

April 23, 2009

Students, Faculty and Staff,

We, the *Cedars* staff, regret to inform you that we will not publish our final issue.

The public relations department, directed by university trustees and some administrative officials, now reviews, approves, censors and cuts the content of your student newspaper. Public relations employees approved every published article beginning with our seventh issue, the second issue of this spring semester.

Review and censorship by public relations breaks the operating model of *Cedars*, which was approved by the administrative council on Oct. 9, 2006. It outlines: "The student editors prepare copy for print and take responsibility for making decisions, along with the Faculty Adviser, for what ends up in print."

As student editors for a student newspaper, we understand and accept some degree of fair and reasonable screening, as outlined in paragraph three of the *Cedars* operating model: "The Faculty Adviser reviews copy at his or her discretion in advance of publication and is responsible for the contents."

But the PR department's excessive attempt to censor *Cedars* necessarily violates our operating model, and the *Cedars* staff has thus decided to cease publication.

Cedars has made incredible strides this year. Among them, we redesigned our Web site, started to translate our online content into Spanish, hosted video and photography, and sent students to an investigative news conference featuring investigative reporters from CNN, *The New York Times*, and *The Columbus Dispatch*.

We are disappointed that some readers often evaluate the entire newspaper based on Viewpoint pieces with which they disagree. *Cedars* often pairs the most controversial opinions with opposing opinions, and the *Cedars* staff encourages and works closely with interested readers to publish letters to the editor.

In order to prepare students to affect the world for Christ, Cedarville University must equip students to work in mainstream media. Further, and perhaps more important, our student body must be able to think critically about a variety of issues, formulate cogent responses, and enjoy a forum in which they may share them. Review by the public relations department undermines our ability to think critically and engage culture.

We grieve the loss of free expression and healthy discourse once found in your newspaper, traits that ought to characterize all vibrant institutions of higher learning.

Sincerely yours,

The *Cedars* staff,

Joshua Saunders, Managing Editor
Michael Shirzadian, News Editor
Rebecca High, Viewpoints Editor
Daniel Sizemore, A&E Editor
Naomi Washatka, Design Editor

"Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making." – John Milton, *Areopagitica*