

Minnesota Daily Content Diversity Board

END-OF-YEAR REPORT
2019-2020

mn
DAILY

Mission Statement

The Content Diversity Board operates within the Minnesota Daily's editorial department. Its functions are primarily focused on news coverage, journalistic ethics and staff support. We do not determine coverage; instead, we provide support and information in the interest of making our reporting, writing and editing as strong as possible. We also act as a bridge between the newsroom and the community.

In order to guide our work, we created two separate statements of purpose: one, a newsroom diversity statement, and two, a mission statement specific to the content board. These guidelines act in tandem. The content board was created, in part, to help ensure the newsroom diversity statement is effectively carried out. We made both of these statements available on [our website](#).

Newsroom diversity statement:

Adequately seeking out and reporting truth is impossible without a commitment to diversity in reporting, editing and sourcing. If coverage lacks diversity of perspective and experience, we are not meeting our mission of fully informing the community.

Diversity is a broad term, but at the baseline, it should encompass diversity of identity, thought and experience.

As an industry, journalism has not historically been diverse. As current students of journalism, it is our responsibility to change that pattern by supporting diversity in our newsroom and community.

Content Diversity Board mission statement:

We acknowledge that journalism cannot function as a truth-teller and watchdog without accurate representation of its communities. Therefore, our role is to support the newsroom's diversity mission statement and ensure our coverage accurately reflects the diversity of the U's campus and surrounding communities by:

- Acting as a watchdog for accurate and representative coverage
- Analyzing coverage to provide a radar for diversity issues in reporting and editing
- Providing a space for discussion and debate about ethics and best practices in diverse coverage
- Serving as a bridge between the Minnesota Daily and the campus community

Board Leadership 2019-20

Chair — Tiffany Bui

The board chair oversees the board's activities.

Outreach Coordinator — Ariana Wilson

The outreach coordinator is responsible for connecting the Daily with local professionals and organizations and looking to support the board by providing insight and training on diversity in media.

Office of the Publisher

Representative — Cleo Krejci

Made up of the business operations officer, the general manager and the editor-in-chief, the Officer of the Publisher oversees the Minnesota Daily's operations. The OP representative on this board, the editor-in-chief, ensures that the board's mission and presence are felt throughout the entire organization.

Newsroom Coordinator — Michelle Griffith

The newsroom coordinator communicates the board's work with the editorial division.

Rotating members

There is no barrier to becoming involved with the board; all staff members are welcome to attend meetings and participate. Everyone who contributed their time and effort was essential to the board's operations this year including, but not limited to: Nur Adam, JD Duggan, Hana Ikramuddin, Jiang Li, Dylan Miettinen, Farrah Mina, Becca Most, Jason Nam, Natalie Rademacher, Jasmine Snow, Jessica Toledo and Katelyn Vue.

Additional acknowledgements

We thank everyone who contributed to this report. Special thanks to Nur Adam, Tiffany Bui, Creston Halstead, Hana Ikramuddin, Desmond Kamas, Cleo Krejci, Dylan Miettinen, Farrah Mina, Becca Most, Natalie Rademacher, Jasmine Snow and Ariana Wilson.

The board was founded in summer 2019 by Cleo Krejci, editor-in-chief 2019-20, but it was made possible by the work of countless dedicated staff members. Note that all members of the Content Diversity Board are also MN Daily staff.

Executive Summary

We believe in a key journalistic principle: There is no accuracy in journalism without diversity. Founded on this idea, the Content Diversity Board was formed in summer 2019, setting out to lay the foundation for a force within the newsroom that ensures strong coverage of our community.

The board was not created out of thin air. As the United States becomes increasingly multiracial and multicultural, the newsrooms of tomorrow must reflect the population and seek to tell a diversity of stories. And as a learning institution, the Minnesota Daily has a responsibility to train and educate the next generation of reporters. The Content Diversity Board was created in recognition that living up to this responsibility will require tough, in-depth conversations about the role of news in the lives of marginalized communities. Our work lies in pushing for institutional improvement and challenging the norms of how news has always been told.

Our year was busy. Looking to better understand our relationship with the community, we conducted a number of feedback sessions with student groups and University staff, the results of which are included in this report. We also met with media professionals and professors, looking for best practices that we could use to guide our overarching goals. And to strengthen the ability of the newsroom to cover the communities we serve, we held newsroom training sessions throughout the year.

We also formed a new position for beat coverage, called the “communities” beat, focused on stories of historically underrepresented community members. Reporter Farrah Mina held the position during the summer, fall and spring semesters, and has repeatedly proven that the beat has a place in the newsroom. Alongside Farrah, reporters Jiang Li and Jason Nam significantly increased coverage of international students this year, covering issues impacting the thousands of international students on campus.

We also gathered data on all stories, looking to better understand the depth and scope of our coverage. In doing so, we learned some key facts about our summer and fall semesters: a quarter of stories covered communities that historically have been underrepresented or misrepresented in the media. During that same time, 28% of photos with human subjects featured a person of color. Of sources quoted in news and arts & entertainment stories, 46% identified as women, while only 2% identified as nonbinary. During the summer and fall publishing cycles, 42% of images ‘above the fold’ pictured a person of color during the summer and fall publishing cycles.

Through a survey of Daily leadership over the past 15 years, we confirmed that the grand majority — 92% — of individuals who have held the top leadership positions of managing editor and editor-in-chief have been white.

We are not alone in our efforts, nor are we the first newsroom to establish a diversity-focused board. The New York Times launched a groundbreaking [diversity and inclusion report](#) and has devoted long segments to coverage of minoritized communities, such as the [1619 Project](#). The Star Tribune started a committee focused on diversity and inclusion in August 2019.

We hope the information included in this report can serve as a foundation for growth. Included in this report are a number of suggestions for the future, which we hope will act as a guiding force for future members of the content board and beyond.

Coverage Tracker

According to [University data](#), about 21% of the University of Minnesota's student population identifies as a student of color. About 10.5% of the student body reported their "home location" as a country other than the United States. When possible, coverage should not stray significantly far from these data points.

All reporters filled out a "coverage tracker" this year — a system for tracking markers of diversity across all of our stories, shared between all reporters and editors. Many of those metrics are useful for quantifying "diversity in coverage."

A	B	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
Date story runs	WEEKHEADS NOTES	Link to article	General keywords (see KEY)	Does this story highlight issues important to communities that historically haven't had a voice?	Breaking? Y/N	Does this story have a visual element?	Does this story have a visual element?	Photo/illustration/rendering	Is there at least one person in the DOMINANT photo? (If there are people in the background but they're clearly not the focus of the image, say no)	Is at least one person in the photo a person of color? (not including random people in the background; this describes central figures in the photo; say n/a if there are too many people to make it relevant)	# sources interviewed	Male sources quoted	Female sources quoted	Non-binary sources quoted	Are there sources in the article that you haven't interviewed in the past 12 months?	Who else could you have contacted to expand the scope of your story?	
8/26	9/2	Varsity bike is closing	https://www. Local business, Dinkytown, development	No	N	Yes	Yes	Photo	No	n/a	5	5	0	0	Yes	Business association members, more bikers	
8/26	9/5	Dinky liquors and McDonalds are closing!!!!	https://www. Local business, Dinkytown, development, neighborhood associations	No	N	Yes	Yes	Photo	No	n/a	12	4	1	0	Yes	People who have been impacted by developments, housing experts	
8/26	9/5	U.S. Dept of Edu is suing 2,000 universities for sex discrimination	https://www. Discrimination, national headlines	Yes	N	Yes	Yes	Illustration	n/a	n/a	5	2	3	0	Yes	More diverse groups within CSE and possibly a more direct source from the U. It was... a little difficult working with UNews on this one, and	
8/26	9/2	Safety notification process story. Changing the safety notification notice processes	https://www. Campus safety, crime, University resources	No	N	Yes	No	Photo	No	n/a	3	2	1	0	yes		
8/26	9/4	Money put aside in Frey's budget to identify cultural districts throughout the city. \$1 mil. CR is one of them.	https://www. Cedar Riverside, local business, development, city government, neighborhood associations, racially minoritized people	Yes	N	Yes	No	Photo	Yes	No	7	3	0	0	Yes	One of the Somali moms Someone from a U neighborhood that isn't getting one to ask if they'd prefer one	
8/26	9/5	14 new officers as part of Frey's budget, some of them in U neighborhood.	https://www. City government, crime	No	N	Yes	No	Photo	No	n/a	4	3	1	0	No	Adult Entertainers willing to be interviewed... had difficulty finding sources who wanted to be interviewed. Someone from the Minneapolis Public School District to provide more context about need for the program	
8/26	9/5	Adult entertainment ordinance passed w/ help of UROC	https://www. City government	Yes	N	Yes	No	Photo	Yes	Yes	3	1	2	0	Yes		
8/26	9/5	Stable homes, stable schools project as part of Frey's budget, using University research	https://www. Housing, city government	Yes	N	Yes	No	Illustration	n/a	n/a	4	2	1	0	Yes		
8/26	9/2	Powell & regents set goals for years, goals for strategic plan, tuition	https://www. Tuition, board of regents, administration	No	N	Yes	No	Photo	Yes	No	5	2	1	0	no		
8/26	9/6	Rare diseases council being formed in medical school, state leg told the U they have to do.	https://www. Research, colleges and departments, legislature, state government	Yes	N	Yes	Yes	Illustration	n/a	n/a	5	3	1	0	yes	More people on the council	
8/26	9/2	Teamsters protested against U about layoffs	https://www. Administration, unions, discrimination, University staff	yes	N	Yes	Yes	Photo	Yes	Yes	5	2	3	0	yes	Getting a statement from someone at the U would have improved this	
8/26	9/4	Researchers given \$2.5 mil for breast cancer, grant given this month	https://www. Research	No	N	Yes	Yes	Photo	Yes	No	5	4	2	0	Yes	A breast cancer association.	
		Nursing school will start doing simulations for school to treat transgender and non-binary students	https://www. Research, LGBTQ students and issues, classes and courses, culture and													Made another opinion school in the	

METRICS COLLECTED

- The number of articles published across news, arts & entertainment and sports desks. Between them, we published 784 stories during the summer and fall semesters. News stories made up 450 of those, or 57%.
- The rate of corrections for all news, arts & entertainment and sports stories. While this is not directly related to diversity in content, the higher the level of accuracy, the better.

Coverage Tracker

METRICS COLLECTED (Cont.)

- The number of articles that included a visual element, such as a photo, illustration or rendering, and the ratios of each type of visual. We also logged which of those visual elements were “new” (i.e., not a file). We chose to analyze this metric knowing that file images are not always as accurate as “new” ones, leaving room for misrepresentation.
- The percentage of photos, of all photos with human subjects, which included a person of color. This metric is essential to accurately representing the community. Photos where race could not be determined were omitted; photos with large crowds of people where race is nearly indistinguishable were also omitted.
- We asked this question for every story: “Does this story highlight issues covering communities and/or groups who historically have not been fully or accurately represented in the media?” We recognize that the answer to this question, as a simple yes or no, is not perfect. In order to guide our decision-making, which we know is somewhat subjective, we looked for stories covering groups such as, but not limited to, racial and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, people with mental health issues, and the LGBTQ+ and transgender communities. “Students” as a general population did not elicit a “yes.”
- The number of sources interviewed for each story. The more sources, the better.
- The ratio of people quoted by name as male, female or nonbinary.
- The ratio of breaking news stories to nonbreaking stories. Breaking stories are generally less in-depth, and less heavily sourced, than others.
- The percentage of sports stories covering women’s sports versus men’s sports, as well as the “type of story,” such as a player feature or a game coverage.
- The breakdown of articles by keyword. For example, how many stories could be tagged as covering “LGBTQ+ students”?
- The ratio of ‘above the fold’ images and overall front pages of the physical newspaper that showed a person of color. These are the first images people see when looking at the paper; they should not consistently depict a narrow range of identities.

Coverage Tracker

METRICS COLLECTED (Cont.)

We also challenged reporters to reflect after their story was published, asking “Who else could you have contacted to expand the scope of your story?” Results were just as varied as the topics. One reporter replied “more small businesses affected, more businesses with people of color speaking about the effect of racial inequity” for a story about developments in University of Minnesota neighborhoods. Another wrote “students of minoritized backgrounds” for a story on access to mental health resources at Big 10 schools.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

All findings below represent coverage from the summer and fall 2019 semesters.

Average sources interviewed per story for news and arts & entertainment (sports not collected):

- News: 3.9 sources
- A&E: 3.05 sources
- **Overall: 3.75 sources**

Total corrections and/or clarifications for news, sports and arts & entertainment stories:

- News: 20/450 — 4%
- A&E: 4/97 — 4%
- Sports: 1/237 — <0%
- **Overall: 25/784 — 3%**

“Does this story highlight issues covering communities and/or groups of who historically have not been fully or accurately represented in the media?”

- News: 107/450 — 24% (19% summer only)
- A&E: 29/97 — 30%
- **Overall: 136/547 — 25%**

Coverage Tracker

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS (Cont.)

Of the photos with a person pictured in them for news, arts & entertainment and sports, how many show a person of color?

Photos where race is not able to be determined are omitted; photos where race is nearly indistinguishable are also omitted.

- News: 58/175 — 33%
- A&E: 25/68 — 37%
- Sports: 49/225 — 22%
- **Overall: 132/468 — 28%**

What is the ratio of women, men and nonbinary individuals quoted in stories for news and arts & entertainment articles?

- News:
 - Male: 814/1511 — 54%
 - Female: 685/1511 — 45%
 - Nonbinary: 11/1511 — <1%
- A&E:
 - Male: 111/267 — 41.5%
 - Female: 135/267 — 50.5%
 - Nonbinary: 21/267 — 8%
- **Overall:**
 - **Male: 925/1778 — 52%**
 - **Female: 820/1778 — 46%**
 - **Nonbinary: 32/1778 — 2%**

What is the ratio of articles written about men's sports versus women's sports?

"Both" refers to articles that include information relating to both a men's and women's sport at the same time, or a sport in which players compete together.

- Men's: 122/237 — 52% (70% summer)
- Women's: 93/237 — 39% (22% summer)
- Both: 22/237 — 9%

Coverage Tracker

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS (Cont.)

How many images “above the fold” showed a person of color, either in a photo or illustration, during the summer and fall semesters?

- 42%

How many front covers, above and below the fold, showed a person of color, either in a photo or an illustration?

- 63%

KEYWORDS

Categories are left separate between summer and fall.

News:

Summer (May 6 – Sept. 1):

- Crime: 18/107 or 17%
- Administration: 18/107 or 17%
- Campus safety: 16/107 or 15%
- City government: 16/107 or 15%
- Local business: 12/107 or 11%
- Board of Regents: 11/107 or 10%
- Development (infrastructure, housing): 11/107 or 10%
- Research: 10/107 or 9%
- Tuition: 8/107 or 7%
- Racially minoritized students/people: 8/107 or 7%
- Colleges and departments: 7/107 or 6.5%
- Discrimination: 7/107 or 6.5%
- Classes and coursework: 5/107 or 5%
- Neighborhood groups: 4/107 or 4%
- National headlines: 3/107 or 3%
- University resources: 2/107 or 2%

Coverage Tracker

KEYWORDS — News (Cont.)

- International students: 2/107 or 2%
- Student government: 1/107 or 1%
- LBGTQ: 1/107 or 1%

Fall (Sept. 1 – Dec. 12):

- Administration: 53/342 = 15%
- City government: 45/342 = 13%
- University faculty and staff: 44/342 = 13%
- Research: 40/342 = 12%
- Campus safety: 37/342 = 11%
- Crime: 35/342 = 10%
- National headlines: 33/342 = 10%
- Development: 32/342 = 9%
- Racially minoritized students/people: 26/342 = 8%
- Climate change: 25/342 = 7%
- Student government: 23/342 = 7%
- Housing: 23/342 = 7%
- Colleges and departments: 22/342 = 6%
- Discrimination: 21/342 = 6%
- Neighborhood groups: 21/342 = 6%
- Board of Regents: 19/342 = 6%
- University resources: 19/342 = 6%
- Student groups: 19/342 = 6%
- Dinkytown: 17/342 = 5%
- State government: 17/342 = 5%
- Local business: 16/342 = 5%
- Minnesota Student Association: 14/342 = 4%
- Graduate students: 14/342 = 4%
- Marcy Holmes: 11/342 = 3%
- International students: 11/342 = 3%
- Prospect Park: 10/342 = 3%
- Sexual misconduct/prevention: 9/342 = 3%

Coverage Tracker

KEYWORDS — News (Cont.)

- Cedar Riverside: 9/342 = 3%
- LGBTQ students/issues: 8/342 = 2%
- Other: 8/342 = 2%
- Native Americans/Indigenous communities: 7/342 = 2%
- Mental health: 6/342 = 2%
- Council of Graduate Students: 6/342 = 2%
- Unions: 5/342 = 1%
- Disability: 4/342 = 1%
- Tuition: 4/342 = 1%
- Transgender students/issues: 3/342 = <1%
- Professional student government: 3/342 = <1%
- Greek life: 3/342 = <1%
- Como: 2/342 = <1%
- Stadium Village: 2/342 = <1%

Arts & Entertainment

Summer (May 6 – Sept. 1):

- Food: 10/24 or 42%
- Local business: 10/24 or 42%
- Events & lifestyle: 6/24 or 25%
- LGBTQ: 3/24 or 12.5%
- Music: 3/24 or 12.5%
- Written and spoken arts: 1/24 or 4%
- Review: 1/24 or 4%
- Arts & identity: 1/24 or 4%
- Comedy: 1/24 or 4%
- Dance: 1/24 or 4%
- Fashion: 0
- Film: 0
- Fine arts: 0
- Climate change: 0

Coverage Tracker

KEYWORDS — A&E (Cont.)

- Other: 0
- Photography: 0
- Theater: 0

Fall (Sept. 1 – Dec. 12):

- Artist profile: 22/73 = 30%
- Music: 21/73 = 29%
- Local business: 14/73 = 23%
- Fine arts: 11/73 = 15%
- Arts & identity: 9/73 = 12%
- Fashion: 5/73 = 7%
- Food: 5/73 = 7%
- Review: 5/73 = 7%
- Other: 4/73 = 5%
- Climate change: 3/73 = 4%
- Dance: 3/73 = 4%
- Events & lifestyle: 3/73 = 4%
- LGBTQ: 3/73 = 4%
- Theater: 3/73 = 4%
- Film: 2/73 = 3%
- Comedy: 1/73 = 1%
- Photography: 1/73 = 1%
- Written and spoken arts: 1/73 = 1%

CONSIDERATIONS, ANALYSIS

Each metric aims to measure the diversity of the Daily's content, but it cannot help us definitively say, on the whole, whether or not we accurately captured the different identities represented on campus. What these different numbers give us is a starting point to ask more questions and a clearer glimpse into our coverage than before. However, the nature of some of our metrics limits the precision of analysis, showing room to make changes to how we collect data where needed.

Coverage Tracker

CONSIDERATIONS, ANALYSIS (Cont.)

We also recognize that journalism should not be based on “quotas” — we cover news based on values of relevance and timeliness, among many others. We approached story pitches and coverage just the same as before we began this data collection. However, it’s still imperative that reporters look in the right place for pitches; being aware of the diversity of our storytelling starts with them. Throughout the year, the Content Diversity Board and Daily leadership pushed for stories covering underrepresented, marginalized and other undercovered communities, when relevant to the news cycle.

“Does this story highlight issues covering communities and/or groups who historically have not been fully or accurately represented in the media?”

This is a fairly broad category. As a metric to track diversity of content, it isn’t granular enough to tell us which underrepresented groups we covered. It’s also difficult to know what this number should really be — how could we really judge, knowing that our first responsibility is to cover news as it happens? And simply reaching high percentages for this question does not mean we are accurately representing campus. For example, if the majority of times we talk to people of color are when we are covering race, that is a problem. Despite those considerations, we think this is a great start.

Overall, stories that answered “yes” consisted of about a quarter of our coverage. However, this percentage varied drastically in news stories depending on the semester, falling to 19% in the summer compared with 24% for news between both semesters, and 30% between news and arts & entertainment. Seeing summer’s number so low, we were forced to consider why this might be the case. For one, the newsroom staff shrinks to about half its normal size. There is also a dearth of stories we regularly report on, because many newsmakers, such as student groups and University administration, are not actively meeting during the summer. However, knowing these challenges should be a signal for added attention in the summer months. Reporters should make all the more effort to seek out these stories and work creatively.

Coverage Tracker

CONSIDERATIONS, ANALYSIS (Cont.)

Arts & entertainment was on the high end of the spectrum compared with news, especially in the summer, which rose to 33% compared with 29% in the fall. Our arts & entertainment editor, Liv Martin, and her reporters have made it a point to diversify their content and who they talk to, which shows in these numbers.

Photo representation

If we assume that only students were photographed, then the ratio of people of color featured in photos, at 28% overall, was greater than the same University population, at 21%. In the city of Minneapolis, about 20% of people identify as a person of color. Our coverage encompasses community members at the University and beyond. Based on this analysis, our coverage did an accurate job of embodying the community.

Of course, we should point out that “people of color” is broad, and does not account for different racial and ethnic identities. Adequately and equitably conveying the intricacies of different identity groups is essential to diverse coverage.

The methods for coming up with this metric, too, are not perfect. We did not ask photo subjects to disclose their race; instead, we looked at each photo after publication. Doing so is not a perfect system, as it leaves room for human error and bias. Photos where race was indistinguishable were omitted, for example. Photos with very large crowds of people were also omitted; we did this because this data set is meant to encompass photos with human subjects clearly the focus of the image. Racially ambiguous individuals were not included, so as not to overrepresent the ratio of people of color in photos.

Gender diversity in sourcing

A very small percentage (2%) of people quoted this year used pronouns other than he/him or she/her. As we look to diversify the voices we feature, particularly on issues of gender, reporters should try to represent identities beyond the gender binary.

Coverage Tracker

CONSIDERATIONS, ANALYSIS (Cont.)

Sports coverage

It's clear that there was a large disparity in the coverage of women's sports compared to men's sports in the summer, at a ratio of 70% men's to 20% women's. In the fall, the disparity became less drastic, but still prevalent, at 59% men's to 39% women's.

It's true that there were many newsworthy events in the summer relating to football recruitment and the NBA draft — which of course warrant close coverage. Across the country, football and men's basketball garner the biggest following based on markers like ticket sales and funding.

The greater question becomes this: what is the best way to equitably cover all sports? In what ways does news coverage reinforce biases?

The content board should further explore these questions to understand their ethical nuances. What we do know is there is room for growth in this area; we must work to balance coverage in semesters to come.

Keywords

The findings of the keyword analysis send two main messages: We cover a lot of different topics, and we should pay more attention to stories falling into categories relating to identity.

Data points like 2% of news stories in the fall covering the LGBTQ+ community, 2% covering Native Americans/Indigenous communities, and 2% for stories covering mental health, are lower than we believe is adequate in order to fully serve our audience. These metrics alone should be used to guide future coverage. While there is not a perfect number to attain, we are sure that this is too low.

However, looking at news specifically, no keyword could be applied to more than 15% of articles. We see this as a positive, because it reflects coverage of a wide range of topics.

Public Forum Synopsis

We hosted our first public forum in December 2019. Though the forum only saw a few attendees, representing a handful of the thousands of diverse perspectives on campus, we appreciated participants' time and input. The only way for an organization like the Daily to continue to progress and act as a forum for the University is to ensure voices from across our institution are heard and fairly represented. Because of this, the public forum will be an annual event and will hopefully act as one of several options to provide input and critical feedback as to how the Daily is doing.

Here are several takeaways from the meeting:

- **Language has power.** Biases can leak through in words that are coded or have implicit connotations — think words like “urban” when describing Black communities. Community members suggested that editors and reporters continually self-analyze and critique use of language in order to ensure fairness and accuracy.
 - **Identities themselves are not stories — they are a part of them.** Reporters should strive to integrate sources of marginalized and minoritized identities into all stories, not just ones directly related to aspects of that identity. Stories and sources are nuanced.
 - **While stories should have diverse perspectives, it is easy to get caught in the trap of tokenization.** This can be mitigated by extensive reporting and ensuring that individuals are portrayed by the many complex, multifaceted aspects of who they are. They should not be presented as a spokesperson for their identity group.
- **Cover the positives of minoritized communities.** Community members generally felt that stories focusing on minoritized individuals or communities were often deficit-based. Reporters have an opportunity to challenge dominant narratives that limit and narrowly define collective experiences. There is an unfortunate “if it bleeds, it leads” mantra in journalism. When reporters try to excessively exploit the trauma of minoritized groups, it causes immense harm.
- **A reporter’s relationship with a source shouldn’t be purely transactional.** This is an issue across all journalistic institutions. Reporters often drop in momentarily to get a story, and the relationship ends there, making it very one-sided. Reporters should continually strive to form relationships with sources based on respect and empathy and should follow up with those sources about how they felt about the final piece. Ask what they thought of the article, what critical feedback they have, what was done well and what could have been better. This could serve an opportunity for continual learning for reporters and the maintenance and deepening of source relationships.
- **There is an ongoing conversation between community stakeholders and journalists as to what constitutes a “safe space.”** Community stakeholders said that now is as important as ever to have safe spaces for people of marginalized identities. Sources should feel comfortable in spaces intended for their use; reporters should acknowledge and respect those boundaries. Reporters should ask questions of how they, themselves, operate within a space.

Staff Demographics

The board conducted a newsroom-wide demographic survey during fall and spring semesters. Roles represented in the survey data include all members of the editorial staff, including reporters, editors, opinions/editorials staff, photographers and videographers, visual and page designers and copy editors. It should be noted that staffing is not steady from semester to semester, which is part of the reasoning behind administering the survey more than once.

The survey asked for a variety of demographic information, shown on the next pages, including a question about transgender identity. However, because a small number of staff responded “yes” to identifying as transgender, the board is not including the breakdown in the interest of protecting their identities.

Staff were notified that this information would be made public and were given the option not to self-identify with any and all of the categories.

Diversity of past Daily leadership

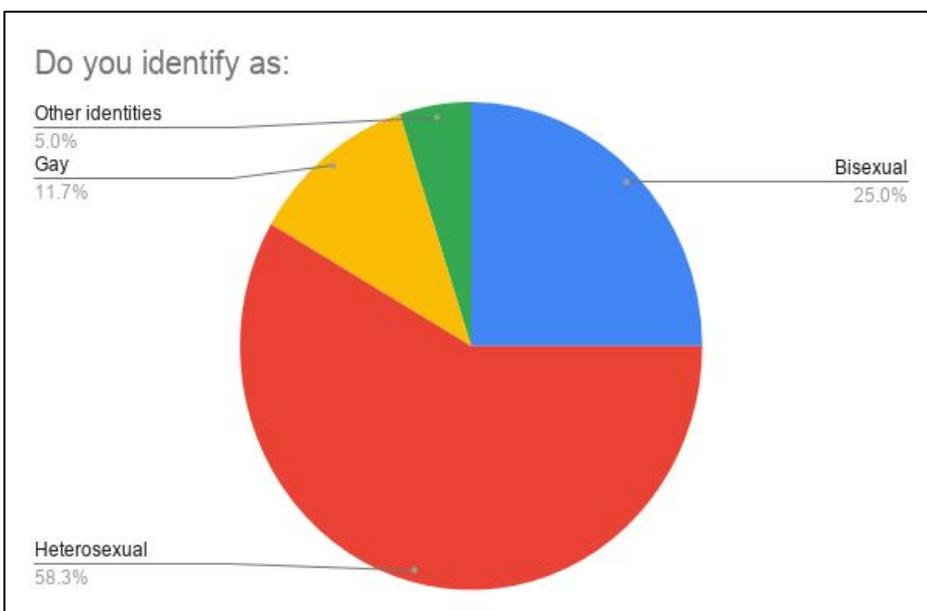
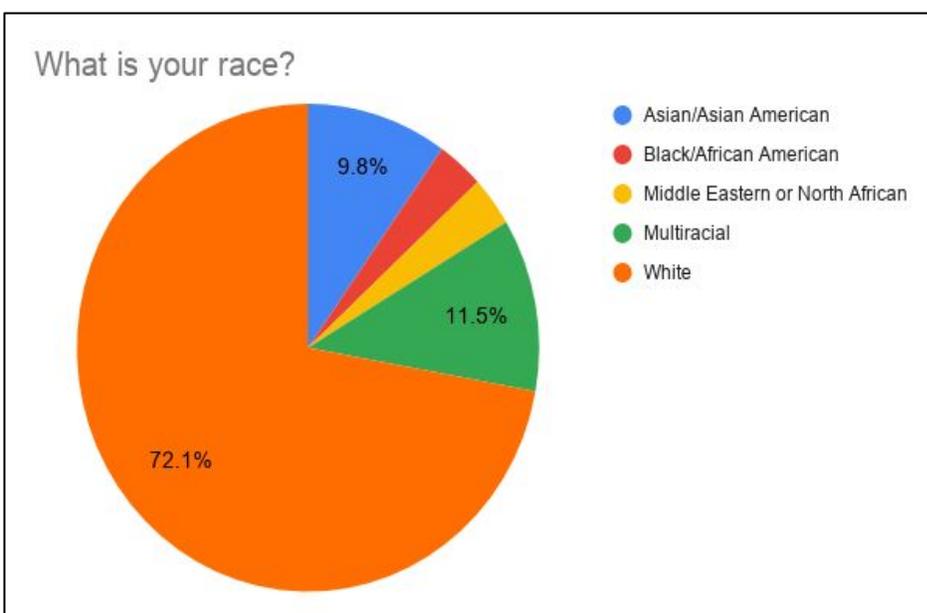
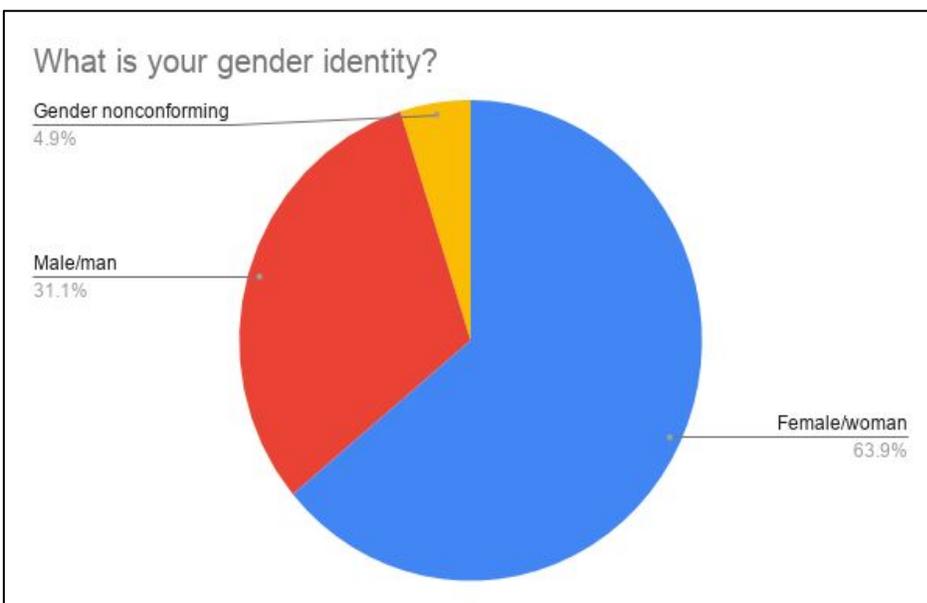
Led by outreach coordinator Ariana Wilson, the board conducted a demographic survey of past leadership at the Minnesota Daily. The findings were not surprising: Those who have held the two top editorial positions, editor-in-chief and managing editor, were overwhelmingly white. The data collected in this survey correspond to individuals who have held those positions over the past 15 years.

- **Race:** Of the 19 individuals who responded to the survey, 92% identified as white. One individual identified as Asian or Pacific Islander. There were no respondents who identified as Black, Native American, Hispanic or Latinx.
- **Gender:** 58% were female and 42% were male. No individuals identified as transgender or nonbinary.
- **Sexual Orientation:** 88% identified as straight.
- **Age:** All respondents were between 20-23 years old when they were in a leadership position.

A second version of the survey was sent to all respondents which included questions on gender and sexual orientation. We received updated responses from all but two individuals.

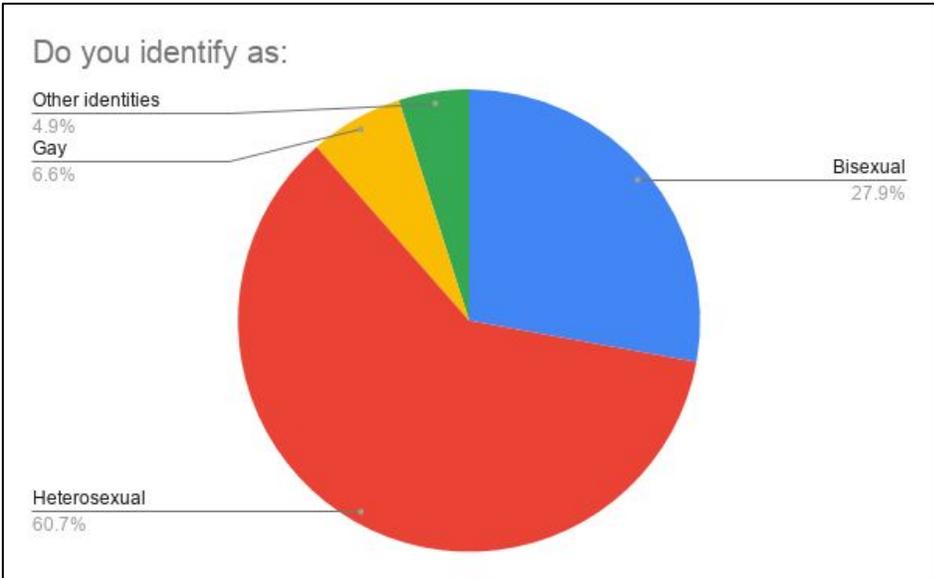
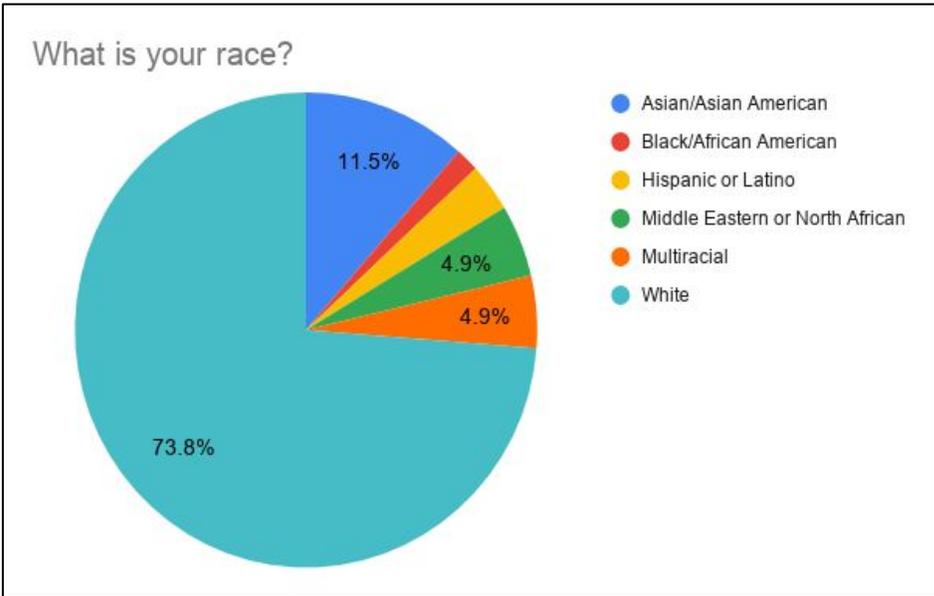
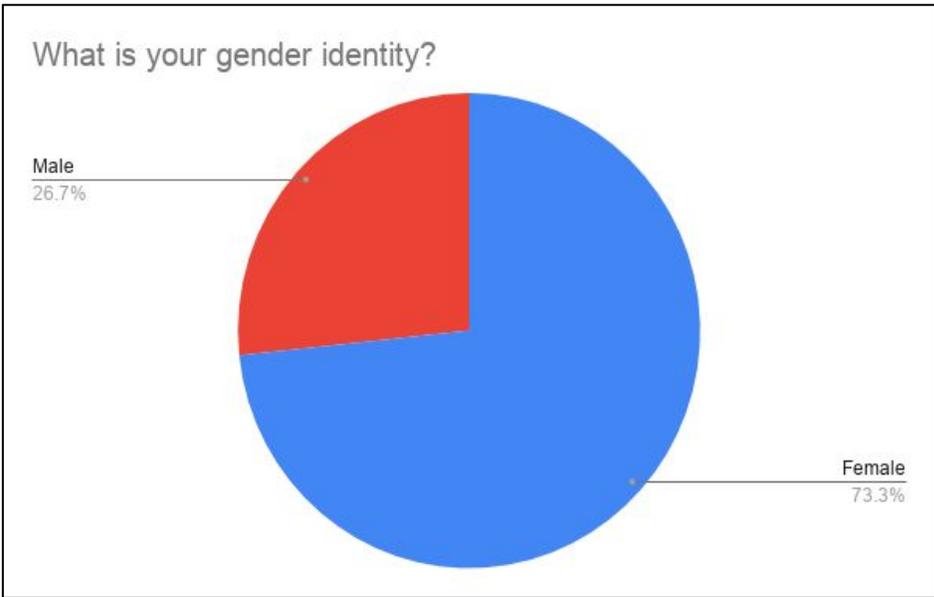
Fall Editorial Staff

“Other identities” indicates a small number of other responses. We are not including these answers in disaggregated form in the interest of protecting staff privacy.



Spring Editorial Staff

“Other identities” indicates a small number of other responses. We are not including these answers in disaggregated form in the interest of protecting staff privacy.



Staff Demographics

ANALYSIS

The Minnesota Daily hires staff members based on merit and ability to succeed in the job - like other organizations, we are an equal opportunity employer, and therefore identity is not a factor in determining employment. In supporting future generations of staff, we hope to see continued efforts aimed at recruiting students of all backgrounds.

For questions regarding race, gender and sexual orientation, staff were given the option to self-identify. They could also select multiple responses for race. We estimate our newsroom was 28% staff of color in the fall and 26% in the spring. Our newsroom demographics roughly mirror the diversity of the student body. In the fall, about 23% of undergraduate students on the Twin Cities were people of color.

The newsroom has historically struggled with recruiting staff of color, particularly reporters. This is reflected in certain groups; in both the fall and the spring, the Daily employed no Native American staff in editorial, although Native students account for a little over 1% of the undergraduate student body in the Twin Cities. Similarly, Hispanic or Latinx students are also underrepresented in our staff.

The overwhelming majority of our newsroom is white and female. We had an all-undergraduate newsroom in the spring, and nearly all staff were undergraduates in the fall. Most of our editorial staff also identify as heterosexual or straight. However, a range of identities are represented among LGBTQ+ staff.

Staff diversity is a key area of interest for newsrooms across the country. As of November 2018, people of color made up less than 17% of newsroom staff and print and online publications in the U.S, and only 13% of leadership, according to the Columbia Review Journal.

Discussions With Student Groups

The Content Diversity Board contacted several student groups and University programs to solicit feedback on the Daily's coverage. During the fall semester, board members met with representatives of:

- The Black Student Union
- The American Indian Student Cultural Center
- The Minnesota International Student Association
- The Gender and Sexuality Center for Queer and Trans Life
- The Al-Madinah Cultural Center
- The Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence
- The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Program.

Many topics overlapped during conversations with leadership, staff and student members of these organizations. Here are some of the main takeaways:

- **Be cooperative and aware when covering people with vulnerable identities.** Reporters should be thoughtful and make sure to discuss the status of their sources' identities when covering less-visible minoritized identities. For example, international students may worry that speaking with the press could jeopardize their status in the U.S. In these special circumstances, reporters should explain how much anonymity they can afford a student on a case-by-case basis. (After this conversation, [we wrote a guide to help](#)).
- **Don't drop in only when there's bad news.** Student group leaders noted that they mostly receive interview requests from Daily reporters when something negative has happened to their community. They feel that this focus on the "bad news" obscures a majority of their work and results in a skewed portrayal of their community. Reporters should check in with organizations more frequently to fairly represent these groups.
- **Provide historical context when telling modern-day stories about inequality.** Student group leaders were acutely aware of how media representation impacts perceptions of the communities they serve. They stressed that explaining the origins of inequalities is crucial to telling a more accurate story.
- **Engage with identity spaces authentically.** Reporters should feel free to engage with identity spaces authentically as allies or identity-holders. However, reporters looking to engage these spaces for the purpose of reporting need to be culturally sensitive and respectful at all times.

Goals & Recommendations

A commitment to making our coverage stronger requires action — not just talk. In recognition of our findings this year, we have created a set of recommendations that we hope to see implemented in years to come.

First, we asked a simple question: What is standing in the way of us doing the coverage we want to do? Here are our answers.

- **Accessibility to working at the Daily.** Working at the Daily is demanding, especially on top of school. But like many other extracurricular programs, it is even more challenging for students who must work to pay for school and cover other necessary costs. The Daily should continue exploring scholarship opportunities for its students in the interest of best supporting students of all economic backgrounds.
- **A high demand on students, created by the nature of the work.** As students, we do not have 40 hours each week to devote to the Daily. This prevents staff from accomplishing everything they want to — including building relationships with community members. In order to build those relationships, and generally strengthen diversity of coverage, we need more support for collaborative efforts aimed at diversity, in order to divide the workload.
- **The Daily is a learning institution.** It is inevitable that we will make mistakes. As with any news organization, mistakes have consequences, and they are often public. But this is a double-edged sword. As a learning institution, we also have freedom to grow new ideas. We can always strengthen our ability to prevent and learn from mistakes.
- **Staff diversity.** We believe that diversity is key to a healthy workplace.
- **High turnover rates and poor institutional knowledge.** Students come and go, leaving holes in what we call “institutional knowledge,” or the ability of students to build off of their predecessor’s work. We must grow institutional knowledge in order to allow future students to learn from past work. This report is a start — we hope that the Content Diversity Board, year after year, will build off of this report and those to come.
- **Prior relationships with student groups.** Some student group leaders have expressed to the Content Diversity Board that they have a poor idea of the Daily, typically based on negative prior experiences. These broken relationships make it difficult to fully capture the diversity of the University.
- **We’re just getting started.** While diversity has always been discussed at the Daily, summer 2019 was the first time in recent memory that a large-scale diversity effort has blossomed in the editorial division.

Goals & Recommendations

- **Content could be more accessible.** We have never explored transcripts or subtitles for our online content.
- **Lack of diversity on the Board of Directors.** The Minnesota Daily's Board of Directors is lacking in racial diversity. This board is responsible for all of the institutional decisions of the organization. While we fully support the work of the board, we hope to see members of color join as positions open up.

Knowing of these challenges, and the findings of this year's work, we have created a set of recommendations for next year and years to come.

- **We must ensure the Content Diversity Board lives on past this year.** Making institutional change requires years of work. We hope that next year's staff will grow the board and record their findings to support the Daily's institutional knowledge.
- **Encourage reporters and editors to more frequently consult the content board.** We want to be a proactive resource, not a reactive one. We must continue building trust with the newsroom and increasing our accessibility.
- **Increase outreach with communities on campus, especially student groups.** The board should continue to gather input on coverage, recruit staff and spread the word about the board's work. We should find additional methods for gathering feedback from students, staff and faculty in order to inform decision making within the organization.
- **Improve the coverage tracker.** The coverage tracker should collect more data, and do so more efficiently and easily.
- **Continue to support the creation of scholarship opportunities.**
- **Hold more training and workshops with the newsroom.**
- **Continue the staff demographic survey.** Continue conducting the demographic survey each semester to gain an accurate idea of staff diversity over time.
- **Create a training guide for all editors on important topics relating to diversity.** This will help ensure reporters and editors have the tools to report on communities in the best way possible.
- **Create a guide for all brand new reporters and photographers.** Use this to help transition people into the newsroom.

What We Hope To See In Multimedia

As journalists, photographers can and should collaborate with reporters in order to best represent the work using visual storytelling. Therefore, all photographers share the responsibility of accurately representing the community.

Spearheaded by photographer Nur Adam, the multimedia desk began collecting demographic information from its sources in Spring 2020. They created an email/text template to follow up with sources after photographing them to ask them to fill out a demographic survey. It collected data including contact information, University affiliation, age, gender, pronouns and ethnicity. It did not address some of the identities that shaped the source's personal experiences, such as disability. The source trackers did not perform to the expected level as the turnout rate from the sources who were sent the survey was low, and the photographers' ability to follow up with each source was limited.

The multimedia team suspended the source tracking with the suspension of print publication and will continue its efforts to track its sources as soon as the team gets back to campus and is able to communicate with the sources without the limitations of social distancing.

Here is what we hope to see in multimedia in the following years:

- **Track your content:** This year, the multimedia team started experimenting with a coverage tracker on Google forms. We hope to see future members of the desk build upon this method, as well as improve upon its feasibility, accuracy and usefulness.
- **Training manual for new staff.** We understand that being a multimedia staff member brings unique challenges. Alongside the rest of the Minnesota Daily, the multimedia desk should ensure that all its staff feels welcome, supporting students who may need help attaining equipment or finding time in their schedules to take on their new role. Providing training on gear and operations for all new staff members is vital to this aim. We hope to see the multimedia editors work with their team to put together a written training manual by the beginning of the 2020-21 school year.

What We Hope To See In Multimedia

- **Make room for discussion about diversity.** Diversity is changing — so is our student body, and so are our communities. It is crucial to include discussions of diversity in multimedia during weekly meetings, including critique. How could the photographer have better sought out representation, when applicable?
- **Attend the trainings.** The content board should ensure all training is relevant to multimedia desk, not just reporters and editors. At the same time, photographers should be expected to learn about challenges and topics relating to diversity in reporting, in general, in order to inform their work.

Policy & Guideline Updates

This year, the editor-in-chief added a number of guidelines to the Daily's ethics and policy document specifically focused on diversity of content.

Pronoun policy: The Minnesota Daily uses the preferred pronouns of its sources. When clarification is needed about a source's pronouns, it may be included in the story, but only when necessary. It is acceptable to leave pronouns out of a story if the writing is clear and accurate and the source is accurately identified.

Use of racial, ethnic and other identity group identifiers: Identification of a person as a member of any group relating to identity such as racial, ethnic and religious identities, should be limited to cases when identifiers are essential to the story. It should be done with great care so as not to perpetuate negative group stereotyping. It is preferable to use identifiers that are most common to the group being reported on. When identifiers are used, it is important to consult AP style, though not all identifiers are in the stylebook and some may contradict sources' wishes. When possible, seek to use the language sources prefer.

Guidelines on suicide coverage: Some types of news content about suicide can increase the likelihood of suicide for vulnerable people. Reporting on suicide, therefore, must be taken extremely seriously.

- *Don't:* Never describe a suicide as the result of one event, or as being "caused" by something. Doing so diminishes the fact that suicides take place resulting

from a series of events. Don't say it was "unexpected" or "sudden." Do not use the phrase "committed suicide." Instead, use "took their own life" or "died by suicide." Don't say a suicide was "successful," "failed," or "unsuccessful." Don't report methods for suicide. Don't report on details or depictions highlighting locations, detail about the death or other details that glamorize the death. Don't include pictures of grieving family and friends. Don't include details of suicide notes. Don't refer to suicide as an "epidemic" or "growing problem," i.e., don't be sensationalist. Don't report on suicides by private people. Only report on suicide in the case of public figures; even then, take care.

- *Do:* Allow readers to see that reducing suicidal thoughts and behaviors is possible. Make sure readers understand that suicide is preventable, especially through tone, language and multimedia elements. Always include information about suicide prevention resources.

Style guide: We also made the decision to capitalize "Black," modeled after the [Seattle Times' decision](#). The Daily also capitalizes "Indigenous" and "Native."