potential conflict between gods that might arise, the conflicts would not be as intense. Lastly, the Olympus Weekly routinely writes in a format of short tweets and medium, intermediate length articles.

## **The Half-Blood Register**

The Half-Blood Register was established only a few years after the first Camp Half-Blood began and is a unique newspaper. It is a publication that is believed to be - written on the grounds of Camp Half-Blood for the purpose of informing and updating those living within camp of current events both occurring in the Mt. Olympus world and that of the outside. It is Camp Half-Blood's championed newspaper and for the majority of campers, The Half-Blood Register is one of their main outlets of information. The campers hold a great trust in The Half-Blood Register that the information they are receiving is truthful and unbiased. Various topics could be seen on the Half-Blood Register. Two of the many are the possible whereabouts and occurrences of both the Olympians and Titans and interviews with campers living at Camp Half-Blood. In major times of war, The Half-Blood Register is a very effective instrument in calls to rally and in informing campers of their needed help. It is also for many campers, a source of motivation and hope during such times. The Half-Blood Register is also Camp Half-Blood's PSA (Public Service Announcement) system, where if information such as activity time changes, battle training location changes, sword-fighting competition cancellations, and emergency notices etc. need to reach the ears of all campers, through The Half-Blood Register, campers will be able to hear these announcements very quickly. The Half-Blood Register routinely writes in formats such as short tweets and cover-stories.

## *Battle of the Queens*

### **The Scotsman**

The Scotsman Newspaper is a publication that is based in Scotland, with its headquarters located in the capital, Edinburgh. The Scotsman reaches the farthest and widest corners of the British Kingdom; people all throughout Scotland - who make up the majority of The Scotsman audience - can never wait to get their hands on the newest edition of this publication. Some of the many topics that The Scotsman writes about include athletic sections such as jousting, local affairs, court trials, and farmers almanac. When in times of war or a heavy political climate, you can always expect The Scotsman to focus more closely on those current events. Since the Scotsman is indeed based out of Scotland, this newspaper does indeed hold a bias in favor of Catholicism and Mary, Queen of Scots. This publication, being one of the first in Scotland to write articles that hold heavy controversy, is always in tune with what the popular opinion is. The Scotsman routinely writes in formats such as medium-intermediate length articles and cover stories.

### **The Daily Telegraph**

The Daily Telegraph is a publication that is based out of London, Britain. This newspaper has a wide variety of followers and is issued throughout the entirety of the British Kingdom as well as internationally. There are many key topics that The Daily Telegraph usually focuses on. Some are about new works of literature, farmers almanac, trial cases, and of course political affairs. When it comes to war and politics, remember that The Daily Telegraph was established in England, meaning that this publication is on the side of Queen Elizabeth I and is in a biased favor of Protestantism - which is England's national religion. The majority of The Daily Telegraph's staff does indeed live in England and is always reporting on the most controversial

topics, never shying away from delicate affairs. The Daily Telegraph routinely writes in formats such as medium-intermediate length articles and cover stories.

*Amazon: Board of Directors*

### **BBC News Network**

BBC has expanded from the main source of factual, unabridged news in Great Britain to one of the premiere centrist media stations in the world. As a result, it should be no surprise that the global company, Amazon and the current issues the company is trying to deal with has taken top priority in their most recent outputs, nor that their articles remain as unbiased and without rhetoric as it gets in today's highly political landscape. The key element to the BBC's steady reader base is their accurate and uninfluenced sourcing, their writers consistently producing stories that cover the more pressing issues in the world today.

It should be noted that while BBC does turn revenue, compete with other organizations, and dole out shares of their profit to stockholders as a regular press organization would, part of their funding comes from the British government, which gives BBC a unique and almost paradoxical existence. BBC, is a taxpayer service, receiving not only its funds but oftentimes orders and corporate decisions through the British Parliament. The United Kingdom is a relatively free country with an abundance of civil liberties protected by its rulers and by its passionate people. However, it is always pertinent to note that unlike the United States Constitution, no one said anything in the Magna Carta about inviolable freedom of the press.

*If desired, additional information about each committee can be found on the corresponding committee's webpage and background guide. The link for each background guide is included in its committee's webpage.*