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Hastings Law News

SPECIAL EDITION

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Student Newspaper Locked Out Over Audit Controversy

BY HASTINGS LAW NEWS STAFF

The *Hastings Law News* staff came back to school this semester to find themselves locked out of their campus office, the result of a continuing controversy between the administration and the student newspaper. The administration has also taken action against individual members of the newspaper staff for failing to comply with a request for an audit of the *Law News*' 1988-89 financial records.

Pursuant to a resolution adopted by the Hastings Board of Directors in a closed session on June 22, 1990, the newspaper is "precluded" from using school facilities or Hastings' name or logo. Since then, a school staff member has told a *Law News* reporter that "the *Hastings Law News* no longer exists," and may only seek information from the College through the Public Relations office, just as any other member of the "foreign press." The school has also initiated disciplinary proceedings against John Andrews, current Editor-in-Chief and member of last year's editorial board. The two other members of last year's board, recently-graduated Editor-in-Chief James Ballantine and Copy Editor Christina Dalton, have had letters of recommendation sent by the school to the State Bar Association giving them only conditional certification of good standing. The certification is used to determine the students' fitness for admission to the Bar.

In a meeting with ASH representatives last Friday, the administration stated that it would be willing to restore the newspaper's status if it receives a letter signed by members of the current editorial board stating that the newspaper agrees to submit to future audits and abide by all rules and regulations of the College. The attorney for the newspaper is contacting the College to set up negotiations concerning the details of any "audit" and the resolution of the proceedings against individual staff members.

The controversy stems from the administration's demand that the newspaper turn over all its financial documents for the 1988-89 fiscal year directly to the school. The newspaper has instead submitted its records to an accounting

firm for an independent audit.

The events that led to the present situation began last spring. On March 23, following a meeting between Hastings General Counsel Angele Khachadour, then-ASH president Phyllis Bursh, and Student Services Director Patsy Oppenheim, the *Law News* received a memo from ASH requesting the newspaper's financial records.

The *Law News* objected to the request, responding that it receives no funds from ASH or the College, and is supported entirely by advertising. The paper also objected to the timing of the audit request and the possibility that it was retaliatory in light of recently published articles. In its March issue, the *Law News* ran a staff editorial calling for the replacement of Khachadour, claiming that she was failing to serve the best interests of the students or the College. In the same issue, a news article appeared which detailed the failure of ASH officers to appoint students to the College's faculty-student committees.

Moreover, the paper was concerned that no other student organizations had received a similar request. While ASH has historically requested an accounting of ASH-disbursed funds from student organizations, there is no indication that any organization has ever been asked to turn over all its financial records.

In April, the College officially notified the *Law News* of its interest in the proposed audit. In an April 17 memo, Oppenheim demanded that the *Law News* turn over its records to her office. In a telephone conversation with Dean Frank Read on the same day, Ballantine raised the paper's concern about the timing of the audit. In the course of the conversation, Read threatened a lawsuit if the paper printed any story implying a link between the audit and the articles critical of the administration.

The College has maintained that the request to turn over records was routine and has denied that it was connected to the content of the articles. In an interview with the *Daily Journal*, Read stated that the school's "sole interest is to see the money was appropriately collected and appropriately expended."

In a meeting with Oppenheim on April 20, the editorial board renewed its objection to turning over its records to the school, but indicated it was willing to submit to an audit conducted independently of the College. The administration responded with a demand that the newspaper produce all records within two days and threatened personal sanctions against members of the editorial board. After the *Law News* protested that the demand came just a week before finals, an extension was given into the exam period. The newspaper responded to the deadline with a letter indicating that it had hired an attorney and intended to turn the records over to an independent auditor. The *Law News* has since turned the records over to an auditor, BDO Seidman, and expects the final report by the end of August.

The administration went before the Board of Directors in a closed door session on June 22, 1990. The Board decided on an August 1st deadline for the receipt of the independent auditor's report. The *Law News* failed to turn over the report by this deadline, which resulted in the newspaper's loss of recognition by the College. While the records had been submitted to the auditor, the report had not yet been completed. In addition, before disciplinary proceedings against any individual members of the newspaper staff were commenced, the General Counsel's office stopped the Records Office from processing transactions for members of last year's editorial board. As a result, Ballantine was initially barred from obtaining his diploma and Andrews was temporarily prevented from registering for a course.

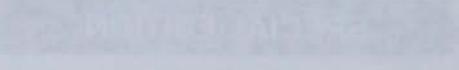
Hastings Law News

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Hastings Law News 200 McAllister Street, San Francisco, CA 94102.

Hastings Law News



Volume 1, Number 1 Spring 1978 Hastings College

Student Newspaper Locked Out Over Audit Controversy

The Hastings Law News, a student newspaper, has been locked out of its offices by the Hastings College administration. The controversy stems from an audit of the newspaper's financial records. The administration claims that the newspaper has been operating on a budget that is significantly over the approved amount. The newspaper's management has denied these allegations, claiming that the audit was conducted in an unfair and biased manner. The newspaper has been unable to access its offices since the lockout, which has severely disrupted its operations. The administration has stated that it will not lift the lockout until the newspaper's financial records are found to be in compliance with the college's policies. The newspaper's management has expressed its frustration and has stated that it will continue to fight for its rights. The controversy has caused a significant amount of tension on campus and has raised questions about the college's financial management practices.

The Hastings Law News has a long history of providing news and information to the Hastings College community. The newspaper is a vital part of the college's student body and has been instrumental in keeping students informed about college events and issues. The lockout of the newspaper is a serious violation of the college's policies and has caused a significant amount of damage to the newspaper's reputation. The administration's actions have been widely criticized by students and faculty alike. The newspaper's management has stated that it will continue to operate from its temporary offices until the lockout is lifted. The college's administration has stated that it will continue to work with the newspaper's management to resolve the controversy. The Hastings Law News has expressed its hope that the college's administration will lift the lockout and allow the newspaper to return to its offices. The newspaper's management has stated that it will continue to fight for its rights and will not be deterred by the college's administration. The controversy has caused a significant amount of tension on campus and has raised questions about the college's financial management practices.

The Hastings Law News has been a part of the Hastings College community for many years. The newspaper has provided news and information to the college's student body and has been instrumental in keeping students informed about college events and issues. The lockout of the newspaper is a serious violation of the college's policies and has caused a significant amount of damage to the newspaper's reputation. The administration's actions have been widely criticized by students and faculty alike. The newspaper's management has stated that it will continue to operate from its temporary offices until the lockout is lifted. The college's administration has stated that it will continue to work with the newspaper's management to resolve the controversy. The Hastings Law News has expressed its hope that the college's administration will lift the lockout and allow the newspaper to return to its offices. The newspaper's management has stated that it will continue to fight for its rights and will not be deterred by the college's administration. The controversy has caused a significant amount of tension on campus and has raised questions about the college's financial management practices.

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The Hastings Law News is a student newspaper that provides news and information to the Hastings College community. The newspaper is published regularly and covers a wide range of topics, including college events, student activities, and local news. The newspaper is owned and operated by the Hastings College student body. The newspaper's management is responsible for the content and quality of the newspaper. The newspaper has a long history of providing news and information to the Hastings College community and is a vital part of the college's student body. The newspaper's management has stated that it will continue to provide news and information to the Hastings College community and will not be deterred by the college's administration. The newspaper's management has stated that it will continue to fight for its rights and will not be deterred by the college's administration. The controversy has caused a significant amount of tension on campus and has raised questions about the college's financial management practices.

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