

# UC Berkeley

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Undergraduate

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## ***On journalistic responsibility: a note from our faculty advisor***

If you have ever had a captive audience eager to learn from you, you have had the responsibility. When scientists publish their work, they are presenting the results and the interpretation of the results in all honesty. The results come from experimentation or observation, and they are reproducible, the critical hallmark for others' accepting the data in the results. In contrast, the interpretation of the results is a matter of discussion, as interpretation comes from the individual's own knowledge base and understanding of the results.

So, too in journalism, including the Berkeley Scientific Journal, the scientific papers are reviewed, revised and published with the understanding that the results are as claimed. The interpretation can sometimes be open to, well, interpretation. Journalism and science have serious communication responsibilities. A journalist is a storyteller whose currency is non-fiction, and whose responsibility is to share the non-fiction in a manner understood by the reader or listener.

A journalist does not share "fake news," nor report unsubstantiated claims as reality. Indeed a journalist has a responsibility to expose "fake news" for the distraction and misdirection it causes. A scientist who writes and speaks to the public becomes a journalist who helps the non-scientist interpret scientific information.

For the audience that is listening to or reading your words, you have a responsibility to them. Communicate clearly and honestly, directly and without exaggeration, respectfully and concisely - truthfully. If you are "reporting," be clear about your sources and evaluate their veracity. If you are sharing your own opinion, make it clear that you are presenting an interpretation of events, results, behaviors, and your opinion is based on your own reasoning, although there may be facts and reports whose impact you are interpreting.

We are all responsible for sharing substantiated information; we are all responsible for exposing claims that lie outside the truth. The journalists of the Berkeley Scientific Journal understand this responsibility and trust that you will too.

-Dr. Caroline Kane, **faculty advisor to BSJ**

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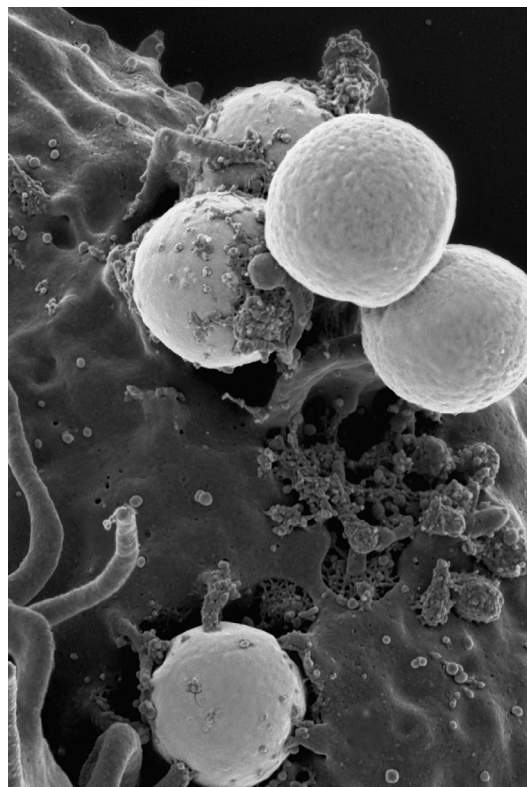
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