BSC Web Monitor Style Guide

Style Guidelines
Consistency with grammar and style usage saves time for those who write content for BSC’s website. Correct and standard usage also enhances the image of the college.

For questions about or suggested additions to the BSC Web Monitor Style Guide, contact Marnie.Piehl@bismarckstate.edu.

Degrees
Capitalize the full degree title when using the proper name; use lowercase for the shorter form:
- Associate in Arts degree
- Associate in Science degree
- Associate in Applied Science degree
- AAS degree
- associate degree
- Program Diploma
- Program Certificate
- Certificate of Completion
- Bachelor of Applied Science in Energy Management
- bachelor’s degree
- Master of Public Administration
- Public Administration degree
- master’s degree

Reference to a “Program”
Unless the word “program” is part of the title, do not capitalize:
- BSC Foundation Scholarship Program
- Criminal Justice program

Professional Titles
Capitalize a professional title if it comes before the name, but not if it comes after the name. This applies to use of titles in a sentence, not necessarily in a list.
- Professor of History J. Michael McCormack
- J. Michael McCormack, professor of history
- President Larry C. Skogen
- Larry C. Skogen, president of BSC

Times
Use lowercase for a.m. and p.m. with periods following each letter:
- 4-6:30 p.m.
- 8 a.m.-6 p.m.

Seasons
Don’t capitalize seasons and semesters:
- fall semester
- spring semester
- summer
Academic Years
Always lower-case:
- freshman, sophomore, junior, senior

Advisor
Use the “or” ending, most commonly used by higher education institutions

Course Listing/Titles
Always capitalize unless you are using a generic term:
- She is enrolled in History of the Western Frontier.
- She is enrolled in history.

Fees and Forms
Never capitalize form names:
- admissions application

Costs
$5 not $5.00 (unless in tables aligned with figures that are not even amounts)

Abbreviations
Do not use periods in acronyms:
- BSC, CETI, FERPA

On first reference of the name of a place or division that you wish to abbreviate later in the copy, use the full name, followed by the abbreviation in parenthesis. Example:
- The National Energy Center of Excellence (NECE) develops industry recognized courses and programs to respond ...

     The NECE offers flexible training available on site, on the BSC campus and/or online...

Percent
Spell out “percent.” Unless in a table, do not use “%.”

Numbers
Spell out numbers one through nine and ordinals first through ninth.
- Eight, eighth

Use figures for 10 and above, ordinals for 10th and above.
- 12, 12th

Spell out numbers used at the beginning of sentences:
- Twenty students are in class.

Alumni
- Individual male: alumnus
- Individual female: alumna
- Group of males: alumni
- Group of females: alumnae
- Group of males and females: alumni is commonly used

BSC Web Style Guide 11/4/11
Class Years
When identifying alumni by their class year, the year is set off by a comma and an apostrophe before the year:
- Jane A. Doe, '99

Also use a comma after the year when used in a sentence:
- Jane A. Doe, ’99, received the 2011 Rising Star Award.

Bulleted Lists
Bulleted lists must have two or more items. When presenting bulleted lists, capitalize the first word of each item and do not include punctuation. Use a period at the end of each item if the list consists of sentences.

To apply for a selective program, you will need to submit:
- An admissions application form
- A program application form
- Two letters of reference
- A personal statement or essay
- Transcripts: high school and college

Quotations
Place in quotation marks titles of:
- Books
- Movies
- Songs
- Poems
- TV programs
- Plays
- Operas
- Lectures
- Speeches
- Articles
- Works of art

Exceptions are the Bible and books that are primarily catalogs of reference material. In addition to catalogs, this category includes almanacs, directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks and similar publications. e.g. Merriam-Webster Dictionary, North Dakota Blue Book

Hyphens and Compound Modifiers
When a compound modifier precedes a noun, use a hyphen to link the words (except very and adverbs that end in ly). Examples:
- They are full-time students.
- She is enrolled only in on-campus classes.

However, these same words, when not used as a modifier, would not be hyphenated, as in these examples:
- Students who are taking classes full time often have part-time jobs.
- Even though you are an online student, you can also take courses offered on campus.
Departments and Offices
Capitalize names of offices and academic departments:
- Admissions Office
- Student Records Office
- Arts and Communication Department

Places and Rooms
Capitalize formal places and room names unless you are using a generic term:
- Sidney J. Lee Auditorium
- the auditorium
- Jack Science Center Room 225
- BSC Aquatic and Wellness Center
- the center

Phone Numbers
Use hyphens:
- 701-224-5400

Web and email References
- website: one word, lower case
- email: one word, lower case (recent change by Associated Press)
- online: one word, lower case
- Capitalize “Internet”
- Capitalize “World Wide Web”
- Capitalize the first and last name: John.Smith@bismarckstate.edu

Need Help With Spelling, Grammar, Or Style?
Consult these websites:
- www.m-w.com – includes a dictionary, thesaurus, and other helpful resources.
- www.dictionary.com – includes a dictionary, thesaurus, and many other helpful resources.
- www.quoteland.com – includes a full listing of quotes. This site even includes a quote identifier.