

# Platform for Editor-in-Chief

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## Introduction

I joined the 'Prince' doing layout design. Each evening, as I set up the spreads and flowed in the night's articles, I would read all of the pieces (and eat some snacks).

During those nights, I developed a deep appreciation for all we do at the 'Prince,' and started dreaming about how the 'Prince' could improve.

In my first year, I wasn't sure how to act on my ideas. I wasn't sure who to talk to, how to make things happen. As a new layout designer, without any experience in journalism, I was hesitant to suggest my ideas to those in leadership positions.

Yet, somehow, two years later, I have seen many of my ideas come into fruition. With the help and initiative of so many, we redesigned our home page to better showcase our work, told stories through custom sites, built up our Instagram, dug deep into data projects, and more. I now lead many efforts that didn't exist a year ago.

My path at the 'Prince' has been nontraditional, and has only been possible due to the support of numerous individuals. I remember Jon encouraging me to apply to be a design editor. I remember Ivy supporting my baby [COVID tracker](#) from the beginning of the pandemic (looking at it now, we've come a long way!).

I am so grateful for where I am now. I have had the tremendous pleasure of working with staff from all sections of the 'Prince,' doing all sorts of projects. I love how dedicated our staff is to our paper. We are collectively devoted to a shared mission "to inform and engage our readers by delivering reliable, timely, and truthful news and commentary that matter," and so many of us will drop anything to help attain it.

In an unprecedented year, we have collectively risen to the challenge. And at the same time, we have recognized that this is a critical moment for us. Two things stand out.

Firstly, it is more apparent than ever that for us to cover Princeton, our staff must better represent the student body at large.

Secondly, for our work to be impactful, we must become digital-first.

We have made strides on both of these fronts, but we need to accelerate our pace.

I am running for Editor-in-Chief because I want to help us realize our collective and individual ambitions. I want to help students of all backgrounds find their place at the 'Prince.'

In the remainder of this document, you will find dozens of proposals. This year will be unimaginably short and unforgivingly busy, but by being deliberate, I know that we can get so much done.

Let's make things happen.

## **A note on the structure of this platform**

This document is broken down into several sections, each of which contain loosely-related proposals. The sections are:

- Operational Strategy
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
- Showcasing Our Work
- Ambitious Storytelling
- Product and Technology
- Section Visions

Certainly, there is much more to be said, and much to be improved on.

# Operational Strategy

## **Our managing editors will be heavily involved**

In addition to day-to-day production, our board will need to place a focus on additional initiatives. With this in mind, we will once again have four managing editors of different backgrounds. Among the five of us, we will run production, and also devote ourselves to bigger-picture initiatives. We will all be as responsive as possible to the staff at large, and hold ourselves accountable for the broad success of the 'Prince.'

## **We will start working on things immediately**

There is no time to waste. We will spend January, the first month of our term, working on bigger projects and setting ourselves up for the semester.

Similarly, we will use the summer to pursue our longer-term projects.

## **Relationship to staff, managing board, and trustees**

I will actively reach out to *all* members of the 'Prince.' I will listen to our staff and do my absolute best to help in anything. If there is something that someone wants to do, I will help coordinate the moving parts to get it off the ground. And I will do this as quickly as I can.

I will also work on making our relationship with the trustees more transparent. As we look to make substantial long-term changes like a need-based stipend, this will be particularly important.

## **Documentation**

As we pursue initiatives that are in their early stages, we will be active in documentation. This includes reflecting upon successes and challenges of particular projects. Some of these reflections can be published online. (For example, see [NYT Open](#).)

## **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging**

### **We must be deliberate and concrete in our commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging**

This year, we have made greater efforts to improve the ‘Prince’ in terms of DEIB. But we are moving too slowly. For us to make meaningful change during our term, we must act immediately and deliberately. Our first move as managing editors and the editor-in-chief will be to meet with leaders of affinity groups across campus. Working with the current board, we will establish — as quickly as possible — a DEIB task force that will turn the goals we have established into concrete changes.

Longer term goals, like a need-based stipend, involve many moving parts. Here, we must also make concrete progress quickly. For financial aid, we will move as fast as possible to launch a minimal viable product. In whatever form it takes, many improvements will need to be made. But getting something out there will allow us to build on it.

### **We must hold ourselves accountable**

This starts with the managing editors and I. As we work to make change, we will regularly circulate anonymous feedback forms among our staff. I will actively encourage our staff to provide feedback, and make myself available to chat. The voices of our staff will be integral in informing our decisions.

### **We must be active in supporting and encouraging our staff, from recruitment and beyond**

I, like many others at the ‘Prince,’ joined without any previous experience in journalism. The non-selective nature of our recruitment process is one of our most important principles. We have a foundational idea that anyone should be able to succeed at the ‘Prince.’

But as we recruit, we must be more active in making ourselves inclusive. This includes holding more BIPOC open houses, and coordinating with leaders of affinity groups.

Furthermore, our efforts must extend past recruitment. We know statistically that our managing board is less diverse than our staff at large. We must improve.

As we train new staffers to contribute to their individual sections, we will also think longer-term in how we support our staff. The managing editors and I will actively seek to have conversations with all of our staffers, with a particular focus on their own interests and goals.

We must be more active in helping staffers, especially those from underrepresented groups, grow at the 'Prince.' To do this, we must break down hierarchies at the 'Prince' to whatever extent is possible. For example, the 145th managing board will have a single Slack workspace for all members.

In addition, we will encourage staffers to take on leadership roles at the 'Prince.' As we take on new projects this term, I will make sure that all members of our staff have an opportunity to take part.

My single biggest goal as Editor-in-Chief will be to elevate and enable our staff at large. This is particularly important to me, as my path at the 'Prince' has been nontraditional. Without the support and encouragement of Jon and many others, I would not have been an editor, let alone a candidate for Editor-in-Chief.

### **We must examine our coverage holistically**

Each month, we will publish a full list of the content we have published. This will allow us to holistically examine the diversity of our coverage. At the same time, it offers a level of transparency to our readers. We will solicit feedback internally on where we need to spend more time.

### **We will introduce public editors critiquing the 'Prince'**

The choices we make directly impact our community. What we publish shapes the conversation.

Our readers deserve to know where we are falling short. And so, this coming year, we will introduce public editors, who will publicly critique our work at the 'Prince,' holding us accountable in all of our efforts.

Public editors have a long history in news organizations. Though few newspapers still have them, The Yale Daily News very recently [introduced](#) its own set of public editors. Public editors

will be editorially independent from the rest of the organization, and may publish whatever they like.

## Showcasing Our Work

The journalism we produce is valuable. This is a result of the hours and hours we spent on each piece from pitch to production. In order to deliver our work to our audience, we must dedicate a similar effort to promotion, whether through social media, our newsletter, or print.

### **We will establish an “Audience” working group**

We will establish a group that will include at least two managing editors, with the mission of connecting our readers to our work. In the first month of our term, this team will have the following three tasks:

1. Develop ‘Prince’-wide social media and headline training, to be used for the coming semester.
2. Set up infrastructure and leadership to best run our social media platforms.
3. Determine what analytics are most valuable to us, and how we can incorporate them into our day-to-day rhythms.

### **Instagram gives us a direct way to reach students**

Our Instagram might be our most direct way to connect with our readers — in particular, students. We know — for instance, from the Frosh Survey — that Instagram is the most popular social media platform among students.

Indeed, our Instagram regularly receives more impressions per week than our website has total sessions.

For one example of a successful Instagram post, our post revealing that USG was spending \$80,000 on virtual Lawnparties was seen by 4,684 users and shared 651 times. Maybe even more tellingly, the post received 43 comments. On no other platform do we see this level of engagement, especially from students.

In the coming year, we must invest more heavily in building our Instagram operations. We should use Instagram, in part, as an independent platform to deliver our content.

### **We can grow our audience through newsletters**

A primary focus will be to optimize our daily newsletter. It is an excellent opportunity to reach our audience regularly. We will work to understand how a newsletter can be most valuable to our readers, perhaps through interviews.

At the same time, we will launch more newsletters tailored to specific audiences. I recently had the opportunity to work with Anika and Paige on launching a newsletter for The Prospect. Thanks to our subscribe page, we now have the infrastructure to have newsletters of any kind.

Throughout all of our newsletters, we will focus on elevating the voices of our staff.

### **We will introduce The Daily Princetonian Magazine**

Thinking digital does not mean that print should be left behind. After all, I started out at the 'Prince' doing layout design, and deeply enjoy having physical copies of our stories. This board, we will publish an issue of The Daily Princetonian Magazine every month.

The magazine will not focus on a specific theme, but rather feature our best work of the month. The format is a particularly natural medium for pieces from Features and The Prospect. Throughout the issue, we will intersperse the incredible work of our Cartoon section (think The New Yorker).

We will work with the Business team on developing a distribution strategy that makes sense, building a subscription model that is free for students (but opt-in).

### **We will anthologize our coverage in books**

Many of our articles tell important and compelling parts of Princeton history. Through archival work, we have unveiled pieces of Princeton's past. For example, see Alex and Evelyn's comprehensive retrospective, ["How the Eating Clubs Went Coed,"](#) or Ben and Ivy's ["Liberating New South: How black student activists inspired change through protest."](#)

We will anthologize these pieces through books, following a model that many other news organizations employ.

# Ambitious Storytelling

This semester, we will pursue more ambitious projects that leverage the web. Here are a few ideas.

## **Create large explanatory projects on Princeton's biggest topics**

The Princeton community deals with issues that are simultaneously important and very complex. We can provide a large service by covering these topics from an explanatory lens.

A good example here is divestment. In addition to our day-to-day coverage, we should zoom out and answer the big confusing questions. Where exactly does Princeton invest its money? Who has the authority to divest? How have other universities divested?

Projects like this will require an immense amount of reporting. After reporting, we will spend a large amount of time on presentation, focusing on delivering the information in an extremely digestible form.

## **Continue to build “tentpole” projects**

This last year, we produced many large-scale projects that drove large amounts of traffic. From [The Commencement Project](#) to [The Most Influential Princetonians in Politics](#) to [The Frosh Survey](#), these have been both fun, informative, and well-received. The Frosh Survey had more than 6000 unique viewers, and was widely circulated among students.

We will continue to improve upon these projects and do more of them.

## **Develop our visual and interactive journalism**

Throughout our work, we can think more about how custom websites can allow us to tell stories in more visual and interactive ways. In the last six months, we have produced a dozen custom websites. This is all brand new at the ‘Prince.’ We are learning a lot, and in the next year, we will build our efforts here even further.



In particular, we will take greater advantage of [scrollytelling](#), a staple of The New York Times, and an excellent way to deliver visual-heavy and explanatory content. As we do so, we will bring in guest speakers that work in web design for journalism.

We have a lot to learn, but by the end of the year, I truly believe that we can be at the forefront in this field — not only among our peer college papers, but among the biggest news organizations in the world.

## **Data journalism**

There is a lot of interest throughout the 'Prince' in doing more data journalism. We have made strides on this front. We produced a wide-reaching [frosh survey](#), a [COVID-tracker](#), and an analysis of Princeton organizations that have received PPP funding.

We have more ambitious projects in the works. Members of digital transition are currently working on two large-scale data projects: one explaining the ebbs and flows of a year at Princeton through Tiger Confessions, and another analyzing every 'Prince' article produced in the last 20 years. News is working on a project analyzing campaign contributions of Princeton professors.

In this next year, we will build the data journalism culture at the 'Prince.' We will make sure to hold workshops, so that staffers without any data science or coding background can learn.

# **Product and Technology**

## **Improving reader experience**

We will work closely with our Technology team (staffed under Business) in improving the reader experience. For example, I recently asked our Tech team to build a cleaner newsletter subscription page, and they [delivered](#). This page enabled us to launch our first section-specific newsletter.

## **Serving our readers in new ways**

Our technology team can also help the 'Prince' serve our readers in new ways. Over the next several months, they are building a "Campus Page," a hub for life at Princeton, including, for example, a dining hall menu tracker and an events page. I will make sure that the editorial side of the 'Prince' is involved as we make this new venture.

## Section Visions

In this section, I outline some of my visions for each of our sections. In no way, are these complete. As Editor-in-Chief, I will work closely with every section editor on establishing what they would like to see accomplished, and will support them in every way that I can.

### Cartoon

Our cartoon section is vibrant. The cartoons are excellent, and the second function of the section — producing illustrations — has been a tremendous success. Our report is now more visual than it ever has been.

We will also continue to support more interactive and web-based pieces — an area in which Wendy has [pioneered](#).

To better feature Cartoon's work, we will spend January building a site customized to display Cartoons. Our monthly magazine will also be an excellent opportunity to showcase both the cartoons and illustrations.

### Copy

Our copy staff is tremendous, and integral to the success of the 'Prince.' Every piece of writing must go through copy. Since our paper is now more collaborative and cross-sectional, every staff member should be copy-trained.

As our publication expands to different platforms, copy editors will be involved at every step. We will work to establish protocols so that all of our operations run smoothly.

## Design

Design will be involved in many efforts at the 'Prince.' In the coming year, there will be two primary operations:

1. **Instagram:** This semester, Anika and I established three-times-a-week Instagram design shifts. Next semester, we will expand these to be five-times-a-week, mimicking the rhythms of what layout production once was.
2. **Magazine Design:** Designing a magazine once a month will be no small task. In addition to monthly production, Design editors will also be tasked with establishing a visual identity for the magazine. This will be a lot of work, but the end result will be a product that the designers, and our entire staff, will be deeply proud of.

We will continue to make sure that designers have all the software they need. Software should not be a hurdle.

## Digital Transition

The Digital Transition team, which I started this year, has been working on a kitchen sink of digital efforts.

A major wing of these efforts involves web design. Our web designers have worked on many projects spanning multiple sections. This team will play a large role in the future of the 'Prince.' To cement its place, **we will establish a new Web Design section.** This section will be led by 3-4 web editors who will expand our efforts in visual and interactive storytelling. The section will establish templates to allow for a robust training program. The Web Design section will actively encourage those with no experience in coding to join.

Other efforts in the section include rigorous polling, building digital tools (like a 'Prince' chrome extension that displays headlines, the latest podcast episodes), and natural language processing (i.e. how can we study large amounts of text). **These efforts will be combined under the name "Prince Labs,"** a highly-collaborative section that is focused on innovative areas in journalism. Staffers across all sections will be welcome to join project teams.

## Editorial Board

The Daily Princetonian's editorial board uses detailed research, clear analysis, and compelling argumentation to share opinions on important topics related to Princeton. The Editorial Board

should offer views on the most timely issues on campus, while also elevating ideas that may not be hot topics, but are just as important.

This board, we will more clearly establish the Editorial Board as a distinct entity. At the moment, its pieces can be lost in the noise. We will devote a special website to its opinions, explaining clearly the Editorial Board's purpose and protocols. By publishing as regularly as possible (at least twice a month), the Editorial Board will become more well known. The more aware the Princeton community is of the Editorial Board, the more valuable it will be.

## **Features**

In the last two years, long-form feature reporting at the 'Prince' has flourished. From long retrospective pieces like "[How the Eating Clubs Went Coed.](#)" to profiles of a wide array of Princetonians, the Features section tells rich, compelling stories of many forms.

This next year, we will continue to grow the section, and put in greater efforts to highlight our long-form pieces through both visually-compelling websites as well as a magazine — two mediums in which these stories will flourish.

## **Multimedia**

Under Mark's leadership, our Multimedia section now features a wide array of podcasts and video series.

A primary focus in the coming year should be to build out our audiences. First and foremost, our website must do a better job of featuring our podcasts and videos. Our daily podcast should have a larger devoted space to it (see [Vox](#)). There should be a spot on the homepage where the latest video automatically plays (see [Wired](#)).

To reach a larger guaranteed audience, we should post videos via IGTV.

## **News**

In these unique circumstances, our coverage of the University is crucial. Our reporting keeps students informed and holds the University accountable. We are lucky to have reporters that are ready to drop anything they are doing to cover a story.

Our work informing the student body is more important than ever. Students are busy, and we should try to deliver information in ways that can be digested quickly. We have done this to some extent on our Instagram through "[takeaways](#)" posts. Framing stories as "3 things to take away from the latest USG meeting," allows the reader to pull out the most important information.

Following in the footsteps of The New York Times, we can also explore doing more [“news analysis”](#) to place greater emphasis on the broader context and importance of what’s going on.

In the last year, we have seen the importance of our accountability journalism. This comes in the form of shorter pieces, like our coverage of [USG’s lawnparties budget](#), or in longer investigative pieces, like in our coverage of [MAT201’s honor code situation](#) or [diversity at PRINCO](#). We will make sure to remain vigilant in our coverage of the University.

The ‘Prince’ also has an opportunity to expand our science coverage. We have tremendous access to world-class researchers, studying topics that are of interest to a population extending far beyond Princeton. I would love to add a specific science desk into the news team.

## **Opinion**

The Opinion section provides insightful commentary and has the power to effect change. This semester, the section has published columns in both large volume and high quality. These columns are shaping the conversation on Princeton’s campus.

The Opinion section can also explore larger-scale projects, in which multiple columnists comment on a particular topic. These projects can allow us to dive deeper into issues. As one example, see [The Privacy Project](#).

We will also focus on elevating the voices of our columnists. Our website should incorporate photos of our columnists. We can Opinion newsletters, either featuring specific topics or specific columnists.

## **The Prospect**

The Prospect section has grown rapidly, and is providing outstanding material. It is a place for light-hearted commentary and tasty recipes, and also poignant and critical reflections.

This last semester, I worked with members of The Prospect to build multiple custom websites. We can be even more experimental in using the web. There are many opportunities to produce visual and artistic projects, like The New York Times’ [Election Distractor](#).

We will continue to publish [Intersections](#), our arts and culture newsletter, and encourage more interaction with our audience. Like Features, pieces from The Prospect will fit a magazine format perfectly — especially, with the illustrations contributed from Cartoon.

## **Sports**

In a time when there are no games to cover, the Sports section has transitioned beautifully in providing insightful coverage of what our athletes are doing in the meantime.

Sports also stands to benefit from a newsletter of its own. Princeton sports has a devoted following, and we should seek to further connect with this audience.

While sports are sidelined, there is also opportunity to do more archival work. For example, we can feature famous moments in Princeton sports history on a visual site with embedded videos.