

**Opinion Columnist Application**

**Fall 2022**

# **Due Friday, August 12th, 2022 at 11:59 p.m. EST**

To send your completed application:

Save this completed document as a Word file (File > Download as… > Microsoft Word (.docx)) and email the completed version, titled **“LAST NAME – Columnist Application 22-23,”** to [associate-editor@cornellsun.com](mailto:associate-editor@cornellsun.com).

The subject line of your application email should be the same as the Word doc: “**LAST NAME – Columnist Application 22-23**”

You may send along with your application any supplemental materials you’d like (a resume, a video of your stand-up routine, previously published writing, etc.), to [associate-editor@cornellsun.com](mailto:associate-editor@cornellsun.com), but **do not feel obligated** to do so if you feel that your application captures the perspective that you’d like to share through The Sun. **No writing experience is required!**

**If you have questions, please send us an email at** [**associate-editor@cornellsun.com.**](mailto:associate-editor@cornellsun.com)

Hello!

You’re interested in being an opinion columnist? Cool! Let us tell you a little bit about the job.

Opinion columnists write every other week throughout the semester. **Columns should take on an issue that’s relevant to the Cornell or Ithaca communities**, provide some research or reporting to back your claims and take a stance or explain why the topic matters to you and the broader community. You will work with the Associate Editor and Opinion Editor to edit your columns. Together, we’ll bring your work to life for our audience of thousands of daily web readers, over 22,000 Facebook and 27,500 Twitter followers. And when you flip to our opinion pages in the print paper, you’ll see your work as part of a larger conversation on campus. It’s a powerful platform, and it’s one that constantly needs a diversity of new angles and voices.

Columns should be around 800 words of opinionated, factually correct and relevant writing. A great column can rely on both your own experience and that of others. So, as a columnist, you’ll have the chance to walk around campus and Ithaca with a fresh set of eyes and find pivotal issues to debate about or bring to light that you couldn’t previously broadcast or didn’t know how to tackle. You’ll learn invaluable skills in reporting, from interviewing to delving into the history of a topic.

If you have a lot of ideas that you feel our campus and community of students, faculty, alumni and Ithacans would engage with and you want this student-run platform to share them, apply. **And if you aren’t too confident in your writing abilities but committed to your opinions, you too should apply.** **We’re not too concerned with previous writing or reporting experience. We care about bringing your arguments to life and will work with you every step of the way to make sure the final product is true to your voice.** And if you’re not sure what that voice is yet, we’ll work with you to develop that too.

Columnists play a crucial role in The Sun’s mission to be an independent student paper that is representative of the community. We are student journalists seeking to bridge the gap between educational and professional publications, aspiring to put forth an informative and meaningful product every weekday of the semester. The Sun’s editors are here to help you find information, pick topics, workshop columns, connect with sources — the whole nine yards.

**The application is a bit lengthy, so we recommend taking your time with it, and don’t be afraid to exercise your own creative voice!** (When reading the 39th application, we’ll be really hoping you had some fun with it.) We strongly recommend checking out the columns on our [website](https://cornellsun.com/category/opinion/) to get a sense for what we publish — and what we have yet to talk about.

We’d love to hear what you have to say. As always, please don’t hesitate to contact us at [associate-editor@cornellsun.com](mailto:associate-editor@cornellsun.com) if you have any questions.

Happy writing!

Sunnily yours,

Emma Leynse ’23 | Associate Editor

Katherine Yao ’23|Opinion Editor

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## **Tell Us About Yourself**

Answer these questions as seriously or un-seriously as you would like. You’re welcome to leave blanks. You can write as much or as little as you’d like. Do you — show us your voice!

**Name:**

**Class year:**

**Area(s) of study:**

**College:**

**Have you worked for the Sun before? What did/do you do?**

**Why did you choose your major/area of study? If you haven’t chosen, what are you considering?**

**What are you involved in on or off-campus? Still trying to find your community? That’s cool too! What are you looking to gain or contribute from involvement in an organization?**

**What’s your favorite Sun opinion column from the past year? Why?**

**What would you bring to the opinion section that it is currently lacking?**

**How would you describe your writing style/voice?**

**What is the most memorable book/article/tweet/etc. that you have read recently?**

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## **Take a Stance**

Below are three brief opinionated questions — CHOOSE TWO to answer. As professors always say (but only sometimes mean), we’ll be evaluating the novelty of your view and the substantive basis of your argument, not whether we agree with you. ***Please respond to TWO questions below in 300-400 words each.*** We’re hoping to get a sense of your personality and your voice from your answers so please be yourself and be honest!

1. **You’re a really, really, really honest tour guide. Give me a mini, unfiltered monologue about the kind of place Cornell is in a nutshell (If you’re an incoming first-year, tell us what your first impressions were).**
2. **What is a tradition you think Cornell should start?**
3. **What do you think is the most difficult thing about entering college?**

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## **Your Column!**

If you’re hired as a columnist, every two weeks, approximately half of a page of The Sun will be devoted to your writing. It’s an exciting prospect, but we don’t toss around half-pages lightly, so we want you to take it seriously and seize the opportunity for your words to reach millions of people. And remember, you are applying to be an *opinion* columnist! Not arts or dining — opinion! (So if you realize that you’re more swayed to those sections, now is a great time to reach out to us at [associate-editor@cornellsun.com](mailto:associate-editor@cornellsun.com) and we would be happy to connect you!)

**Why do you want your very own routine space in the newspaper?**

**Please share eight ideas you have for columns:**

(Hint: you may actually use these if accepted, so put some thought into it!)

*Note: by “idea,” we mean your argument, thesis statement, main point, etc. It should be an opinion. Think “Spinach is the best salad base,” not “Leafy greens.”*



**Where might you look for inspiration, should you run out of ideas?**

**Finally, please write one sample column.**

Your column should be **700-900 words**, and should include a catchy **headline (title)**. *Please proofread your column carefully. If selected as a columnist, this sample column may be run. And if we are impressed with your work but you’re not selected, we may still run your column as a guest submission throughout the semester.*

To write an effective column, we recommend you:

1. Develop a point you want to make.
2. Gather evidence and decide how you want to defend your point.
   1. Your evidence can include thorough research, personal anecdotes and interviews (talk to people who know something about the topic, and gather quotes and alternate viewpoints to present or dispute).
3. Consult columns or op-eds in other papers to pick out effective argumentative techniques or prose styles other authors deploy.

Your column can be on *a topic of your choice*, so long as it is **Cornell or Ithaca related**. Again, please look at other opinion pieces from the past year for inspiration. Column ideas can come from anywhere so keep your eyes open! **Don’t worry about taking “the hottest take,”** we would prefer that you write about something that you actually care about rather than something that is controversial for the sake of writing about it. **Remember this isn’t about whether or not we agree with your column, we just want to see how you write and your thought process!**

Congrats! You finished our application! We can’t wait to read it. Please reference the first page on how to submit your application and if there are any questions remember that you can reach us at [**associate-editor@cornellsun.com**](mailto:associate-editor@cornellsun.com)**.** You’ll hear from us soon!