Only Your Stylist Will Know: How to Let an Editor Make You Look Fabulous
“A really good editor is like a really good hair colorist. They make you look your best, but no one can tell you had anything done.”
What does an editor do?
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- Catch blatant errors — spelling, punctuation, typos, grammar — to keep you from looking unprofessional
Missouri State University Misspells Name on Over 8,000 Promotional Bags

“Yesterday I couldn’t spell ‘engineer’; today I are one.”
top 25-reasearch productivity, of the nation’s largest and USF’s accomplishments in
Negativity Bias
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• Negative information is an attention magnet.
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- The more attention you pay to anything, the more you’ll remember it.
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• The more attention you pay to anything, the more you’ll remember it.
• Therefore, negative information can damage a reputation far more easily than positive information can boost a reputation.
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- Correct awkward or unclear writing, to help you get your message across clearly and cleanly
Awkward Writing = Harder to Read
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- Due to the fact that our donors have donated so generously, we have more money we can use to defray the costs of scholarships.
Awkward Writing = Harder to Read

• Due to the fact that our donors have donated so generously, we have more money we can use to defray the costs of scholarships.

• **Better:** The generous support of our donors has enabled us to increase funding for scholarships.
Awkward Writing = Harder to Read

• All reading requires mental effort, otherwise known as cognitive load.
Awkward Writing = Harder to Read

- All reading requires mental effort, otherwise known as **cognitive load**.
- As cognitive load increases, **persistence** — a reader’s tendency to read a piece of writing all the way to the end — **decreases**.
Unclear Writing = Harder to Understand
Unclear Writing = Harder to Understand

• When the executive committee launched the strategic plan review process, it needed a drastic overhaul.
Unclear Writing = Harder to Understand

• When the executive committee launched the strategic plan review process, it needed a drastic overhaul.
• Better: When the executive committee began reviewing the strategic plan, it soon became apparent that the plan needed a drastic overhaul.
Unclear Writing = Harder to Understand

• When the executive committee launched the strategic plan review process, it needed a drastic overhaul.

• **Better:** When the executive committee began reviewing the strategic plan, it soon became apparent that the plan needed a drastic overhaul.

• **Better but different — which is right?** When the executive committee began reviewing the strategic plan, it soon became apparent that the committee needed a drastic overhaul.
Unclear Writing = Harder to Understand

- All reading is an act of decoding a text to extract its meaning.
Unclear Writing = Harder to Understand

• All reading is an act of decoding a text to extract its meaning.
• The harder it is to decode a text, comprehension — the reader’s understanding of the text’s meaning — decreases.
What does an editor do?

• Catch blatant errors — spelling, punctuation, typos, grammar — to keep you from looking unprofessional
• Correct awkward or unclear writing, to help you get your message across clearly and cleanly
• Enforce editorial style to ensure that your communications are consistent
Editorial Style

• A set of rules that tell you what to do when there’s more than one “correct” way to write something.
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  – Randy Woodson is chancellor of NC State.
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  – Randy Woodson is chancellor of NC State.
    Randy Woodson is Chancellor of NC State.
  – She gave ten million dollars to the university.
    She gave $10 million to the university.
Editorial Style

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  – Randy Woodson is chancellor of NC State.
    Randy Woodson is Chancellor of NC State.
  – She gave ten million dollars to the university.
    She gave $10 million to the university
  – The U.S. flag is red, white, and blue.
    The U.S. flag is red, white and blue.
Editorial Style

- The main purpose of any editorial style is to enhance **clarity** and **consistency**.
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• Editorial styles come from editorial style guides, such as the *AP Stylebook* and the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
• Organizations often use a known style guide as the foundation for their own style, with additions and modifications as needed.
Editorial Style Guidelines

Following a well-defined editorial style gives your writing a professional sheen and brings it in line with the university's brand platform.

Jane S. McKimmon Center for Extension and Continuing Education

Informally known as the McKimmon Center, this structure was completed in 1976. It is named for a home demonstration leader who was among the first women to receive degrees from NC State.

Jr., Sr., III

The terms Jr., Sr., III and the like used after a person's name are part of the name and thus generally do not take a comma:

Lonnie Poole Jr. gave a generous gift to the university.

If a person requests that we use the comma with his or her name, we should grant the request out of respect for the individual. We should also remember that when a building, fund or other entity is named after a person, the entity and the person are distinct from one another, and so are their names. Hence, at the request of Gov. Jim Hunt, we use the comma in his name.

Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr. spoke to an appreciative audience.

But there is no comma used in the full name of the Hunt Library:

The James B. Hunt Jr. Library is one of the most technologically advanced learning and collaboration spaces in the world.
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• Enforce editorial style to ensure that your communications are consistent
• Adhere to brand guidelines for voice and tone, so all your communications reinforce key messages and work to achieve strategic goals
The two meanings of “brand”:

- The set of guidelines an entity uses to shape the way it communicates
The two meanings of “brand”:

- The set of guidelines an entity uses to shape the way it communicates
- The way an entity is perceived by others
Voice and Tone

- **Voice**: The characteristic qualities of your writing that arise from who you are and generally do not change
Voice and Tone

- **Voice**: The characteristic qualities of your writing that arise from who you are and generally do not change.
- **Tone**: The way you shape your writing to fit a specific occasion or purpose.
NC State’s Brand Personality

• Courageous
• Innovative
• Intellectual
• Purposeful
Courageous
Write with conviction. Never shy from challenging or complex subjects. Describe the problems facing our world, and propose solutions. Choose bold, unambiguous language. Show our eagerness to put ideas to the test in the real world, where they count.

More Like:
NC State graduates go straight to work — fighting fires in the forests of western North Carolina, kickstarting finance throughout the Queen City or revitalizing textiles along I-85. From the moment they arrive here, our students learn the tools of their trade, applying big data insights to get big things done.

Less Like:
As befits a place responsible for practical learning, NC State offers students a thorough grounding in the equipment and skills of their respective fields. Students also undertake internships and other beneficial learning experiences that may help to better prepare them for life after graduation, whether that means a potential career in forestry, the financial services sector or even North Carolina’s recovering textile economy.

Here’s Why:
The first example lays out real challenges and depicts NC State graduates meeting them. It hooks the reader with active, evocative verbs ("fighting," "kickstarting"). It is confident in its claims, presenting experiential education as invigorating for students and vital to their prospects. By contrast, the second example is timid, vague and forgettable.
The Four Levels of Editing
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1. Developmental editing
The Four Levels of Editing

1. Developmental editing
2. Substantive editing
The Four Levels of Editing

1. Developmental editing
2. Substantive editing
3. Copy editing
Agricultural and Consumer Services, operate a network of 18 research stations where field trials are conducted in a range of soil types and climates. 

And through the university’s Cooperative Extension centers in all of the state’s 100 counties, farmers have direct access to information and counsel about the latest developments in agricultural science and technology. 

Another advantage Linton cites is NC State’s location in the Research Triangle, home to three of the world’s top five agricultural biosciences industry leaders as well as more than 50 life sciences companies. 

Supporting Linton’s claims is an economic feasibility study conducted by the Battelle Memorial Institute. Nowhere else, Battelle reported, has its Technology Partnership Practice seen such a “promising convergence of assets poised to take advantage of large-scale expanding markets.” 

Realizing the Promise

To turn that promise into reality in time to avert global food shortages, scientists need to start thinking and working in new ways, says Becky Boston, an NC State plant scientist. Researchers can’t afford to work in disciplinary silos, instead, they need to augment the expertise of their disciplines with the problem-solving creativity that can arise from close communication and collaboration with others, she observes. 

That collaboration is already in motion. Right now, four task forces with representatives from academia, government and industry are working together to develop a road map to guide the initiative’s next steps, including a $160 million Plant Sciences Research Complex to be built on Centennial Campus. 

Among those participating in the task forces is Charles Hall, chief executive officer of the North Carolina Soybean Producers Association. The state’s farmers have lagged behind the rest of the nation when it comes to soybean yields, so the initiative should tackle both short- and long-term agricultural problems, he says.
The Four Levels of Editing

1. Developmental editing
2. Substantive editing
3. Copy editing
4. Proofreading
Graduates more undergraduates than any other college

40 percent of undergrads earn Dean's List honors

NC State's leader in graduating class size and in students who

15 master's degrees
5 Ph.D. programs
3 dual-degree programs
4 graduate certificate programs
11 distinguished professors
6

$9.4 million Private fundraising in FY15

$8.1 million gift in FY14 established the university's first endowed center

Five community-oriented institutes and centers that further NC State's

The phrase "Graduates more undergraduates" is really confusing at first; I had to read it two or three times before I understood it. "Graduates" parses as a noun first, not a verb. To fix this, I'd completely rewrite the bolded text. I'd also add "at NC State" at the end:

Awards more bachelor's degrees than any other college at NC State
The College at a Glance

1,494 total enrollment
539 undergraduate
529 master's
432 doctoral

bhwinter
2/21/17, 1:53:26 PM

The figures at right add up to 1,500. This total enrollment figure should equal the sum of the three figures at right, shouldn't it? If so, we need to resolve the discrepancy.
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