



Blanket Tax Standing Committee 2015-2016
Report on Review of New Blanket Tax Application
Rice Standard

Abstract

Rice Standard is a registered student organization with the mission to create an independent magazine to serve as a public forum. By publishing original content through print and online media, the Standard provides a medium for students to reflect on and express their most personal ideas without judgment or censorship. The Blanket Tax Committee has reviewed Rice Standard's application and recommends the Student Senate **not approve** Rice Standard's request for subsidiary status.

Evaluation

X.A.4.c and X.A.4.e of the Student Association Bylaws establishes criteria for the Blanket Tax Standing Committee to consider when reviewing an application for the creation of a new blanket tax. The Committee must find that an organization's proposal satisfies all of the criteria in order to recommend approval of that proposal. The Committee presents its findings with regard to each criterion below.

1. Would the requested funds benefit the student body and the Rice community?

The Blanket Tax Standing Committee finds that the requested funds would not benefit all of the student body and the Rice community uniquely. The mission and purpose of the organization in our opinion is not unique enough from the Rice Thresher to justify a creation of another Blanket Tax organization.

2. Would the requested funds contribute to the organization's mission, purpose, and goals?

The Blanket Tax Standing Committee finds the funds will contribute to the organization's mission, purpose and goals by financially supporting their printing.

3. Does the organization have a strong financial need?

The Blanket Tax Standing Committee finds that Rice Standard has a strong financial need as they publish on an annual basis.

4. Have all other reasonable means of acquiring funding been exhausted?

The Blanket Tax Standing Committee finds that Rice Standard has not exhausted all means of acquiring funds. The committee finds based on the information provided that the organization is in the process of applying to several grants on campus and ALFA grant. As such, we feel that Rice Standard has not exhausted all sources of funding yet.

5. Is the organization's financial need long-term and annual?

The Blanket Tax Standing Committee finds that Rice Standard's financial need is long-term and annual.

6. Proper Budgeting

The Blanket Tax Committee finds Rice Standard's budgeting to be appropriate.

Conclusion

As thoroughly discussed above, the Blanket Tax Standing Committee finds that the Rice Standard proposal to be a subsidiary organization with access to blanket tax funds does not satisfy all of the review criteria. This alone is sufficient for a recommendation to **not approve** the proposal.

As such, formally, The Student Association Blanket Tax Standing Committee for the 2015-2016 academic year hereby recommends that the Student Senate **NOT APPROVE** the Rice Standard.

Respectfully submitted, Sai Chilakapati
Chair, Blanket Tax Standing Committee

Rice Standard Response

We respect the findings of the blanket tax committee and understand the reasoning behind the decision. We hope to learn from this experience and further advance the mission of The Rice Standard

rice **STANDARD**

SA SUBSIDIARY APPLICATION

CONTENTS:

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RICE STANDARD

Year founded: 2007

President: George Han, georgehan@rice.edu

Treasurer: Mengjia Liu, m154@rice.edu

Advisor: Kelley Callaway, kcallaway@rice.edu

Number of active members: 17 (including all columnists, illustrators, and other staff)

Mission Statement

The Rice Standard is an independent magazine created to serve as a public forum. By publishing original content through print and online media, the Standard provides a medium for students to reflect on and express their most personal ideas without judgment or censorship.

Our History

The Standard was founded in February 2007 to provide a new venue for the thoughts of Rice University students. Before the Standard, the only media outlet at Rice was The Rice Thresher, a weekly newspaper. The Standard was founded to publish in-depth content that the Thresher often overlooks, specifically by providing a platform for students to express complex political, social, and cultural thoughts or positions in the form of short essays. The print magazine debuted in March 2007 and published a second issue that April. These early issues were great successes and students were drawn to the magazine by the high-quality writing and new voices, as well as our embrace of free-speech and independence.

Today, the Standard maintains both a print and an online presence. Our mission is to enable students to voice their opinions on the issues that impact life at Rice and around the world. Articles have ranged from political commentary to philosophical discourse, from heartfelt and personal introspection to outrageous satire. In the spring of 2014, our college life survey drew over 600 respondents, by far the largest poll of Rice students' personal thoughts ever conducted.

We feel that our publication provides a forum for the expression and exchange of unique perspectives by featuring more voices and adding new ones constantly. We will showcase the ideas and experiences of the people you eat lunch with and sit next to in class. We are the Rice Standard, and we're the only place where your voice can be heard.

RICE STANDARD CONSTITUTION

Last Revised August 6, 2015

Article I. Name and Purpose

Section I.A. Name. The name of this organization shall be *RICE STANDARD*, abbreviated *RS*.

Section I.B. Mission Statement. The Rice Standard is an independent magazine created to serve as a public forum. By publishing original content through print and online media, the Standard provides a medium for students to reflect on and express their most personal ideas without judgment or censorship.

Section I.C. Purpose. The purpose of this organization shall be:

I.C.1. To provide a uncensored designated public forum for any form of creative expression, created by and maintained by students;

I.C.2. To engage the Rice community in important discussions on a wide variety of topics and to promote social activism through personal columns;

I.C.3. To provide opportunities for Rice students learn about journalistic practices and receive training in writing for an audience;

I.C.4. To make partnerships with various other student-run organizations in order to promote student media on campus;

Article II. Membership

Section II.A. Classes. There shall be three classes of members:

II.A.1. Editors. All currently active members in the club shall be eligible for editor membership. Editor membership shall be granted to any eligible person who requests the position and such request is approved by a majority of the current editors. This position is analogous to the "officer" roles in many other organizations.

II.A.1.a. The amount of editors allowed is the choice of the Editorial Board.

II.A.2. Columnists. Columnists membership shall be granted to any person who wishes to contribute to the Standard on a full-time basis, but is not interested in taking on leadership positions. Contributions must be first approved by the editors.

II.A.3. Part-time contributors. Students who wish to contribute one-off pieces may do so without making a full-time columnist commitment. Contributions must first be approved by the editors.

Section II.B. Removal

II.B.1. Grounds for Removal. Any of the following shall constitute grounds for removal of membership:

II.B.1.a. Conduct injurious to the organization and its mission, where injurious conduct is any conduct tending to injure the good name of the organization, disturb its well-being, or hamper it in its work;

II.B.1.b. Conduct unbecoming a member of the organization and the good name of student media; and

II.B.1.c. Ineligibility for membership according to the requirements of this organization, the Student Association, and/or Rice University, whichever are applicable.

II.B.2. Process for Removal. If an editor or the sponsor of the organization has reason to believe a member has acted in a manner warranting removal under Section II.B.1, the member may be called before the editors and/or sponsor in a closed meeting. After hearing the alleged grounds for removal and the member's response, the editors may remove the member by a majority vote. The President shall notify the member of the decision in writing within 48 hours.

Article III. Editors

Section III.A. Definition. The editors of this organization shall rule as an oligarchy and share all responsibilities of the president, treasurer, webmaster, creative director, and more.

Section III.B. Editorial Board

III.B.1. Definition. The editors shall constitute the Editorial Board.

III.B.2. Authority. The Editorial Board shall have general supervision of the affairs of the organization between its regular meetings, make recommendations to the membership, and perform any other duties listed in this constitution. The Editorial Board shall be subject to the orders of this organization, and none of its acts or omissions shall conflict with action taken by this organization. Accordingly, the Editorial Board shall be authorized to spend this organization's funds and create plans to apply for more funds.

III.B.3. Meetings. The Editorial Board shall select its own time and place of meeting. A special meeting may be called if any editor requests it. The meeting may take place in person or over the internet.

Section III.C. Duties of Editors

III.C. The Editors shall:

III.C.a. Oversee all meetings and activities of the organization;

III.C.b. Chair all meetings of the membership and of the Editorial Board; and

III.C.c. Ensure the organization abides by the rules and regulations of the Student Association and of Rice University at all times.

III.C.d. Be in charge of programming; and

III.C.e. Submit all required forms to the Student Association and the Office of Student Activities by their respective deadlines.

III.C.f. Manage this organization's funds;

III.C.g. Maintain a correct balance of this organization's funds;

III.C.h. Present a budget to the membership no later than November 1;

III.C.i. Accept funds from grants and update the organization's records accordingly; and

III.C.j. Make available, at the request of any member, the Student Association, or Rice University, a current breakdown of the organization's income and expenses.

III.C.k. Take minutes at all meetings of the membership and of the Executive Committee;

III.C.l. Distribute minutes to the membership or the editors in a timely manner;

III.C.m. Maintain the membership list, any mailing lists, and the organization's website;

III.C.n. Accept membership information forms from new members; and

III.C.o. Manage the organization's correspondence.

Section III.D. Eligibility. Only student members who are not on Disciplinary Probation or otherwise prohibited from holding office in a registered student organization shall be eligible to seek and hold office.

Section III.E. Selection. Editors shall be elected in accordance with Article V (Voting) at a regular meeting.

Section III.F. Term. Editors shall serve until their replacement, removal, or resignation.

Section III.G. Removal

III.G.1. Grounds for Removal. Any of the following shall constitute grounds for removal from office:

III.G.1.a. Failure to satisfactorily fulfill the duties of the office;

III.G.1.b. Conduct injurious to the organization and its mission, where injurious conduct is any conduct tending to injure the good name of the organization, disturb its well-being, or hamper it in its work;

III.G.1.c. Conduct behavior or action unbecoming of a member of the organization;

III.G.1.d. Ineligibility for membership according to the requirements of this organization, the Student Association, and/or Rice University, whichever are applicable; and

III.G.1.e. Violation of Rice University rules or regulations, including the Code of Student Conduct and the Rice Alcohol Policy, where the violation occurs in the course of fulfilling the duties of the office, and where the member has been found in violation by an appropriate judicial body or official.

III.G.2. Process for Removal. An Editor may be removed through either of the following processes:

III.G.2.a. Upon receipt of a petition of at least 20 percent of the voting members of the organization, the Editorial Board shall be required to schedule a recall election to be conducted between 48 hours and two weeks from the time of receipt. A two-thirds vote of voting members present is required to remove an editor in a recall election.

III.G.2.b. If an editor or the sponsor of the organization has reason to believe an editor has acted in a manner warranting removal under Section III.E.1, the editor may be called before the other editors and sponsor in a closed meeting. After hearing the alleged grounds for removal and the editor's response, the other editors may remove the member by a unanimous vote. The Editorial Board shall notify the member of the decision in writing within 24 hours.

Section III.H. Vacancies. In the case of a vacancy for any office, the Editorial Board shall call a special election to be conducted between 0 hours and two weeks from the time of vacancy.

Article IV. Meetings

Section IV.A. Regular Meetings. Regular meetings of this organization shall be held at a time and place that is convenient for the membership. The membership may, at its discretion, change the time or place of meeting. Regular meetings shall be held at least monthly. The Editorial Board shall send a reminder to the membership via appropriate means between 24 and 7 days in advance of each regular meeting.

Section IV.B. Special Meetings. Special meetings may be called by the Editorial Board. The Editorial Board shall be obligated to call a special meeting upon the written petition of at least 30 percent of the student members. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the call. At least 48 hours' notice must be given for special meetings.

Section IV.C. Quorum. Forty percent of the student members shall constitute a quorum for all purposes under this constitution.

Section IV.D. Attendance. Editors are expected to attend all meetings.

Article V. Voting

Section V.A. Voting Members. Voting members shall be all student members.

Section V.B. Threshold. Except where otherwise noted, any matter put to a vote shall be decided by a majority of voting members present.

Section V.C. General Elections. Elections shall be held at any time for all editor positions. A majority of voting members present shall be required to elect an editor. The number of editors allowed is the sole choice of the Editorial Board.

V.C.1. There is no set election period. Any member with any level of experience may request to join the Editorial Board.

Article VI. Finances

Section VI.A. Budget. The Editorial Board shall prepare a proposed budget by November 1 of each year. The budget may be approved or amended only by a majority vote of voting members present at a general meeting with at least 48 hours' notice.

Section VI.B. Dues. There are no annual dues for this organization. Funding will come from grants.

Section VI.C. Club Funds. All funds gathered by the organization must be deposited into a club account through the Office of Student Activities within one business day of their receipt.

Section VI.D. Misuse of Funds. The sponsor shall refer to the relevant University office(s) any member reasonably suspected of spending club funds without authority, failing to deposit club funds appropriately, or otherwise misusing or abusing club funds.

Article VII. Sponsor

Section VII.A. Requirement. The organization must have a sponsor who is a member of the Rice faculty or staff and who plans to be at Rice for the full academic year.

Section VII.B. Selection. The sponsor shall be selected at a regular meeting by a majority vote of voting members present.

Section VII.C. Term. The sponsor shall serve until his or her resignation or replacement.

Section VII.D. Training. The sponsor must meet the training criteria set by the Office of Student Activities by the deadline determined by that office.

Section VII.E. Replacement. If the sponsor resigns, is replaced, or is otherwise unable to continue serving as the sponsor for the remainder of the academic year, the organization shall select a new sponsor and notify the Office of Student Activities of the change within 15 class days.

Article VIII. Parliamentary Authority

Section VIII.A. The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall govern this organization in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this constitution and any special rules of order this organization may adopt.

Article IX. General Policies and Regulations

Section IX.A. Nondiscrimination Policy. This organization shall not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, age, disability, or veteran status.

Section IX.B. Anti-Hazing Policy. This organization shall not engage in any form of hazing, as defined by the Code of Student Conduct and any other applicable Rice University rules and regulations.

Section IX.C. Conflict of Interest Policy. The business of this organization shall not be conducted in any manner that creates a conflict of interest or the reasonable appearance thereof.

Section IX.D. Approval of Contracts. No commitments or contracts shall be made by any member of this organization on behalf of this organization without the approval of both the sponsor and a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

Section IX.E. Interpretation of this Constitution. This document shall be interpreted based on the letter, the spirit, and the intent of any provision(s) in question, with reference to appropriate archival documents to provide insight into the intent or spirit of a provision where relevant. Article and section titles are intended to aid in reading and interpreting the document but shall not be construed as binding upon or limiting the content of their respective articles and sections. Where a general statement and a specific statement appear to be contradictory, the specific statement shall be taken as a binding exception to the general statement.

Article X. Primacy of the Student Association

Section X.A. This organization shall recognize the primacy of the Student Association Executive Branch, the Student Senate, and ultimately, the Student Association.

Section X.B. This organization shall be bound by the requirements of the Constitution of the Student Association and any associated rules and regulations.

Section X.C. This constitution and any bylaws or policies adopted by this organization are subordinate to the Constitution of the Student Association.

Article XI. Amendments

Section XI.A. Approval by Membership. Proposed amendments to this constitution may be approved by the membership by a three-fourths vote of voting members present with at least one week's prior notice. Otherwise, the Editorial Board may make changes at any time.

Section XI.B. Approval by Student Association Parliamentarian. Amendments approved by the membership shall be submitted to the Student Association Parliamentarian. Amendments may not take effect until they are approved by the Parliamentarian or the Student Senate in accordance with the Constitution of the Student Association. The Date of Last Revision on the title page of this constitution shall be updated to reflect the date of approval by the Parliamentarian or Senate.

Budget

	2014	2015	2016
Printing costs	\$646.19 (1 small issue, 500 copies)	\$900.00 (1 larger issue, 1,000 copies)	\$1400 (2 larger issues, 1,000 copies)
Website	---	---	---
Promotional materials	\$264.87	\$200.00	\$100
Food	\$89.48	\$300.00	\$200
Other	---	---	\$100
SA funds requested	\$0	\$0	\$1,700
Out of pocket	\$1,000.54	\$1,400.00	\$100
TOTAL	\$1,000.54	\$1,400.00	\$1,800

Net savings: \$1,620 remaining

General explanation of request for funds

Funds are needed primarily for printing costs, since we want to publish more than once annually and need money for that to be a reality. In 2014 our annual magazine had a print run, and in 2015 the print run was 1000 copies. In both years, the issues were instantly snatched up by students, and nearly the entire print run had been exhausted within a two week period. For that reason, we want the issues we print to have a minimum print run of 1000 copies, but preferably several hundred more per print issue if possible. If possible, we would like to use a small amount of funding for promotional materials and events (e.g. flyers, posters, launch party for a new issue).

Current efforts to acquire other sources of funding. (SAPP, Alpha, etc.)

We have already obtained some money from SAPP funding, and are in the process of applying to the ALFA cultural programming fund and several other grants on campus. Our primary source of money in the past few years has come from the think tank Campus Progress, who provided

us with an annual student media grant. However, they have since rebranded themselves as Generation Process and cut our grant funding entirely because of budget cuts on their end.

Explanation and evidence of the organization's financial practices, including budgeting and record-keeping;

We haven't spent large amounts of money in past years, as the vast majority of our spending has been devoted to the annual print issue. Aside from the print issue, we have incurred minor expenses in purchasing T-shirts for our staff members and food for our monthly meetings. We always vote on expenses before any purchases are made, and review them with our advisor Kelley Callaway, who does our financial record keeping. Our budget looks very similar from year to year, so we always have a good sense of how much we'll need given the estimates from the previous year.

Why the above sources of funding are not sufficient to sustain your organization?

For the past three years we have been spending money carried over from our own account without getting enough new sources to replenish it. With high printing costs, hundreds of dollars are quickly spent on just one print issue. This is not sustainable in the long term, especially since we want to grow. Now we only have \$1600 which we need to keep as an emergency fund, so future print issues and other expenses must come from a longer-term annual grant.

How priority access to the Blanket Tax General Pool will aid long-term sustainability of the organizations?

We will no longer have to live on the edge of bankruptcy and can focus on expanding our print presence instead. We have stayed active for eight years, and an annual amount of money will allow us to survive for many years to come and continue providing a unique platform for students. Without a long-term money supply, our growth will be very limited, and we cannot have a print magazine at all.

Proposed amendments to the organization's constitution that would satisfy the requirements placed upon subsidiary organizations by this constitution, including the requirement for elected leadership set forth in Section IX.A.4 of the SA constitution.

Our constitution and government already meets the needs of the SA extremely well. The voices of our writers and illustrators is very important to us, and we make decisions as a whole.

How additional funds will benefit the student body?

We are a unique outlet and fill in many of the gaps in Rice's student media especially through our publication of human interest stories. Anyone can publish their thoughts without censorship, and we encourage discussion as a public forum. We also help writers improve their writing skills through an extensive editing system as well as opportunities to learn the editing process and methods of writing and publishing for an audience through our online and physical presence. Our writers cover such diverse subjects as their views of the culture at Rice (a recent article is Rice and the Cult of Positivity), global and political events with far reaching consequences "outside the hedges" (Beirut and the Shadow of Selective Grief), their own experiences abroad and at Rice (The Anxious Abroad, How to Study for Midterms), their hobbies and culinary interests, and more. All these are stories unlikely to receive significant coverage in our fellow publications. Additionally, our surveys such as the Rice Census and the ongoing Race at Rice Survey have been popular, thought-provoking, and great promotions for discussion.

With more funding, we will be able to print more physical copies of our magazine more frequently and increase our presence at Rice as a forum for discussion and a great opportunity for those who would like to write. We currently print once a year, and we would love to be able to print at least once a semester. With our current funds, we also expect to last for only a few more years in print and without the print copy, we appear to have little presence on campus.