

The Disorientation Guide to Campus Media

The lowdown you won't find in the front pages or comp meetings of Harvard's official media.

The Crimson:

The Harvard Crimson bills itself as “the only breakfast-table daily newspaper in Cambridge, MA,” your only source for news on campus and off. Since its founding in 1873 as *The Magenta*, *The Crimson* has maintained a virtual monopoly on news coverage of what's going down in and around Harvard University, with a staff of several hundred and a daily readership of 14,000.

The Crimson is a private corporation, officially independent of the university. Yet the newspaper is still subject to close scrutiny and interaction with the Harvard administration and with various advertisers. For years, *The Crimson* has taken part in regular meetings with the president and the deans of the university. It also has a whole department dedicated to relations with “Business.”

The paper is structured just like a private corporation, with an executive leadership known as a “Guard,” including a president, managing editor, business manager, and extensive executive boards in the News, Editorial, Business, Magazine, Sports, Arts, and other departments. Though the real power is in the hands of the executives, all staff writers are granted the status of “editor.”

All aspiring staff writers are subjected to a complicated “comp” process, whereby editors extract many of their news stories, editorials, reviews, and other material from willing “compers.” Sometime in the last month of every semester, a new class of “compers” is inducted into the staff of *The Crimson* through an elaborate ritual known as “elections.”

The Crimson's News Board makes claims to objectivity and fairness in its reporting. However, it is subject to the criticism from the Left that its coverage is overly favorable to the Harvard administration and big corporations, and to familiar criticism from the campus Right that its coverage is overly “liberal” and antagonistic to the policies of the Bush administration.

The Editorial Board issues both signed opinion editorials and its own unsigned opinions every day in the name of “The Crimson Staff.” These opinions have swung to the Right in recent years, coming out in staunch support of discriminatory groups on campus, the occupation of Iraq, free market economics, and the administration of Larry Summers.

Though a Diversity Committee and financial aid fund were instituted in recent years, *The Crimson* still faces allegations of bias and exclusivity. Out of the last 6 Editorial Chairs, only one has been a woman. Out of 18 columnists published by the Editorial Board last year, only 3 were people of color.

But it's not fixed in stone. *The Harvard Crimson* is a vast enterprise with a volunteer staff open to all Harvard undergraduates. With people like you, it could be a different kind of newspaper.

To comp *The Crimson*: Attend a comp meeting for one of the boards in September or February.

To tell *The Crimson* about a news story: Email news@thecrimson.com and call 617.576.6565

To submit an Opinion Editorial (650-900 words) to *The Crimson*, email it to editorial@thecrimson.com or pcbrzez@fas.

To submit a Letter to the Editor (50-200 words) to *The Crimson*, email it to letters@thecrimson.com

Other Campus Media

Note: A fresh alternative newspaper may be coming soon, to be published by the editors of the “Disorientation Guide,” and maybe you! Editors, writers, and artists wanted. To get involved, contact ausmani@fas, mgould@fas, or mroosev@fas.

The Harvard University Gazette

This is the weekly publication of Harvard's PR wing, the Office of News and Public Affairs, the same people who run the university website. It is crafted to keep the shine on the university's image and put a positive spin on any and all campus news. Everything that goes into the Gazette is approved by the Office and by “the President and Fellows of Harvard College.”

The Harvard Independent

The “student-run weekly newsmagazine” of Harvard College. Founded in 1969 as an alternative to what was, back then, a more left-wing Crimson. *The Independent* or “Indy” now offers a range of content centered around news, student life and the arts. Though it tries to compete with *The Crimson*, the poor weekly has never managed to be taken as seriously as other publications.

The Harvard Advocate

The “premier literary magazine of Harvard College,” claiming to be the oldest college literary magazine in the country. *The Advocate* seems to be published primarily for the enjoyment of self-styled literati and glitterati. “Mother Advocate” is admired in the literary and art worlds, but like other Harvard institutions, it has also been subject to accusations of elitism and pretension.

The Salient

Harvard's own “naturally conservative” journal, a well-funded and well-run publication. *The Salient* is infamous for its publication of anti-Islam cartoons attacking the prophet Mohammed, and an editor's call for the College to “reestablish standards of morality and strongly consider disciplinary measures for those violating them...even more so to homosexuals.”

Perspective

Presented as Harvard's “Liberal Monthly,” *Perspective* or “Perspy” is the counterpart to *The Salient*, but less controversial and quite harmless. Its content tends toward invective against George Bush and support for Democratic politics, and it shares much of its leadership and readership with clubs like the College Dems, Environmental Action Committee, and BGLTSA.

Harvard Political Review and Harvard International Review

These are the two student publications with the closest ties to the political establishment. *The Political Review*, published by the IOP, tends to cozy up to political figures and rarely stray from the political center. The *International Review* is intimately connected to the U.S. foreign policy establishment through its celebrity authors and its publisher, the International Relations Council.

Online Media

In recent years, campus blogs have gained both fame and infamy for their timelier, edgier coverage and commentary about goings-on at Harvard and beyond.

Cambridge Common (www.cambridgecommon.com), the most widely read of the Harvard blogs, run by progressive politicians since 2005 as a virtual “common” for campus dialogue and dissent.

Quench Zine (quenchzine.blogspot.com) is a creative zine, self-published online and in print by a collective of queer and transgender students at Harvard.

Dem Apples (www.demapples.com) is the official website of the Harvard College Democrats, and Red Ivy (redivy.campustap.com) is its Republican foil.

Immigration Orange (immigrationorange.campustap.com) is another site started by a campus politico, this one for debate and discussion on issues of immigration, borders, and foreign policy.

And, if you're not satisfied with what's out there, start your own blog at www.campustap.com, a network for student blogs. “This is your campus,” it says. “Go ahead, say something.”

Alternative Sources of Info

"The Democracy Center" is a free space, independent media center, and political and cultural venue near Harvard Square at 45 Mount Auburn Street (next to Tommy's Pizza and Daedalus). It was opened up by Harvard students and Boston residents in 2004. Among many other groups, it now hosts the Papercut Zine Library, a public lending library with a collection of over 6,500 independent publications. Papercut's collection includes: Politics, personal, education, fiction, poetry, music, humor, health and sex, art and film, cooking and food, race, class, gender, queer issues, environment, travel, foreign language, and more. Membership is free. Open daily 2-7 pm.

Lucy Parsons Center is one of the best alternative bookstores in the Northeast, with a well-stocked collection of new, used and bargain books, and more than 200 magazines, newspapers, and journals. The *LPC* also carries posters, postcards, shirts, and political paraphernalia of all kinds. Frequent in-store events include reading and discussion groups, poetry, music, and free film nights every Wednesday. Open every day from 12-9pm. Located in Boston's South End at 549 Columbus Avenue (Take the Green E line to the Symphony stop, or the #1 Mass Ave. bus).

Independent Bookstores in Cambridge:

The Harvard Bookstore is the independent place to go for new and bargain books in Harvard Square (the Coop was bought out by Barnes & Noble long ago). It also hosts free in-house events with authors and critics every week. Located at the corner of Mass. Ave. and Plympton St.

Grolier Poetry Book Shop is the oldest independent bookstore in the area, stocking 15,000 poetic works in its little storefront. For eighty years now, it has been a destination of choice for radical writers like e.e. cummings and Allen Ginsberg. Located at 6 Plympton Street.

Revolution Books is where the People's Republic of Cambridge goes for all things communist and socialist. *Revolution* is run by the Revolutionary Communist Party, which some people have found to be a "Maoist cult." An interesting place nonetheless. Located at 1156 Mass. Ave.

Raven Books is Harvard Square's only independent destination for used books. *Raven* has strong collections in alternative literature, art, history, political theory, philosophy, and anthropology, and adds over 1,000 books a week. Will buy your books too. Located at 52-B J.F.K. Street.

More Books for Free:

Public Libraries are the local pit stops for those who can't find what they're looking for in Lamont or Widener. The *Cambridge Public Library* is located at 45 Pearl Street, just off

Mass. Ave. near Central Square. The *Boston Public Library* is at 700 Boylston Street at Copley Square.