- FOCUS
    - A clear and persuasive essay must be free of unnecessary information and opinions. Every sentence should be used to hone the author's argument.
    - The thesis should be clearly stated and supported throughout the essay. The conclusions should go beyond simply restating the thesis.
    - The organization of the essay should help the focus of the essay. Paragraphs should be logically linked to one another and should have a natural flow for the reader.
    - All articles should have some relevancy in the voting booth. This is a generally good rule to use when deciding what topic to select.

- CONTEXT
    - The author's argument should be placed into a relevant context. A deep historical analysis is not required, but the reader should be able to understand the major points of the argument from the given context.

- LOGICAL SUPPORT
    - All claims and assertions should be supported by sources. These can include quotations, facts and figures, or any other method of displaying factual support. Specific examples must be presented in an academic manner in contrast to a primarily opinion piece with little or no cited facts.
    - The reasoning for each argument must be well-thought out and well-written. No conclusions should be drawn without presenting the relevant facts.
    - For example, if the author is discussing a potential international intervention to end the violence in Syria, he or she should present research to support that argument. This can include United Nations initiatives, facts and figures from other conflicts, etc. Instead of saying "the UN should intervene because so many people are dying", the argument should say something more along the lines of "As the United Nations General Assembly has continued to present a more assertive role in preserving human rights as seen in their 'Responsibility to Protect' initiative and intervention in the Libyan conflict, the UN should intervene because 50,000 people have died since the conflict began according to a BBC report."
    - All statements must be factually correct and original in nature. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be permitted in the *Vanderbilt Political Review.*

- MECHANICS
    - Articles must be grammatically correct. No spelling or punctuation errors should be present in the essay. The entire essay should be proofread by the author before sent for submission.
    - All articles should be double spaced with one inch margins. 12 point Times New Roman font is generally requested.
    - APSA style is requested.
    - Online submissions should be around 500 words, while the articles for the print issue should be 800-1000 words.

- CONTENT
    - While the articles should have an argument, they should be academic in tone. All statements should be supported by facts. However, this does not mean that the argument cannot be opinionated. As long as the opinions are backed up with facts or quotations and maintain an academic tone, the article will be up to standards.
    - The author should take into account the difference between a credible and non-credible source. Sources should be scholarly in nature or from a respected organization.
    - We will actively pursue essays with special relevance to Vanderbilt students.