

# DAILY TROJAN

FALL **2022**  
Editor-in-Chief Application

Name: Kacie Yamamoto

Major: Journalism

Cumulative GPA: 3.72

Current USC Activities: Daily Trojan (Associate Managing Editor), USC Helenes (Director of External Correspondence), USC Admission Center (Student Ambassador)

Expected Fall '22 Activities: USC Helenes (Director of External Correspondence), USC Admission Center (Student Ambassador)

Previous experience in journalism, publications, or other relevant activities: (Give year, title, responsibilities, and school/ company. If you have a current resume, please attach it to this application)

What is your career objective and in what ways would the DAILY TROJAN Newspaper editorship contribute to it?

Please state briefly what changes and improvements you would like to see made this coming Fall!

**Previous experience in journalism, publications, or other relevant activities: (Give year, title, responsibilities, and school/company. If you have a current resume, please attach it to this application)**

I currently work as an associate managing editor (primarily overseeing the news section) at the *Daily Trojan*, where I edit stories for daily print publication, contribute to breaking news coverage and lead writers and section editors in journalistic decision-making. I've worked at *DT* every semester since my first semester at USC, having previously held the positions of staff writer, assistant news editor, news assignments editor and news editor. This semester, I also started a column about Korean pop music that was featured in *LAist*.

I also have experience working at professional newsrooms in my hometown of Honolulu. Last summer, I worked as a newsroom intern at the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, the city's daily newspaper, where I wrote breaking news stories, covered press releases and events and contributed to reporting on an investigative story with *ProPublica*. I also previously worked as a newsroom intern at a local Japanese American newspaper in my hometown, where I wrote long-form articles on issues relevant to the Japanese American community and culture.

Last fall, I worked as a communications intern at the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, the country's largest nonprofit organization dedicated to advocating for journalists' First Amendment rights and freedoms, where I wrote informational articles, summaries of relevant legislation and social copy. I currently work as a marketing associate with the Little Tokyo Historical Society, writing promotional articles and social copy for a recently published memoir.

**What is your career objective and in what ways would the DAILY TROJAN Newspaper editorship contribute to it?**

After college, I hope to either work for a corporate company doing editorial or communications work, or attend law school to practice First Amendment or media litigation. Although these two career objectives aren't inherently related, I believe that serving as the *Daily Trojan's* editor-in-chief will contribute to my preparations to pursue either. My experience at *DT* so far has been crucial to my professional development, not only in growing my technical skills stemming from working under high pressure deadlines and reporting on sensitive topics efficiently, but also in advancing my soft skills related to leadership, dependability and teamwork. I would be extremely grateful for the opportunity to continue working in this learning environment, and to grow from and apply the lessons from this experience to a career rooted in my passion for journalism – a passion that *DT* has greatly contributed to strengthening.

**Please state briefly what changes and improvements you would like to see made this coming Fall!**

This coming Fall, I'd like to work towards making improvements to the following broad categories: diversity & inclusion, prioritizing reporting on the USC community, professional development and workplace culture and staff retention. While these objectives are large and are

impossible to fix in just one semester, I'd like to both continue existing and implement new strategies to move closer towards achieving these goals.

### Diversity & Inclusion

I'd like to further develop our Diversity & Inclusion section beyond the publication of the semesterly D&I report. I believe that our current system of D&I reads internally is flawed, and I'd like to change the way that we approach diversity and inclusion in the newsroom through the following steps:

1. Integrate D&I reads more closely into the production process. As of right now, D&I reads are requested by section editors or managing editors on a case-by-case basis, which usually results in articles that mention sensitive topics being the only ones that get D&I reads. While this is important, I believe that D&I spans beyond just ensuring that we cover sensitive topics carefully, but also in the diversity of sources we interview and the language used in every article we publish.
  - a. I'd like to work closely with the Diversity & Inclusion Director and the rest of masthead to establish a new system for D&I reads. While I think it's a bit ambitious to propose that every article goes through an additional D&I read, I'd like to work towards creating a system in which D&I reads are integrated into section, managing and copy reads as much as possible.
2. Develop further the mandatory bias training that we present at Orientation, emphasizing concepts of fault lines and sensitive reporting in practice, rather than just self-awareness.

### Covering the USC Community

At our core, we're a student newspaper serving the USC community. While I understand that much of our headspace is covering University and student responses to current events or current pop culture and media, I believe that we can work towards finding a better balance of our coverage of USC-related and external topics. Additionally, I believe that there are ways to streamline our coverage of breaking University-related and sports-related news. To remedy this, I'd like to take the following steps:

1. Prioritize the creation and publication of columns that are relevant to the USC community. While I personally write a column that has nothing to do with the USC community, I'd like to find a balance between columns like mine and ones that are University-specific.
2. Streamline our breaking news coverage process in a way that is both efficient and practical. It's impossible to expect editors to be available at all times of the day. I'd like to establish a more clear cut shift schedule for breaking news writers, editors and copy editors, as well as a breaking news photo team.

### Professional Development

I believe that the most valuable journalistic experience I've had at USC is working at *DT*. However, I believe that we can, as a whole, improve the ways in which we train our new writers and staff members when they join us. Many students join our publication before they've ever taken a formal journalism course, or aren't journalism students at all, and therefore, aren't

immediately familiar with our articles' style or requirements. It can be frustrating and discouraging to get feedback on your articles that isn't constructive or helpful, which I believe contributes to lower staff retention rates. To remedy this, I'd like to take the following steps:

1. Work closely with the Staff Development Director or with the rest of the Managing team and masthead to develop engaging, tailored workshops for new writers (e.g. interviewing tips, headline and lede writing), as well as professional development workshops on journalistic career development. I envision these workshops taking place either during or outside of a revamped Orientation.
2. Create comprehensive staffwide resources that provide general information about article requirements, with section-specific notes. For this, I envision a document with notes like source requirements, general word counts, basic *DT* style, protocol for contacting media relations and answers to frequently asked questions/solutions to common issues that is made available to everyone on staff.
3. Revamp the Jobs and Internships Slack channel, encouraging people to submit professional development opportunities, and create a *DT* alumni network through a LinkedIn group and a speaker series with alumni who now work in journalism or related fields.

#### Workplace Culture & Staff Retention

In addition to a lack of constructive feedback, I believe that *DT*'s low staff retention rate is an issue rooted in the lack of community our paper provides to staff members who don't work for a print section on the masthead. I think that *DT*'s sense of community in this way is then derived from the long hours that we spend with one another, and while I treasure the community I found at *DT* through this way, I still remember working at *DT* before I was on masthead and feeling like an outsider when I entered the newsroom. To remedy this, I'd like to take the following steps:

1. Create a *DT* internal newsletter. This is something that I've talked about with others in the past, but I'd really like to establish this as a way to spotlight writers' work, keep others updated on what's going on in the newsroom and establish a digital connection within our staff, at the very least. I envision the newsletter also including links to the resource document I mentioned earlier, a community calendar and a community pitch sheet.
2. Streamline ways for staff members to contribute story ideas and pitches to different sections. I'd like to establish a *DT* communal calendar, where all members of our staff can add different campus and community events that they suggest we cover, as well as a communal pitch sheet – something like a Google form where staff members can contribute their different ideas to their respective sections.
3. Work closely with the Wellness and Outreach Director to plan large social gatherings, such as casual picnics or dinners, for the entire staff. Similar to our semesterly banquet, I want to create opportunities for staff members to interact with others outside of their sections in casual, low-stakes environments.