

Drexel Edits: Grammar Police For a Good Cause



By: [Matt Erickson](#)

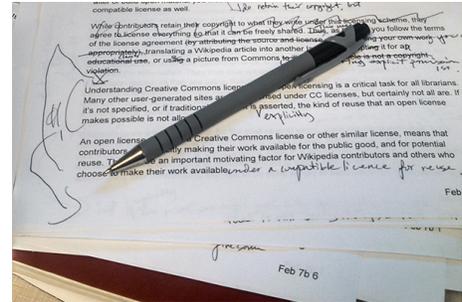
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Nonprofit organizations often have many needs: Funding. Space. Volunteers.

But how about an editor?

The careful eye of a trained editor can be invaluable for groups that must communicate effectively to achieve their goals, and smaller organizations may not have the resources to pay one.

That was the pitch Lawrence Souder, PhD, made to Drexel's College of Arts and Sciences after the University began a push for more civic engagement. To Souder's delight, Dean Donna Murasko agreed to support his idea: an initiative to provide pro bono editing services to area nonprofits. [Drexel Edits](#) was born, and it's now open for service.



Lawrence Souder

"I think we could do some real good for the community," said Souder, an associate teaching professor in the Department of Culture and Communication.

The idea sprung from a graduate editing course taught by Souder, in which he began assigning students to work with nonprofits to build some experience. For Drexel Edits, he's recruiting volunteers from among students, graduates, professional staff and others interested in giving back through editing.

"We all have our blind spots when it comes to writing and communicating," Souder said. "Sometimes it's vital to have that second pair of eyes."

Drexel Edits can apply those eyes to things such as grant proposals, annual reports, strategic plans and newsletters. Such communications can be crucial for attracting and keeping support, and they need to be carefully constructed, Souder said.

“There has to be a lot of care with the structure, with the nitty-gritty basics of sentences and words,” he said.

So far, Souder’s students and volunteers have performed services for groups including Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia and ACHIEVEability. Reviews have been positive, and he’s on the lookout for more groups to help and more volunteers to edit.

“I’m thinking about smaller organizations where the executive director is often the main, if not the only, employee,” Souder said.

Even at larger organizations, Souder said, communications workers may be the first to go if there’s a need to cut costs. But communicating well is still vitally important to those groups’ livelihood. That’s why, in this case, a red pen can be a valuable tool for giving back to the community.

Any editors out there who’d like to help make Philadelphia a better place can contact Souder at DrexelEdits@drexel.edu.