

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

**LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM:
NON-COURSE REQUEST FOR LBC DESIGNATION IN GENERAL
EDUCATION**

CONTACT PERSON: KEVIN S. DEVINE

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DEPARTMENT: STUDENT MEDIA

DEPARTMENT HEAD: KEVIN S. DEVINE

1. Workshop/Experience Title: Editor of The Eastern Echo (includes all Editorial Board members, i.e., editor in chief, managing editor, news editor, assistant news editor, copy chief, design chief, webmaster, etc.)

The experience must require a commitment equivalent to what would be a minimum of 1 credit hour (15 contact hours). In your description, demonstrate how this will be accomplished.

2. Description

The Eastern Echo, EMU's award-winning, independent student newspaper, publishes every Monday, Wednesday and Friday during the academic year and on Tuesdays in Spring Term. Circulation is 8,000 per issue. Each year, the Echo staff includes over 100 students representing a wide range of majors and reflecting the diversity of EMU's campus and community. Because all content is student generated and all editorial decisions are made by the student editorial board, Echo editors average about 25 hours per week working at the paper, with the senior edit board members (editor in chief, managing editor, news and sports editors, photo editor, etc.), putting in as many as 35 hours each week. In general, their work includes but is not limited to: recruiting and training staff; planning and assigning work; overseeing production and design; conceiving and planning art and graphic design; researching major stories; cultivating sources; editing stories; writing stories; proofing copy; and providing feedback to staff. In short, they do everything their counterparts at commercial papers do, except they also attend classes, study and sometimes sleep. The Echo, in terms of circulation and copy, is larger than a dozen commercial daily papers and more than 50 commercial weeklies in the state of Michigan.

3. Check the LBC requirement this program is intended to meet.

Learning Beyond the Classroom (LBC designation). Please designate the specific LBC category:

- Self and Well Being
- Community Service, Citizenship, and Leadership
- Cultural and Academic Activities and Events
- Career and Professional Development
- International and Multicultural Experience
- Undergraduate Research

4. Rationale. Provide a concise, clear, jargon-free explanation of how this experience fits into the General Education program and why it fulfills a Learning Beyond the Classroom requirement. This rationale must be included on the materials distributed to students participating in the experience, (excluding promotional materials).

As outlined above, the Echo edit board members devote a considerable amount of time, energy and thought to the paper. Their role is not only to serve as the management team leading their fellow students on staff (the writers, photographers, designers, ad sales reps, delivery staff, etc.), but also to serve as thought leaders on campus and in the community. The **mission* of the Echo**, appended at the end of this form, includes serving as a free forum for the discussion of ideas in the community.

To that end, the editors recruit students from all over campus and from all walks of life in an effort to reflect the campus and community through a culturally, socially and economically aware lens. Current staff members reflect EMU's rich diversity in terms of age, race, gender, religion, ethnicity, ability and sexual orientation. All students are welcome to apply to work at the Echo, and the edit board members make every effort to offer training, support and guidance to staff members and to work with and nurture the talents and expertise various students bring to the paper. Furthermore, the paper is distributed throughout campus and to more than 100 off-campus locations in order to engage the entire "community" of EMU in that discussion of ideas. The edit board members take their responsibility overseeing this "free forum" very seriously and strive for excellence, objectivity and inclusion.

In addition, the Echo's edit board members participate in workshops sponsored by the Department of Student Media as well as attend state and national conferences sponsored by various student and professional journalism organizations to sharpen their own journalism and management skills. Most also spend time with Echo alumni and/or volunteer professional journalists in the Metro Detroit area who mentor and advise the students on journalism and management issues.

* The Department of Student Media produces print, multimedia and online publications that communicate to students, faculty, staff and the community what the University community does, feels and thinks while at the same time serving as a hands-on co-curricular learning environment that prepares students for careers in a wide range of fields.

5. Clearly and concisely explain how this program meets each of the General Education outcomes for the requirement checked in number three (all outcomes of selected category should be addressed). To do this, (a) list the General Education outcomes for the requirement and explain how the program meets each outcome; and (b) after each outcome explain how you will assess if the outcome has been met and how you will provide feedback to the students.

Students who complete experiences as an Edit Board member at the Echo will...

- **Participate in the development, maintenance, and/or change of community standards and norms.**

Edit board members of The Eastern Echo are well versed in the mission of the paper. They take their responsibility overseeing this “free forum” very seriously and strive for excellence, objectivity and inclusion.

Assessment: Consists of several measures, including:

- Quality of the paper, as measured by
 - Professional critiques
 - State and national awards (collegiate and professional)
 - Amount of and quality of letters to the editor, online feedback, online forum activity
- Impact of the paper on specific campus and community issues, as measured by
 - Citation of the paper in discussion of the issue in the media and public forums
 - Public discussion of issues within a framework or using the terminology, research or ideas from the Echo
- The reputation of the paper among stakeholders, as measured by
 - Anecdotal evidence
 - Reader feedback
 - Awards

- **Participate in service/volunteer activities.**

Edit board members see their role as journalists in general and as the management team of a newspaper in particular as a kind of public service, providing objective news and information to the community in an effort to build greater participation in the civic life of the community and to foster the development of citizens within the campus community by providing access to information and one of the fundamental tools of democracy – a free press.

Assessment: Consists of several measures, including:

- Quality and quantity of reader feedback (letters, forums, etc.)
- Ability of paper to “break” news stories (number of scoops, etc.)
- Anecdotal evidence

- **Develop leadership skills.**

Edit board members spend countless hours each semester recruiting, training, mentoring and evaluating their fellow student staff members. They learn by applying knowledge from the classroom to real-life situations; they learn by encountering challenging situations and dealing with difficult people; they learn through on-the-job, day-to-day supervision of staff and management of resources and time; and they learn through workshops, conferences and mentors.

Assessment: Consists of several measures, including:

- Completion of Echo Leadership 101 training
- End of semester/end of year staff critiques and 360 feedback
- Performance reviews
- Esprit de corps, as measured by
 - Participation in staff holiday and year-end dinners/awards ceremonies
 - Participation in staff after-hours activities (basketball games, bowling, volunteer food drive, Thursday dinners, etc.)
 - Year-end staff survey results
- Quality of the work of the staff members each edit board member supervises, as measured by
 - Awards
 - Citations in other media
- job/job offers upon graduation or internships for those not yet graduating

- **Develop skills and habits that aid in future life and career pursuits.**

The Echo is a student-run newspaper – and it is a “real” paper, though not a commercial paper. The workload, the environment, the technology, the training, the working conditions and the pressures, both deadline and bottom-line, are the same as for their commercial counterparts. This is a learning lab with real-life applications for the edit board members. It is like the live-

fire training the US Army conducts. It requires knowledge, skill, stamina, perseverance, commitment, curiosity and integrity, among other things, but most of all, it requires a belief that some things matter enough to sacrifice great time and effort for, and the news and the sharing of opinions and information are a couple of those things. Edit board members do all that and, when they graduate, they do so as seasoned professionals with portfolios full of meaningful work.

Assessment: Consists of several measures, including:

- Performance reviews
- Year-end staff surveys
- End of semester/end of year staff critiques and 360 feedback
- quality of work over time
- Notes from feedback sessions/mentors, etc.
- quality of job/job offers upon graduation or internships

- **Develop and practice empathy for others.**

Edit board members, through training and coaching from professional staff, learn to manage their peers in a professional and supportive manner. In performance reviews by edit board members with their staff, as well as in various personnel issues that arise, edit board members strive to see their staff members first and foremost as fellow students striving to master basic journalism skills and to develop basic job and interpersonal skills.

Assessment: Consists of several measures, including:

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 - Participation in staff holiday and year-end dinners/awards ceremonies
 - Participation in staff after-hours activities (basketball games, bowling, volunteer food drive, Thursday dinners, etc.)
- Notes from feedback sessions, critiques, performance reviews (by editors)
- Year-end staff survey results

- **Acquire skills for working cooperatively with others.**

Producing a newspaper is essentially like running an assembly line – it's all about fitting on content as the chassis rolls along the line, in time, of course, to meet the print deadline. Working backwards from having the papers hit the news racks at 8 a.m., edit board members have to keep

that chassis rolling along the line – from the point of brainstorming and assigning stories, to writing them, to copy editing, to page design to proofing to printing to delivery – and then to do it again 48 hours later. It is an inherently cooperative process. The edit board members understand this process and make it work through planning and teamwork. In addition, the editors develop contingency plans for pretty much any emergency in order to get the paper published and in the racks first thing in the morning every M-W-F.

Assessment: Consists of several measures, including:

- Frequency of meeting production, printing and distribution deadlines
- Number of “contentious issues” that arise during the course of the year (on staff and between the paper and its stakeholders) and how they are dealt with (outcomes for all stakeholders)
- Number of non-graduating staff members who apply for leadership positions for the next year
- Number of non-graduating staff members who return to work a second, third, fourth year, etc.
- Esprit de corps, as measured by
 - Participation in staff holiday and year-end dinners/awards ceremonies
 - Participation in staff after-hours activities (basketball games, bowling, volunteer food drive, Thursday dinners, etc.)
 - Year-end staff survey results
- Number of Echo alumni who remain in contact with the paper as donors, mentors, workshop presenters, job referrals, etc.

6. Attach the materials that will be distributed to students. The materials must include the rationale from #4 above and clearly reflect the outcomes and methods detailed in #5 above.

Please submit all materials in electronic form.

Action of the Department

Department Approval

Date

Action of General Education Advisory Committee (comments attached)

Vote of General Education Committee: For _____ Against _____ Abstentions

Chairperson, General Education Advisory Committee

Date

Approval

Associate Vice-President for Undergraduate Studies and Curriculum

Date

Expectations for Eastern Echo and Cellar Roots Editors

Learning Beyond the Classroom, 2006

Echo edit board members and Cellar Roots editors devote a considerable amount of time, energy and thought to the paper. Their role is not only to serve as the management team leading their fellow students on staff (the writers, photographers, designers, ad sales reps, delivery staff, etc.), but also to serve as thought leaders on campus and in the community. The **mission* of the Echo/Cellar Roots**, appended at the end of this form, includes serving as a free forum for the discussion of ideas in the community.

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In addition, the Echo's edit board members and Cellar Roots Editors participate in workshops sponsored by the Department of Student Media as well as attend state and national conferences sponsored by various student and professional journalism organizations to sharpen their own journalism and management skills. Most also spend time with Echo alumni and/or volunteer professional journalists in the Metro Detroit area who mentor and advise the students on journalism and management issues.

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