



TISL

Tennessee Intercollegiate
State Legislature

Media Handbook 2025

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Mission Statement

To accurately and efficiently promote, inform, and spread the news of the Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature with professionalism, credibility, and fairness.

Editorial Board

Communications Director: Macy Miller, East Tennessee State University

Deputy Communications Director: Emily Garver, Belmont University

Internal Relations Director: TBD

External Relations Director: TBD

OVERVIEW

TISL Media was created as a student initiative in 2007 at the 38th TISL General Assembly and officially began at the 39th TISL General Assembly.

TISL Media's mission is to accurately and efficiently promote, inform, and spread the news of the Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature with integrity, trustworthiness, and objectivity.

Students in TISL Media work together to achieve that mission by producing a newsletter called *TISL Times*, publishing online broadcast videos, and utilizing various social media platforms.

The media program is a crucial part of sharing information about what happens at TISL with the delegates and outside world.

Journalists will follow the Code of Ethics that is included at the end of this document. They will not disturb chamber or AMC3 proceedings.

The Editorial Board has adopted Internal Procedures, a Code of Ethics, and other guidelines to help with the day-to-day operations of TISL Media.

WHAT TO BRING

We encourage media participants to bring any of the following items they have access to. TISL is not responsible for loss or damage to student property.

*required

General Media Materials:

- Laptop or tablet*
- Chargers for phones, computers, tablets, cameras, and other equipment*
- Pen & paper*
- Headphones*
- Small microphone for voiceovers and interviews

For Photographers/Videographers Only:

- Video or digital camera (HD preferred)*
- Software to edit video packages or photos (Final Cut Pro or similar.) Export videos in Quick Time Movie format.*
- SD Card*
- USB or card reader to connect a camera to computer.*
- Tripod

AT THE TISL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Individual roles will be pre-determined before the TISL General Assembly, but can be changed at the Communications Director's discretion.

TISL Media will meet at the beginning of each day during the TISL General Assembly at a time and location to be determined by the Editorial Board. Each delegate will be designated a task every morning based on the Media calendar of events.

There will be a **required Media Orientation** on the Thursday of the TISL General Assembly for all members. Orientation will cover the Media calendar and specific expectations.

Media-Specific Meetings

- 1 p.m. Thursday – **Media Orientation** Media Area
- Friday, 8:30 a.m. – **Media Meeting***, Media Area
- Saturday, 8:30 a.m. – **Media Meeting***, Media Area
- Sunday, 8:30 a.m. – **Media Meeting***, Media Area

*Meeting times and locations are subject to change.

A Media GroupMe will be utilized to inform delegates of meeting changes. All other Media-specific events will be listed in the Media calendar.

AWARDS

Best Overall Media Delegate: A Media Delegate who is the most effective at achieving the TISL Media Mission overall. This member will be selected by the TISL Media editorial board and will be announced on the final day of the conference.

Best Media Social Media Member: A Media Delegate who is the most effective at achieving the TISL Media mission while creating and presenting accurate, timely and effective information for the TISL General Assembly. This member will be selected by the TISL Media editorial board and will be announced on the final day of the conference.

Best Media Photographer: A Media Delegate who is the most effective at achieving the TISL Media mission while recording accurate and effective photographs of the TISL General Assembly. This member will be selected by the TISL Media editorial board and will be announced on the final day of the conference.

Best Media Reporter: A Media Delegate who is the most effective at achieving the TISL Media mission while exhibiting truthfulness, integrity, and skill in their writing. This member will be selected by the TISL Media editorial board and will be announced on the final day of the conference.

OUTSIDE THE TISL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

After the completion of the TISL General Assembly, the Board will create a post-GA survey for Media members. This survey can be used by the upcoming Editorial Board in order to make each year more efficient.

For the sake of productivity and in preparation for the TISL General Assembly, the Editorial Board will hold at least one conference call per month from August to November. Calls will be established by the Communications Director. Access to the conference call is available upon request, but the Editorial Board shall hold discretion as to whether their meetings be private or public.

INTERNAL PROCEDURES

Director: The Director will act as chair of an Editorial Board whose terms end with the term of the Director.

The Director's job is to act as the communication liaison between the Executive Council and the Media program.

They are responsible for ensuring that advertising commitments to TISL sponsors are met in coordination with the TISL Executive Director.

They should be the first informed of issues within the Media department and are responsible for helping resolve issues or bringing them to the TISL Executive Director.

Deputy Director: The Deputy Director will stand in when the Media Director cannot.

They will assure that all content has been properly reviewed and edited by a qualified member of TISL Media before publication.

They are responsible for ensuring that advertising commitments to TISL sponsors are met in coordination with the TISL Executive Director.

The Deputy Director is to be kept informed of current projects by media team members.

External Communications Director: The External Relations Director will be responsible for all information that is published about TISL to the outside world. This includes but is not limited to: social media, broadcasting, and the TISL Media website.

They may delegate someone to oversee broadcast production and website content.

Duties of the External Relations Director include:

- Promote a common hashtag for use across social media platforms, typically #TISL [insert GA number]
- Train members of the media for social media and content submission during the TISL
- General Assembly
- Update TISL Media website as needed
- Enforce social media guidelines and oversee content creation

Internal Communications Director: The Internal Relations Director is responsible for information published during the TISL General Assembly that deals specifically with proceedings and information for delegates.

They will act as editor-in-chief of the *TISL Times* and ensure that an edition is published twice a day and once on Sunday.

They will work with the External Director to ensure online and physical copies are readily available.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Your audience is large and diverse. It is much larger than the delegates at the Capitol. These social media accounts are also followed by:

- TISL alumni of all ages
- High-ranking state officials
- College & university administrators
- Professors
- Anyone else who sees your posts because of retweeting, liking, and sharing.

Please consider the total audience -- delegates and non-delegates -- when deciding what to post.

Be cautious of what you like and who you follow on our social media pages. It is imperative to maintain a professional image.

With some social media sites, such as X (formerly known as Twitter), there is a limited character count. Keep in mind when posting content and remember to keep information consistent across platforms.

Good topics for posting:

- TISL General Assembly key events: Opening Session, Joint Sessions, Elections and Closing Session, for example.
- Interesting bills: passed or defeated
- Quotes from outside speakers
- AMC3 results
- Election nominations and results

*Photos and other visuals generally receive more insights and are easier to quickly comprehend.

Do not post:

- Irresponsible posts
- After-hours social events because they're not official TISL events
- Consecutive posts (multiple posts within a few minutes)

SOCIAL MEDIA OVERALL EXPECTATIONS

Post **accurate** information in a timely manner. This includes double-checking important information such as names, hometowns, delegations, election results, bill numbers, etc. Check twice, post once. Other good practices might include getting a list of colleges, sample ballot, bill packet, etc. to check for accurate information.

Members of TISL Media, especially the Editorial Board, should be available to quickly cover breaking news via social media should the need arrive. The Director can also recruit and train assistants to help with the posting process.

Media reporters are encouraged to use the official hashtag when posting social media content.

GENERAL POSTING AND REPORTING WRITING GUIDE

For information on the recommended writing & style guide, visit [this link](#).

AMC3 MEDIA GUIDELINES

A Media member must enter the courtroom before the round begins and remain there until the round is complete. Please try to remain courteous to the AMC3 participants and minimize distractions by remaining in the back or to the sides of the courtroom.

No food or drink(s) is permitted in the courtrooms. Cell phones, in silent mode, may be used only for the purposes of media coverage. Avoid personal cell phone usage during court sessions.

Photography is permitted in all rounds of the AMC3 competition, but reporters and photographers should use a quiet “point and-shoot” without flash. Turn off the sound to the shutter if you have the capability and avoid any serious disruption through movement or sound.

Video is only permitted within the semi-final and final rounds. It is allowed **ONLY** if the reporter is in the room **BEFORE** the competition starts and remains stationary through the remainder of the court session.

Reporters are permitted to interview the TISL Supreme Court, Magistrates, Clerk & Marshall, or Assistant Clerks.

You may **NOT** interview Jurors of View. You may **NOT** interview any competitors, unless it is a competitor in the final round. Avoid discussing any opinion on the case prior to its release, AMC3 scores, lawsuits, and campaigns.

Media reporters should refer to teams by their team number or individual name and avoid naming their college or university.

CODE OF ETHICS

The Code of Ethics is adopted by the Editorial Board and applies to all TISL Media participants.

Everyone participating in TISL Media shall seek **high standards of accuracy and ethical reporting**. Analyzing your work is the best way to keep from plagiarism.

STANDARDS FOR FACTUAL REPORTING

Reporters are expected to be as accurate as possible given the time allotted for story preparation and the space available, and to seek reliable sources. Events with a single eyewitness are reported with attribution. Events with two or more independent eyewitnesses may be reported as fact. Controversial facts are reported with attribution.

Independent fact-checking by another TISL Media participant is desirable to achieve quality. Each section editor will serve as the final editor for material submitted in his or her own section but should still seek approval from their Director.

When an error has been discovered, a correction should be made in a proportionate and timely manner. Corrections might be made through a medium other than where the initial error was made.

Plagiarism is defined as claiming someone else's idea(s) as your own. Paraphrasing, citing sources, and analyzing your work is the best way to keep from plagiarizing any work.

ELECTION COVERAGE

TISL Media's goal is to provide fair and accurate coverage to all candidates during the election. TISL Media's role is to be a link between voters and the candidates. Reporters should report information that is relevant to a candidate's potential to lead in a position of TISL leadership.

Just as with other TISL coverage, TISL Media will offer fair and accurate coverage of the election. Election results will be announced formally by TISL Media at a designated time and place upon receiving the official vote tally from the Election Commission.

If there are any questions please contact Communications Director, Macy Miller at millermf2@etsu.edu.

SLANDER AND LIBEL

- Libel: a published false statement that is damaging to a person's reputation; a written defamation.
- Slander: the action or crime of making a false spoken statement damaging to a person's reputation.

Reporting the truth is almost never libel, which makes accuracy very important. Reporters and editors are expected to carefully verify the accuracy of anything they publish. They should compare the information presented against their general knowledge to test its veracity and plausibility.

Private persons have privacy rights that must be balanced against the public interest in reporting information about them.

Should a section editor have concerns about a potential slander or libelous case, he or she should bring the matter to the Editorial Board and a TISL Media adviser.

HARM LIMITATION PRINCIPLE

Editorial independence is accompanied by a responsibility to not print sensitive information in certain situations. Some weight needs to be given to the negative consequences of full disclosure, creating a practical and ethical dilemma. The Society of Professional Journalists' code of ethics offers the following advice, which is representative of the practical ideals of most professional journalists. Quoting directly:

- Show compassion for those who may be affected adversely by news coverage. Use special sensitivity when dealing with inexperienced sources or subjects.
- Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or grief.
- Recognize that gathering and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort.
- Recognize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than do public officials and others who seek power, influence or attention. Only an overriding public need can justify intrusion into anyone's privacy.
- Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity.