

# The Business of Literary Magazines

The Balancing Act Between Creative  
and Pragmatic Concerns

# Goal 1:

*Create a sustainable program that draws the interest of quality staff and generates school-wide submissions.*

- Incorporate an interdisciplinary and multi-cultural approach. If your magazine is perceived as elitist, you will probably have to rely on art and writing from a limited circle of students. Additionally you will not be representing the entire school population.
- Judge submissions by student ID with no name written anywhere on the form. Ask that your staff privately hand their submissions to you rather than the editor. Your business manager can look up student ID matches after the submissions are accepted.
- Visit English classrooms with information about the club, but rehearse the presentation. Make it funny and memorable. Take business cards.

- Get names of talented writers from the English teachers. Obtain their email address and inform them that they have been specially cited by their English teachers. They meet your staff on a given day. Ask them to bring a portfolio of their best writing. Tell them they have been specially acknowledged by their teachers.
- Create short, humorous TV spot-ads for the school's broadcasting system. Many students don't even know of your publication's existence.
- Early in the year, get the newspaper staff to feature an article on your publication and/or website.

- Ask for a lockable, glass-covered display case to feature eye-catching spreads from current and past publications. More than one is an even better option.
- Create a link on the school website for submission forms and staff applications and descriptions.
- If possible have archived PDF's of your magazine so that students can see the type of work you are selecting.
- Join several national journalism associations to gain feedback and validation for your program. Ask the principal to announce any awards on the PA.
- Once you select your staff, let them know about your magazine's history and the awards it has garnered. Past success inspires current effort. No one wants to drop the ball.
- By email disseminate a PDF version of last year's magazine with critique notes from the judges. This helps staff members know their strengths and weaknesses.

**Goal 2:** *Promote the magazine to the outside community and on the world-wide-web to showcase student work to a larger audience.*

- Contact a local book store and arrange for a multimedia performance of your magazine.
- Invite your local newspaper to the presentation.
- Ask for server space to set up your own literary/visual/and performance art website where you can archive student work.
- Partner with a media student or one of your own students to create a web by videotaping students in art, theater, drama, dance, and chorus.

## Goal 3: *Funding and Printing Your Publication in a Bad Economy*

- If you don't have time for an extensive fundraiser, purchase Pixy Sticks from Amazon.com or Sam's Club. The return is 75¢ on your quarter.
- If you do have the time, have your staff host an open mike coffee house and sell baked goods and staff- designed T-shirts.
- A good idea I heard at lunch yesterday was to fashion an "American Idol "competition and charge admission to the finale.
- Cut costs by cutting down on the number of copies you print or by using a saddle - stitch binding.

- An even cheaper alternative to stapled copies is to have your staff assemble the loose pages by using nuts and bolts, ribbons, etc. by hand.
- When going to the printers make sure you ask for blue line proofs and the format in which they want the files. Time is money for most printers. If you know what you are doing upfront and assure them that you will get it right, you may be able to get a better price.
- Get at least three different bids for publishing the magazine. Frequently the small printer will give you a better deal.

## Goal 4: *Assembling and Training a Superior Staff*

- On club day hand out business cards with a publication website. Make sure your website includes information on staff positions, applications, and submission forms.
- Hold an informational meeting one week later. After you tell them the tentative schedule and the late hours necessary, then and only then have them turn in their applications.
- Hold this first meeting after school. That way you know who is really interested and will have or find transportation home.
- Hold interviews with your editor –in-chief. After the interviews, individually go over each application to make sure he/she is not overly committed to other extra-curricular activities.

- If your club can only meet after school, stress the importance of transportation and inform them that if they are accepted, they cannot miss more than three meetings.
- Pick an editor-in-chief who will take the initiative to create **productive** club activities each week and move throughout the different staffs gathering information and creating goals and deadlines. Try waiting until a month or two of meetings before picking an editor-in-chief. In this manner you can see who is self-motivated and who has leadership skills.
- Try not to accept any students who are also in yearbook or theater or who have sports schedules that conflict with club meetings. Frequently production weeks are at the same time as a school play or a yearbook deadline.

- Require two writing samples from anyone who wishes to be on the literary staff.
- Ask potential photography and art staff to bring a portfolio of their work.
- On the application form ask for their specific technological skills. Do they know Photoshop or In Design well enough to provide two or three training sessions for the general staff?

# ELYSIUM MAGAZINE

