

Student newspaper really needs your help

Every university should have a student newspaper and in November of 1992 the *Island Waves* began as a volunteer effort by about a half dozen students. The *Island Waves* is intended to be a voice of and for the students of TAMU-CC. The August 24 edition was the student newspaper's tenth issue and began its fourth full long semester. Many people hope there will always be a student paper on campus and maybe the *Island Waves* can show that it should be made a priority. What can best make that happen is more support and story input from students and others on campus. Submissions and involvement of students, faculty and staff are welcomed and very much needed.

The paper has gained increased acceptance from the campus community as well as local advertisers. The university administration also wants the paper to succeed and continue, especially with TAMU-CC being a growing four-year institution. But because of the complete lack of journalism or print communication classes on campus, the student paper has only a small and mostly untrained staff. Putting together the *Island Waves* has been a job done primarily by only three people—a reporter, an advertising salesperson, and an editor who also does the page layout. Occasional submissions from other students are also used. Only occasionally because that is about how often other students submit articles for publication.



There have been previous attempts to have student newspapers on campus throughout the university's history—each was short-lived. Why? Because these papers were usually dependent on the journalistic skills of a single student. The situation with the *Island Waves* is the same. Though the university provides financial support, this paper relies on one student with a journalism degree. This isn't enough to ensure that a student newspaper will survive.

I cannot guarantee that I will be editor for another semester and unless another student skilled in desktop publishing or journalism can take over then the paper might die. I was fortunate to be able to devote so much time to founding and putting out this paper but all

professional students (over 275 hours) must eventually leave school and reenter the real world.

Whether the paper will get some much-needed curriculum support is doubtful because TAMU-CC may not be allowed to offer a journalism program because it might target some of the same students as the program at TAMU-Kingsville. Evidently, such proximity limits curriculum expansion at TAMU-CC. So it seems that any formal journalism programs are likely to be years away due to the exigencies of state university curriculum development. Such policies threaten the viability of any student paper on our campus because of the dependence it necessarily fosters on the skills of a very few students.

One benefit of the increase in student services fees will be an improved funding of the student newspaper. Last semester's funding was such that budget shuffling was required to meet expenses of printing and part-time wages. With improved funding the paper should be hiring more students, possibly including a couple work study students. Hopefully, some freshmen or sophomores will have high school journalism experience and have time to work on the paper. In any case, more student involvement will allow for a diversity of

Part time paid positions, from 10 to 20 hours work per week, include an editor/page layout specialist, reporters, an advertising person, and data entry people. Applications to work with the paper are available from the Office of Student Life for the various staff and volunteer positions. Students with journalism experience would be preferred; however, we realize that most students lack such skills. Even volunteers who can only do an occasional article, contribute some artwork, a column, be a movie reviewer, submit poetry, cover a

Several part time, paid positions with the *Island Waves* are available and students interested in working with the paper are encouraged to apply.

viewpoints, better coverage of campus activities, more creative writings and more in-depth reporting.

A dedication to make the student newspaper a success is the primary job qualification for both the *Island Waves* staff and its volunteers. Journalism means that extra hours of effort are often necessary, usually without pay, in order to get the paper done. This can be a real chore for students who are taking a full class load because the paper is like a sponge that will absorb all the free time you have to give. Such is the nature of college journalism and a lighter class load is recommended for those who want to contribute on a regular basis. Not everyone has the luxury of taking light class loads or giving up lots of time.

particular campus activity or be a club liaison are very much needed. Volunteer effort really is needed get the job done.

Getting involved with the student newspaper is a chance to improve your communication skills and it will later look good on your résumé. It provides a ready outlet for what you want to say and you know that others will read it. You will have your own byline and we'll possibly your picture in the paper, too. Maybe fame, glory and riches will soon follow.

The *Island Waves* is your newspaper too and anyone on campus can help to improve it. Let your voice be heard on the island!