



Request for 2024 Funding Services and Activities Fee Committee

BUDGET PROPOSAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Department Name: Student Publications

Create Date: 01/23/2024

Due Date: 02/07/2024

Submitter Name: Daniel Nash

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Department Head Approval:

Department Head: Conor Leary

Requested Amount: **\$235,399**

Departmental Information

STUDENT UTILIZATION

These funds will go to the operations of two student-operated publications, the weekly news publication the Ledger and the annual literary arts journal Tahoma West.

In short, the Ledger provides a news service for the campus, and Tahoma West provides student writers and artists with a creative outlet, as well as direct experience with a small-scale version of the submission process they would face at a professional operation. The employees of both publications receive firsthand education in the skills required to see a multimedia creative project to completion. The Ledger produces 30+ small projects each year in the form of weekly print and online issues, while Tahoma West completes one large project in the form of its book.

If approved in full, this SAF funding request will pay for:

- student personnel wages,
- weekly printing of 300+ copies of the Ledger,*
- subscription to the MailChimp email newsletter service,
- Workday cost allocation,
- annual 900-copy printing of Tahoma West,
- office supplies,
- Adobe Creative Cloud,
- UW telephone services,
- professional journalism memberships and contest entry fees,
- copy and postage fees,
- food for Ledger staff training in September and the Tahoma West launch party in May.

Additionally, in the past, I've used end-of-year surpluses to purchase promotional goods that are distributed free to students at involvement fairs.

*: Proposal reflects a regular printing year. Knowing that we are likely to face another year of requested cuts, I've attached an alternative plan for multimedia investments.

CORE VALUES/MISSION ALIGNMENT

Student Publications aligns with the Strategic Plan indicators of Students, Scholarship, and Vitality.

Students

Our new strategic plan advises UW Tacoma programmers to "ensure every student has opportunities to engage in high-impact practices."

The American Association of Colleges and Universities identifies collaborative projects and writing-intensive courses as two practices with a high impact on student learning. The Ledger and Tahoma West are both intensely collaborative environments, and the Ledger is certainly writing intensive if not a course per se. Reporters who work for an entire academic year will write 24-30 articles on top of their coursework. Section editors produce the same amount of work, and additionally edit the writing of the reporters they supervise.

In terms of collaboration, the students of the Ledger rely on each other to bring the newspaper to print each week, whether writers and editors polishing an article, writers and illustrators brainstorming artwork for a topic, or editors and designers deciding how the week's newspaper will look. Meanwhile, the editors of Tahoma West must work together to select and edit contributions to the journal before collaboratively designing a 120-page book on a tight deadline for spring launch.

Scholarship

Goal 7 advises programs to "Foster a climate of creativity, entrepreneurship, and innovation. In recent years, the Ledger staff rapidly innovated in the areas of email newsletters and ebooks. This year, students have created new products for advertisers and produced a mini-podcast to add value to the longtime Huskies in the Hallway feature.

Vitality

Goal 10 advises us to "create spaces, programs and activities that encourage engagement" with UWT. Ledger reporters must engage with new and unfamiliar areas of campus to produce interesting work and perform their jobs. Readers are engaged when they read about topics relevant to their campus experience, such as available childcare services, the Husky 100 program, or the opening of Milgard Hall. Tahoma West provides an engagement opportunity offered nowhere else on campus--the opportunity to go through a creative editing process and have their story, poem or artwork appear in a book.

SAF-FUNDED PROGRAM OR SERVICES GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Tahoma West's goal each year is to gather as many submissions as possible from UW Tacoma students, alumni, faculty, and staff. As of February 9, Tahoma West has received 45 submissions in advance of the March 22 deadline for the 2024 volume. That's one more early submission than we reported to SAFC during last year's process--and we'd conducted that count in March! The majority of submissions come in over Spring Break, and staff typically receive around 100/year, with the two pandemic volumes seeing slightly fewer.

The Ledger's service goals are to expand readership in print and online.

Print issues are tracked with a hand-count sheet by circulation manager AJ Pioquinto. The manager distributes new issues and counts issues remaining from previous weeks. I've attached the distribution manager's weekly reports for the year so far.

Web traffic to thetacomaledger.com has remained high despite staff cuts reducing the number of stories per month. Our usual metrics were not able to be measured perfectly this year due to a technical issue with Wordpress's Jetpack plugin related to their going to a paid plan. I describe the details in an attachment to this proposal. That said, 2023 traffic was higher than 2022 traffic in terms of views and visitors. Comparing months between September 2023 - January 2024 to the same months in the previous year, the Ledger has seen modest growth with clear upticks in September, October, and November, tempered by December and January numbers that were slightly down over the previous year. Articles published in the September 2023 - January 2024 earned 79,969 views in the current school year, through January 30, 2024 (a 19% increase over the same period of the previous year).

The Ledger newsletter has averaged a 66% open rate, up 4.5% from last year. Unsubscribes average 0.19%, which is on par with last year. Our average click-through rate was 1.3%, with a steep dropoff from the beginning of the school year, which saw 15-20% clickthroughs. However, web traffic has remained consistently strong, so it's possible more students are visiting the website directly.

We have taken on the Museum of Glass as an advertiser this year, and the publication's new advertising manager is working on an updated media kit for clients.

STUDENT UTILIZATION (COMPARISON OVER PAST 2 YEARS)

The Ledger primarily tracks service use through distribution and readership, covered above in Q3 and supported by supplementary attachments to this application. The attached bar chart of web traffic to thetacomaledger.com provides raw readership numbers (including non-student readers) by month over the past two years. The MailChimp data provides a gender and age breakdown of students using the mailing list.

Tahoma West tracks the total number of submissions received by the Spring Break deadline for its annual volume:

- The 2023 issue of Tahoma West saw 63 total submissions (21 visual art, 10 creative nonfiction, 21 poetry, 11 fiction)
- The 2022 issue of Tahoma West saw 105 total submissions (21 visual art, 7 creative nonfiction, 73 poetry, 4 fiction)
- The 2021 issue of Tahoma West saw 86 total submissions (47 visual art, 10 creative nonfiction, 25 poetry, 4 fiction)

2023 saw a decrease in total submissions, after several years of post-pandemic growth. It's hard to pinpoint a precise reason for the decrease in the previous year, but I noted that the difference primarily came down to a lower number of poetry submissions, while the other three categories either remained stable or grew. At any rate, the number of early submissions to the Spring 2024 journal is high. As of January 31, the journal has received 45 early submissions, which is a number we would normally expect in late February or early March. The majority of submissions typically come on the day of the journal's deadline for contributions, which always occurs on Friday during Spring Break. That date will be March 22 this year.

More demographic data for submissions to the 2023 Tahoma West (Volume 27) is attached.

COLLECTION OF FEEDBACK & IMPROVEMENTS

Tahoma West and the Ledger are both located in MAT 151. Both editorial staffs hold combined Student Publications office hours to take feedback and answer student questions. These have returned to being fully in-person after being held online from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic through the end of the last school year.

Tahoma West maintains three regularly updated social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to interact with UWT students interested in submitting or attending events. We have a university-hosted website at tacoma.uw.edu/tahoma-west, where users can find submission guidelines, contact information, and online editions of the past two years' journals. The editor-in-chief interacts with interested submitters or campus partners via tahomaw@uw.edu.

The Ledger likewise maintains social media and a dedicated email address (ledger@uw.edu), to communicate with students, accept press releases, and otherwise conduct business. Email has been the most active source of qualitative feedback. Usually, this takes the form of story ideas, in which case the editors evaluate the content for newsworthiness. If the feedback comes in the form of a correction to the story, the staff fact check the point brought up and, if they determine the story got the fact wrong, they run a correction online and in the next possible print issue.

SERVICE BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

The most significant way the Ledger benefits students is that it gives them a chance to read about issues that impact the student body, in articles written by students like them. One tool we have to see this in action, and examine whether the paper is hitting the mark, is to review thetacomaledger.com's story analytics on the day new stories are released. Stories about co-curricular programs, support resources, health services, or local businesses--in short, stories that directly affect students' day-to-day lives--rise to the top of the "Most Viewed" list when they're published online. We believe that it is essential for universities to have an independent paper that reports and critiques topics that are relevant to students.

It's important to gauge the paper's impacts on its student employees as well. The Ledger's staff develop professional skills that carry over after college. The process of handling unfamiliar information, making quick sense of it, cooperating with peers, and transfiguring raw material into a narrative product that will make sense to casual readers--all on a deadline that repeats week after week--prepares students for managing the ambiguity and demanding schedule of a full-time workplace.

I like to keep track of former Ledger employees; many have gone on to wonderful and varied careers. Managing Editor Josephine Trueblood (2022-2023) is the social media manager for Guitar Maniacs here in Tacoma. Editor-in-Chief Talia Collett (2020-2021; arts editor 2019-2020) is now a program assistant in UW Tacoma's Office of Community Partnerships. Managing Editor Alyssandra Goss (2019-2021) is a project coordinator for Belshire Environmental in Southern California. Opinion Section Editor Remi Frederick (2021-2022) has contributed articles about local theater to the Seattle Times Company's event calendar website, The Ticket. Former Tahoma West Nonfiction Editor Tiera Nhem (2019-2021) is an assistant editor for the same publication. Layout Manager and Designer Morgan Morgans (2019-2022) provides costuming services for community theaters throughout Western Washington.

Tahoma West benefits students by providing them a manageable first step toward becoming a published author/artist. Students who submit to Tahoma West are exposed to the same publication process they would encounter at a professional publisher, but scaled down to the size of our campus, making it a manageable first step for someone interested in pursuing authorship. Creative arts majors are far from the only group interested in this goal. Contributors to the 2023 journal came from 8 different major programs. Writing Studies made up the largest group of contributors. However, there were more majors represented per contributor this year compared to the previous year. Creativity is for everyone, regardless of major.

Staff Budget Requests

Category	Details	Amount Requested
Student Staff ³	One (1) editor-in-chief for Tahoma West at \$17.28/hour and 19.5 hours/week for 40 weeks. E001	
	Student Staff Wages:	\$13,479
	Fringe @ 20.5%:	\$2,763
Student Staff ³	Four (4) section editors for Tahoma West at \$16.78/hour and 10 hours per week for 40 weeks. E002	
	Student Staff Wages:	\$26,848
	Fringe @ 20.5%:	\$5,504
Student Staff ³	Summer hours for one (1) editor-in-chief for the Ledger, at \$17.28/hour and 5 hours/week for 12 weeks. E003	
	Student Staff Wages:	\$1,037
	Fringe @ 20.5%:	\$213
Student Staff ³	One (1) editor-in-chief for the Ledger at \$17.28/hour and 19.5 hours/week for 40 weeks. E004	
	Student Staff Wages:	\$13,478
	Fringe @ 20.5%:	\$2,763
Student Staff ³	Three (3) section editors for the Ledger at \$16.78/hour and 15 hours/week for 40 weeks. E005	
	Student Staff Wages:	\$30,204
	Fringe @ 20.5%:	\$6,192
Student Staff ³	Six (6) reporters at \$16.28/hour and 8 hours/week for 40 weeks. E006	
	Student Staff Wages:	\$31,258
	Fringe @ 20.5%:	\$6,408
Student Staff ³	One (1) Advertising Manager at \$16.28/hour and 8 hours/week for 40 weeks. E007	
	Student Staff Wages:	\$5,210
	Fringe @ 20.5%:	\$1,068
Student Staff ³	Two (2) art team students (photographer and illustrator) at \$16.28/hour and 8 hours/week, for 40 weeks. E008	
	Student Staff Wages:	\$10,419
	Fringe @ 20.5%:	\$2,136
Student Staff ³	One (1) content assistant at \$16.28/hour and 8 hours/week for 40 weeks. E009	
	Student Staff Wages:	\$5,210
	Fringe @ 20.5%:	\$1,068
Student Staff ³	One (1) distribution manager at \$16.28/hour and 4 hours/week for 40 weeks. E010	
	Student Staff Wages:	\$2,605
	Fringe @ 20.5%:	\$534

Student Staff ³	One (1) Content and layout manager at \$16.78/hour and 19.5 hours/week for 40 weeks. E011	
	Student Staff Wages:	\$13,088
	Fringe @ 20.5%:	\$2,683
Student Staff ³	One (1) Managing Editor for the Ledger at 17.28/hour and 17 hours/week for 40 weeks. E012	
	Student Staff Wages:	\$11,750
	Fringe @ 20.5%:	\$2,409
PERSONNEL TOTAL:		\$198,326

Other Budget Requests

Category	Details	Amount Requested
Other Services	Cost of printing 30 issues of the Ledger in full color at the most recently quoted price of \$774.10 (delivery included). May need to decrease issues if print costs increase. S001	\$23,223
	Estimated cost of printing 900 issues of the 2025 Tahoma West book, based on 2023 cost plus a buffer to account for inflation. S002	\$9,000
	UW Telephone services. S003	\$350
	Postage fees for mail center. Covers summer mail-outs of Tahoma West book to contributors. S004	\$200
	Four Adobe creative cloud licenses for the Ledger and Tahoma West. Used to design pages for both publications. S005	\$1,350
	Workday cost allocation. S006	\$650
	Web hosting fees for thetacomaledger.com S007	\$100
	Professional memberships and contest entry to the Associated Collegiate Press and Association of Writers and Writing Programs. S008	\$300
Non-Food Supplies & Materials	Office Supplies (notebooks, pens, printer ink, paper, and miscellaneous) for MAT 151. S009	\$1,500
Food	Food for Ledger's Sept. 2024 staff training. S010	\$100
	Food for Tahoma West's annual book launch in May 2025. S011	\$300
SUPPLEMENTAL TOTAL:		\$37,073

PERSONNEL TOTAL:	\$198,326
SUPPLEMENTAL TOTAL:	\$37,073
COMPLETE PROPOSAL TOTAL:	\$235,399

Supplemental Documents



TAHOMA WEST VOLUME 27 DEMOGRAPHICS



LEDGER NEWSLETTER PERFORMANCE AND DEMOGRAPHICS



LEDGER WEBSITE VIEW STATS

Viewership of thetacomaledger.com