

# Recommendations Report by the Gazette Study Group

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## MEMBERS

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Tom Stevenson, *USC President*

## Introduction

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The Gazette Study Group was established through a partnership between the University Students Council (USC) and the Gazette. Its mandate was to discuss and provide recommendations on:

- (i) the overall quality of the Gazette;
- (ii) the operations of the Gazette;
- (iii) the role and functions of the Advisory Board;
- (iv) adherence to, and provisions of, the Editorial Policy, Procedures, and the Code of Ethics, and;
- (v) the publishing of special issues.

This report was drafted by Stuart Thompson, Aisha Omar, and Kabir Chauhan with assistance from Mark Kearney and Paul Benedetti. Allison Buchan-Terrell and Tom Stevenson have provided direction but have not contributed directly to these recommendations.

An accompanying appendix provides plans, advertisements and other research documents.

The Study Group decided to conduct its research using five different methods:

- (i) **Web-based census:** A short online survey with the principle purpose of reaching a large portion of Western students; it did not ask for written answers, but rather uses value-based questions (ex. values ranked “1-5”);
- (ii) **Pick-up point survey:** A short questionnaire for a random selection of Gazette readers and non-readers, performed at various pick-up points across campus;
- (iii) **Focus group:** A discussion of current Gazette content that provides anecdotal feedback in greater depth, using both readers and non-readers;
- (iv) **Circulation Count:** Counting the remaining Gazette newspapers each stand around campus to gauge how many newspapers are read;
- (v) **Newspaper Research:** Interviewing editors from Canadian campus newspapers and conducting research into national daily newspapers to reveal their best practices.

# Meetings

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The Group held eleven meetings between September 14, 2007 and March 27, 2008. The corresponding agenda and a brief summary follows for each meeting date:

## *September 14, 2007*

Agenda:

- (i) Brief history of the Gazette
- (ii) The Spoof Issue controversy and the USC/Gazette response – new policies
- (iii) The Study Group: purpose, membership, meetings, mandate, research
- (iv) The Gazette's hopes for the Study Group
- (v) Scheduling of subsequent meetings
- (vi) Set agenda and divide duties
- (vii) Set deadlines for research and reporting

Notes:

- Conclude that one large survey conducted through e-mail could function to capture students' views about the Gazette in the areas of content, function, readership
- A separate feedback form would be established on the Gazette website to allow for more detailed student feedback
- Research will also be conducted of other professional and student newspapers

## *October 11, 2007*

Agenda:

- (i) Define issue areas/questions for survey
- (ii) Define methodology of survey
- (iii) Set survey agenda and divide duties
- (iv) Determine research methodology for report
- (v) Set deadlines for survey and research

Notes:

- In attendance is Professor of Statistical & Actuarial Sciences David Bellhouse
- Professor Bellhouse advises that one large survey (as planned) would be insufficient to capture student opinions; such a survey would be lengthy and complicated, both for those completing it and those who are analyzing the data
- Professor Bellhouse advises a multi-phase approach to accrue all desired information:
  - (i) Web-based census
  - (ii) Pick-up point survey
  - (iii) Focus group
  - (iv) Circulation count
- Due to these additional research areas, the deadline for the Group's report was extended to January 1, 2008

*October 25, 2007*

Agenda:

- (i) Define questions for census survey
- (ii) Check in on status of research for survey
- (iii) Put survey plan in motion and set deadlines
- (iv) Determine research methodology for report
- (v) Set deadlines for research portion of report

Notes:

- Questions for the online census were discussed in relation to a former USC survey containing questions about the Gazette
- The structure of the pick-up point surveys was discussed, particularly recruiting volunteers from the list of unsuccessful Study Group applicants
- Ivey professors, solicited to help plan the focus group sessions, responded that they would not be available to assist
- The deadline for the final report was scheduled for February/March 2008

*November 22, 2007*

- (i) Discuss phase one – census survey
- (ii) Check in on status of focus group and pick-up point survey
- (iii) Put survey plan in motion and set deadlines
- (iv) Determine research methodology for report
- (v) Set deadlines for research portion of report

Notes:

1. Responses for the online census were tallied at 306
2. A second advertising campaign and a new deadline was organized for the online census to encourage more participation
3. Final respondent figures for the pick-up point survey were tallied at 155
4. Ivey professors remained unresponsive for assisting with the focus group sessions; undergraduate Ivey students were also solicited (via Ivey professors) but they were also unresponsive

*December 10, 2007*

- (i) Discuss phase one — census survey
- (ii) Check in on status of focus group
- (iii) Set deadlines for research portion of report

Notes:

- Presented the Newspaper Research Plan (**Appendix 4.0**)
- Final respondent figures for the online census were tallied at 532

*January 17, 2008*

- (i) Discuss the focus group

- (ii) Presentation of the best newspaper practices research
- (iii) Pick-up count results
- (iv) Set deadlines for formulating recommendations

Notes:

- Focus group planning had begun without the assistance of Ivey professors, though they would later be solicited to review the focus group plan
- Newspaper research material was reviewed
- Results from the circulation count were reviewed

*January 31, 2008*

- (i) Discuss phase one – census survey
- (ii) Check in on status of focus group
- (iii) Set deadlines for research portion of report

Notes:

- Discussion about the results of the census and pick-up point surveys with relation to how these may inform the group's recommendations

*February 14, 2008*

- (i) Discuss the focus group
- (ii) Presentation of the best practices research
- (iii) Pick-up count results
- (iv) Set deadlines for formulating recommendations

*March 6, 2008*

No Agenda set

Notes:

- Discussion and presentation of key findings from the focus group, census data and pick-up point survey

*March 20, 2008*

No Agenda set

Notes:

- Presentation and discussion of first draft recommendations

*March 27, 2008*

No Agenda set

Notes

- Presentation and discussion of final Recommendations Report

## Online Census

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### *Methodology*

The purpose of the online census is to reach a large portion of Western students in order to gather brief feedback about readership, circulation and some general opinions.

The questions used for the online census were partially based on a previous survey conducted by the USC in November 2004. This survey received 6,572 responses. The questions and results from the 2004 survey are attached (**Appendix 1.0**).

Given that the Spoof Issue controversy had occurred between this first census the new census, it would be helpful draft similar questions so that a change in readership could be identified. Since the other research methods provide considerable depth, the principle concern with the online survey is brevity. Accordingly, the final version of the online census (**Appendix 1.1**) contains six questions.

Some consideration was made over word choice, such as labeling the “Spoof Issue” as the interchangeable “April Fool’s Issue” in order to avoid the negative association with 2006’s Spoof Issue. This change was made because the question asks about the April Fool’s issues in general, rather than with the specific instance to which the term “Spoof” is associated.

### *Promotion*

The online census was hosted on the Gazette website and was available through a link on the main page. The census was promoted in the following ways:

1. An e-mail titled “Have Your Say!” (**Appendix 1.2**) sent to all active UWO e-mail accounts on Friday, November 2, 2007 through [accting1@uwo.ca](mailto:accting1@uwo.ca);
  - Due to a miscommunication, the census website did not become active until November 5. Accordingly, the deadline for the census was extended;
2. Advertisements for the census appeared in the Gazette print edition and online.

By November 22, the census had received 306 responses. To encourage a higher response rate, the census deadline was extended to December 10<sup>th</sup> and a second advertising campaign was then conducted:

- The Western News ran an article online and in print on November 27 (**Appendix 1.3**);
- CHRW was contacted but could not run the story before the census’ deadline;
- An article appeared in the Western Web mail-out, an online USC newsletter (**Appendix 1.4**);

During the following days, the census received an additional 228 responses. The number of responses for the census totaled at 533.

*Results*

1. How often do you read *The Gazette*?

a - Once	8%
b - 2-3 Times	37%
c - 4 times	40%
d - once/month	4%
e - 2-3 times/month	6%
f - Never	3%
Blank	1%

2. Where do you most frequently pick up *The Gazette*?

a - UCC	19%
b - SSC	18%
c - NCB	6%
d - NatSci	14%
e - Talbot	5%
f - UC	4%
g - Residence	4%
h - Other	26%
Blank	3%

3. Which sections of *The Gazette* do you enjoy reading most? (Choose all that apply).

Front Page	79.1%
Editorial	55.8%
Campus Life	50.6%
Local	34.7%
A&E	30.8%
World	29.8%
Cartoons	27.2%
Games	25.7%
Sports	16.0%

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4. Rate your opinion of *The Gazette*:

5 - It's Great	14%
4 - It's Good	46%
3 - No opinion	12%
2 - It's Bad	17%
1 - It's awful	8%
Blank	4%

5. Do you like *the Gazette's* special issues?

Frosh		Valentines		April Fool's	
1 - Yes	64%	1 - Yes	66%	1 - Yes	56%
2 - No	25%	2 - No	24%	2 - No	34%
Blank	10%	Blank	10%	Blank	11%

6. *The Gazette* should publish:

a - Daily (Mon - Thurs)	69%
b - Semiweekly (twice a week)	16%
c - Weekly (once a week)	13%
Blank	1%

## Pick-Up Point Survey

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### *Methodology*

The pick-up point survey was conducted from November 5 to November 16, 2007.

Volunteers were recruited through an e-mail (**Appendix 2.0**) sent to roughly one-hundred unsuccessful applicants for the Gazette Study Group's Students-At-Large positions. The e-mail offered the first ten volunteers a gift-certificate to a USC establishment as compensation their time. Several volunteers were also recruited through word-of-mouth, to be used in the case of a volunteer absence. In total, eight volunteers were used and five received a \$20 gift certificate to the Wave. Students who answered the survey questions received no reward.

The survey was unadvertised so as to keep the participants as an unbiased random sampling of Western students. A selection of pick-up points were surveyed. These were conducted for thirty minutes at a time, from 10:30-11:00 AM during the first week and from 1:30-2:00 PM during the second week. The schedule follows:

	<b>Monday Nov. 5th</b>	<b>Tuesday Nov. 6th</b>	<b>Wednesday Nov. 7th</b>	<b>Thursday Nov. 8th</b>	<b>Friday Nov. 9th</b>
<b>Time</b>	10:30-11AM	10:30-11AM	10:30-11AM	10:30-11AM	10:30-11AM
<b>Location</b>	North Campus Building	Social Science Centre	Talbot College	University Community Centre	Natural Science Centre

	<b>Monday Nov. 12th</b>	<b>Tuesday Nov. 13th</b>	<b>Wednesday Nov. 14th</b>	<b>Thursday Nov. 15th</b>	<b>Friday Nov. 16th</b>
<b>Time</b>	1:30-2PM	1:30-2PM	1:30-2PM	1:30-2PM	1:30-2PM
<b>Location</b>	North Campus Building	Social Science Centre	Talbot College	University Community Centre	Natural Science Centre

Surveying several different locations allowed for a wide range of student representation. For each survey time frame, two volunteers stood near a Gazette pick-up point for thirty minutes and asked students who picked up a Gazette if they would like to answer "a few quick questions about the Gazette?"

The questions were as follows:

1) Out of 100%, what percentage of the *Gazette* should be devoted to serious investigative journalism (instead of lifestyle news)?

- Possible responses: 0% - 10% - 25% - 50% - 75% - 90% - 100%;
- If participants asked for an example of investigative journalism, *The Globe and Mail* was specified.

2) Out of 100%, what percentage of the *Gazette* should be devoted to local news coverage (instead of non-local)?

- Possible Answers: 0% - 10% - 25% - 50% - 75% - 90% - 100%;
- If participants asked what “local news” was, “London” was specified.

3) Do you like the *Gazette*'s special issues (such as the April Fool's issue, Valentine Day issue or Frosh Issue)?

- I enjoy one of them: April Fools | Valentines Day | Frosh Issue;
- They are all great;
- I have never read a special issue;
- They are all terrible;
- Some of them are bad/Some are good;
- I detest one of them: April Fools | Valentines Day | Frosh Issue.

*Results:*

In total, 156 students responded to the survey. By coincidence, no faculty members visited a pick-up point while surveying took place. Anyone who picked up a copy of the *Gazette* was asked to participate in the survey. A graphical representation of the results can be found in **Appendix 2.1** and the most popular responses are highlighted below:

- (i) What percentage of the *Gazette* should be devoted to investigative journalism?
  - a. Response by sex: most popular response of 50%
  - b. Response by faculty: most popular response of 50%
- (ii) What percentage of the *Gazette* should be devoted to local news?
  - a. Response by sex: most popular response of 25%
  - b. Response by faculty: most popular response of 25% for Science and Social
  - c. Science but most popular response of 50% for other faculties
- (iii) How do you like the Special Issues in the *Gazette*?
  - a. Response by sex: most popular response “they are all great”
  - b. Response by faculty: most popular response “they are all great” for Science and
  - c. Social Science but most popular response of “some are good, some are bad” by
  - d. other faculties.

While the Science and Social Science faculties were overrepresented in the survey results, this remains congruent with the size of the faculty on campus. Similarly, the underrepresentation of students in the faculties of Arts & Humanities and Music corresponds appropriately to their relative faculty size.

## Focus Group

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Research was initially conducted independently to uncover best practices in this area of research. A focus group plan was drafted and submitted to Ivey Professor Ken Hardy for review. After altering the document based on his recommendations, the final draft (**Appendix 3.0**) was presented to the Group on January 20, 2008. A consent form (**Appendix 3.1**) was also drafted for focus group participants to sign at the start of each session.

The focus groups were scheduled for February 4-8 from 4:00-5:30 PM.

Participants were recruited using several methods:

1. An e-mail entitled “USC Awards and Gazette Study Group” sent to all active students using [accting1@uwo.ca](mailto:accting1@uwo.ca) (**Appendix 3.2**)
  - a. Due to backlog with the accting1 e-mail account, this e-mail was not sent until February 5; accordingly, the first two focus group sessions were cancelled
2. An article on the USC’s online newsletter Western Web appearing on February 4 (**Appendix 3.3**)

Unfortunately, both of these advertisements labeled the focus groups as “Gazette” initiatives, essentially “unblinding” the participants. This potential for biased participation was noted by the moderators during the focus group sessions.

Over 60 students responded to the request for focus group participants. Two additional focus group times were added for the following week: on February 11 and 12 from 4-5 PM. Each session was scheduled to capacity with 12 confirmed participants; on average approximately 10 participants attended.

### *Results*

Notes from each focus group were first digitized into a series of point-form documents. Themes were then identified and organized using an Excel spreadsheet. Appropriate comments were placed under their corresponding theme and colour-coded for an emotional index (describing the tone of the participant who made comment as either positive, negative, neutral, or as a recommendation). Trends were identified as they appeared throughout all groups, as well as with individual participants. Conclusion were drafted into the a final report (**Appendix 3.5**).

## Circulation Count

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The circulation count was performed by the individual responsible for filling each Gazette pick-up station at the start of each day for the week of October 23.

This week was selected so that no special issue or event of exceptional interest was scheduled. Thus, these figures should represent an accurate reflection of the Gazette's circulation:

October 23	88.9% pick-up
October 24	89.9% pick-up
October 25	79.9% pick-up
October 26	95.0% pick-up

The four-day average pick-up was 88.4% of the 11,000 copies printed. Pick-up percentages for previous years are as follows:

2001/02	58.5% pick-up
2002/03	64.4% pick-up
2003/04	88.3% pick-up

Statistics for the 2006/07 and 2007/08 years are currently unavailable.

## Newspaper Research

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The newspaper research initiative is designed to gather best practices of other Canadian newspapers – both national and campus-based. The plan for this research (**Appendix 4.0**) was presented on December 10, 2007.

### *Research*

Information was gathered for the following newspapers:

- Campus Newspapers
  - a. University of Toronto's *The Varsity* (**Appendix 4.1**)
  - b. McMaster University's *The Silhouette* (**Appendix 4.2**)
  - c. Queen's University's *The Journal* (**Appendix 4.3**)
- National Newspapers
  - a. The Globe and Mail (**Appendix 4.4**)
  - b. The National Post (**Appendix 4.5**)
  - c. The Toronto Star (**Appendix 4.6**)

## Recommendations

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1. A section of the Gazette website devoted to the results of the Study Group, to remain online until at least the end of 2008, and will include the final Recommendations Report.
  - (i) An article appearing in the Gazette summarize how the recommendations will be implemented appearing before the end of 2008.
2. Due to the educational deficit concerning the Gazette's response to the 2007 Spoof Issue controversy, the Gazette will:
  - (i) Add an educational section on their website listing accurate information about the Gazette's response to the 2007 Spoof Issue, to remain online until at least the end of 2008;
  - (ii) Publish a prominent article in the print edition of the Gazette addressing this educational deficit, and listing accurate information about the Gazette's response, to appear before the end of 2008.
3. The Gazette will enhance their commitment to openness and volunteerism by:
  - (i) Organizing an Open House for interested students;
  - (ii) Organizing Gazette representation during Clubs Week;
  - (iii) Organizing in-class presentations to targeted students (such as those enrolled in the Journalism and Writing programs);
  - (iv) Perpetuating a welcoming attitude and positive environment for Gazette staff, volunteers, and visitors to the Gazette office, including:
    - i. Every individual entering the Gazette office is greeted within a reasonable amount of time, and ensuring that all Gazette staff are aware of this requirement, and that they are fulfilling it;
    - ii. Assigning a Senior Editor as "Volunteer Expert," who will:
      - a) Ensure a welcoming, inclusive environment for new volunteers, and emphasizing this requirement for all Gazette staff;
      - b) Enforce an open-door policy to address volunteer concerns;
      - c) Make Gazette staff and volunteers aware of their position;
  - (v) Creating and implementing innovative advertising campaigns that extend beyond print advertisements to encourage new student volunteers;
  - (vi) Creating a database to organize volunteer contact information;
  - (vii) Implementing physical organizational changes to the Gazette office, where appropriate, to enhance its openness, functionality and approachability;
  - (viii) Organizing at least one avenue for community comment, which may take the form of a town hall meeting, survey, focus group, or other feedback method, before the conclusion of each school year,

- allowing the Western community to voice their opinions and recommendations about the Gazette;
- (ix) Examining the possibility of an additional Editorial Board staff position to fulfill the above responsibilities;
    - a. A report to be completed before the end of the 2008/09 publishing year.
  - (x) Examining the effectiveness of the above recommendations at the end of the 2008/09 publishing year.
4. The creation of a “Community Feature” section, for two purposes:
- (i) To seek out articles, or accept non-solicited articles, written by individuals who represent or may be interested in a cause, campus group or issue;
    - i. To allow these individuals to represent themselves in their own words, so that the Gazette may represent student voices emerging from outside of their office;
    - ii. The Community Feature is not a message board; articles are not to be solely promotional in nature;
    - iii. The Gazette staff may edit articles for clarity or refuse articles that are inaccurate, irrelevant or in violation of the Code of Ethics;
    - iv. To appear no less than twice per month;
  - (ii) To allow the Gazette Editor-In-Chief space to respond about or elaborate on a Gazette-related issue, such as:
    - i. How or why a particular story was covered in a particular way;
    - ii. How or why certain Letters-to-the-Editor were chosen;
    - iii. To respond to Letters-to-the-Editor in greater detail;
    - iv. To elaborate on why the Gazette took a particular position in their editorial;
    - v. To appear no less than once per month;
5. A commitment to investigating the possibility of creating additional themed issues (such as special issues or inserts), which may include:
- (i) A Queer Issue, Black Student Awareness Issue, a Religions or Spirituality Issue, an Affiliate Colleges Issue, a Women’s Issue or other themed issues focusing on campus or minority groups.
6. Revisions to volunteer policies and the “Volunteer” section of the Gazette’s website to reflect:
- (i) An emphasis on the “freelance” commitment:
    - i. writers determine their own schedule – they may write as much or as little as they choose at any time;
    - ii. writers may choose to provide their own story ideas or they may choose to be assigned stories;
    - iii. writers may choose to communicate with Gazette staff and receive story assignments through e-mail rather than in person;
    - iv. once a writer has committed to a story, that story must be received by the deadline established between the writer and the editor;

- v. writers are encouraged to contact an editor about changes made to their article;
  - (ii) Additions to the Gazette website to include more comprehensive information about volunteer commitment and the operations of the Gazette; this may be modeled after the Gazette's internal "Volunteer Handout."
7. A commitment to a stronger division between the serious and humorous sides of the Gazette, prescribing:
- (i) Greater discretion when using non-serious headlines in the Letters-to-the-Editor section, particularly when the headline addresses the writer specifically;
  - (ii) Greater discretion when using non-serious headlines, non-serious captions or non-serious writing style in the "News" section;
  - (iii) Keeping with the irreverent tradition of student newspapers including the Gazette, non-news and non-Letter-to-the-Editor sections, non-news headlines, and non-news captions in an irreverent tone are acceptable so long as that they do not violate the Code of Ethics;
  - (iv) Section 7 is to be reflected in the Gazette's internal "Editor's Guide."
8. A commitment to increasing the representation of world news within the Gazette, which may include:
- (i) The creation of a "Top Five World News Stories" section, wherein five brief descriptions will appear outlining the major issues of the day.
9. A commitment to increasing the presence of student and professor features, "Man-On-The-Street" student interviews, university research initiatives, investigative University reporting, and other feature articles highlighting the Western community.
10. Include in the masthead of the Gazette print edition: "To view the Gazette's editorial policies, visit <http://www.gazette.uwo.ca/policies.cfm>."
11. Add a subhead to the Events Calendar explaining that:
- (i) The Calendar appears every Tuesday and Thursday;
  - (ii) Everyone is allowed to submit articles for print;
  - (iii) When there is not sufficient space to print all submissions, it remains the editors' discretion to select which events will be printed.
12. A commitment by the Editor-In-Chief and/or Managing Editors to respond to e-mails received by the Gazette, so that the Gazette may exemplify its commitment to transparency and openness:
- (i) These e-mail responses may be drafted in advance as a singular "canned" response, and will address:
    - i. Unsolicited articles: briefly explaining why unsolicited articles are not accepted and information about how to volunteer for the Gazette;

- ii. Letters-to-the-Editor: briefly explaining the selection process for this section.
- 13. The Editor-In-Chief for the 2008/09 publishing year is to provide their response to the Recommendations Report prior to the commencement of the 2008/09 publishing year;
  - (i) This report will be available online until at least the end of 2008;
  - (ii) This report will be summarized and published in the Gazette.

# Appendix

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**USC Online Survey (Nov. 2004) - Appendix 1.0**

- a. Do you read the Gazette?
- b. How often do you read the Gazette?
  - 2-3 times per week: 34%
  - 4 times per week: 26%
  - Once per week: 17%
  - 2-3 times per week: 10%
  - 2-3 times per month: 8%
  - Never: 4%
- c. Where do you pick up the Gazette?
- d. What areas do you enjoy coverage of in the Gazette?
  - Front Page Articles/News: 73%
  - Campus Life: 67%
  - Editorials: 58%
  - A&E: 48%
  - World News: 43%
  - Local Community: 36%
  - Cartoons: 34%
  - Sports: 31%
  - Games: 26%
- e. Is the Gazette an adequate student lifestyle newspaper?
  - It's fine the way it is: 64%
  - It should be more serious: 15%
  - I don't care: 14%
  - It should be less serious: 4%

**Final Online Census Questions - Appendix 1.1**

1. How often do you read The Gazette?
  - a. Once per week
  - b. 2-3 times per week
  - c. 4 times per week
  - d. Once per month
  - e. 2-3 times per month
  - f. Never (If "never," skip to question 6)
2. Where do you most frequently pick up The Gazette?
  - a. University Community Centre (UCC)
  - b. Social Science Centre
  - c. North Campus Building
  - d. Natural Science
  - e. Talbot College
  - f. University College
  - g. Residence
  - h. Other
3. Which sections of The Gazette do you enjoy reading most? (Choose all that apply).
  - Front page articles/News
  - Campus Life
  - Editorials
  - A&E

World news  
Local community  
Cartoons  
Sports  
Games

4. Rate your opinion of The Gazette:

5 - It's great    4 - It's good    3 - No opinion    2 - It's bad    1 - It's awful

5. Do you like the Gazette's special issues?

Frosh Issue

Yes    No

Valentines Day issue ("Sex Issue")

Yes    No

April Fool's issue

Yes    No

6. The Gazette should publish:

- a. Daily (Monday – Thursday)
- b. Semiweekly (twice a week)
- c. Weekly (once a week)

### **"Have Your Say" E-mail - Appendix 1.2**

University Students' Council – closer to you.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Gazette Survey

Your student newspaper wants your feedback! In response to concerns from students, faculty, administration, and citizens about the publication of The Gazette's annual SpooF Issue in March 2007, the Gazette created a Study Group to investigate and provide recommendations on the paper. As part of phase one of this multi-phase survey process, students are invited to fill out a quick survey to let us know their thoughts on the Gazette this year. [Click here for the survey.](#)

UCC Renovations

What would you like to see in the University Community Centre? The UCC will be undergoing major renovations in Fall 2008. Your USC wants to get closer to you and hear your ideas! How can we make the UCC a better place for all students? More lounge space? More eateries? A bowling alley? Let us know your thoughts by participating in a reno café. The café conversations will give you an opportunity to get creative, use your imagination, speak your mind, and contribute to the project. [Click here for a schedule of dates.](#)

Remembrance Day

Come out and attend Students Who Fought For Students: Western's Remembrance Ceremony. This year, we will be focusing on fellow Western students who fought for us and what it meant to the university. It will be taking place in the UCC Atrium on November 9th at 10:30 AM. Wear a poppy, come out to the ceremony, and

remember the cost of war on lives.

If you have any questions please contact: Matthijs van Gaalen, Remembrance Day Commissioner at: [mvangaal@uwo.ca](mailto:mvangaal@uwo.ca).

### Western News Article – Appendix 1.3

Student Gazette seeks reader opinions

By Communications Staff  
Thursday, November 29, 2007

The student Gazette has launched a six-question online survey to gather opinions about areas for improvement in the 101-year-old paper.

The survey is part of a larger outreach initiative conducted by the Gazette Study Group, comprised of faculty and students. The mandate is to review the newspaper's operations and practices and make recommendations for improvement.

The study group has surveyed readers across the campus by way of distributed questionnaires and will conduct focus groups in the coming months.

To do the Gazette survey, go to [www.usc.uwo.ca/gazettesurvey](http://www.usc.uwo.ca/gazettesurvey)

### Western Web – Appendix 1.4



#### **SOUND OFF on the Gazette!**

What are your thoughts on the Gazette? We want your feedback. Visit [www.usc.uwo.ca/gazettesurvey](http://www.usc.uwo.ca/gazettesurvey) to fill out our quick survey!

### Volunteer Recruitment E-mail – Appendix 2.0

Greetings,

The Gazette Study Group greatly appreciates your interest in making the paper more accessible and informative for Western Students. In the near future, we will be conducting an online survey via email asking Western Students for their feedback and suggestions concerning *The Gazette*.

In addition to this, the Study Group is organizing a team of volunteers to ask *The Gazette* readers at pick-up stations a few quick preference questions concerning the content of the paper. Since you applied to be a member of the Study Group, we thought we would give you the first shot at these positions. This isn't a large commitment (we only ask for a total of two hours over the first two weeks of

November) and we plan to work around the location/time availability of volunteers (considering your class and work schedules). Volunteers, if they prefer, will also have the opportunity to work in pairs. To show our appreciation for your help, the first ten people to volunteer will be awarded a gift certificate to a UCC establishment, such as the Wave, after completing their hours.

If a volunteer position interests you, please respond to this email with your full name, student number, preferred method of contact and the week you are able to volunteer (the first or second week of November).

Next, you will be emailed a list of possible volunteer times from which you may choose your preferred time. Volunteers will be polling random readers at randomly selected *The Gazette* pick-up stations. Once again, thank you for your interest in working towards a better *The Gazette* for every Western student.

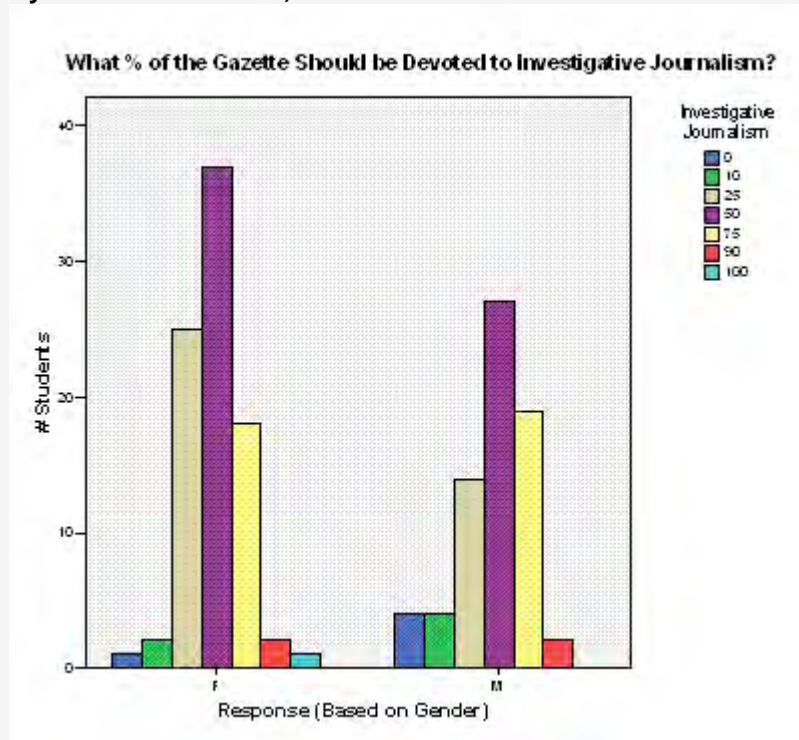
Sincerely,

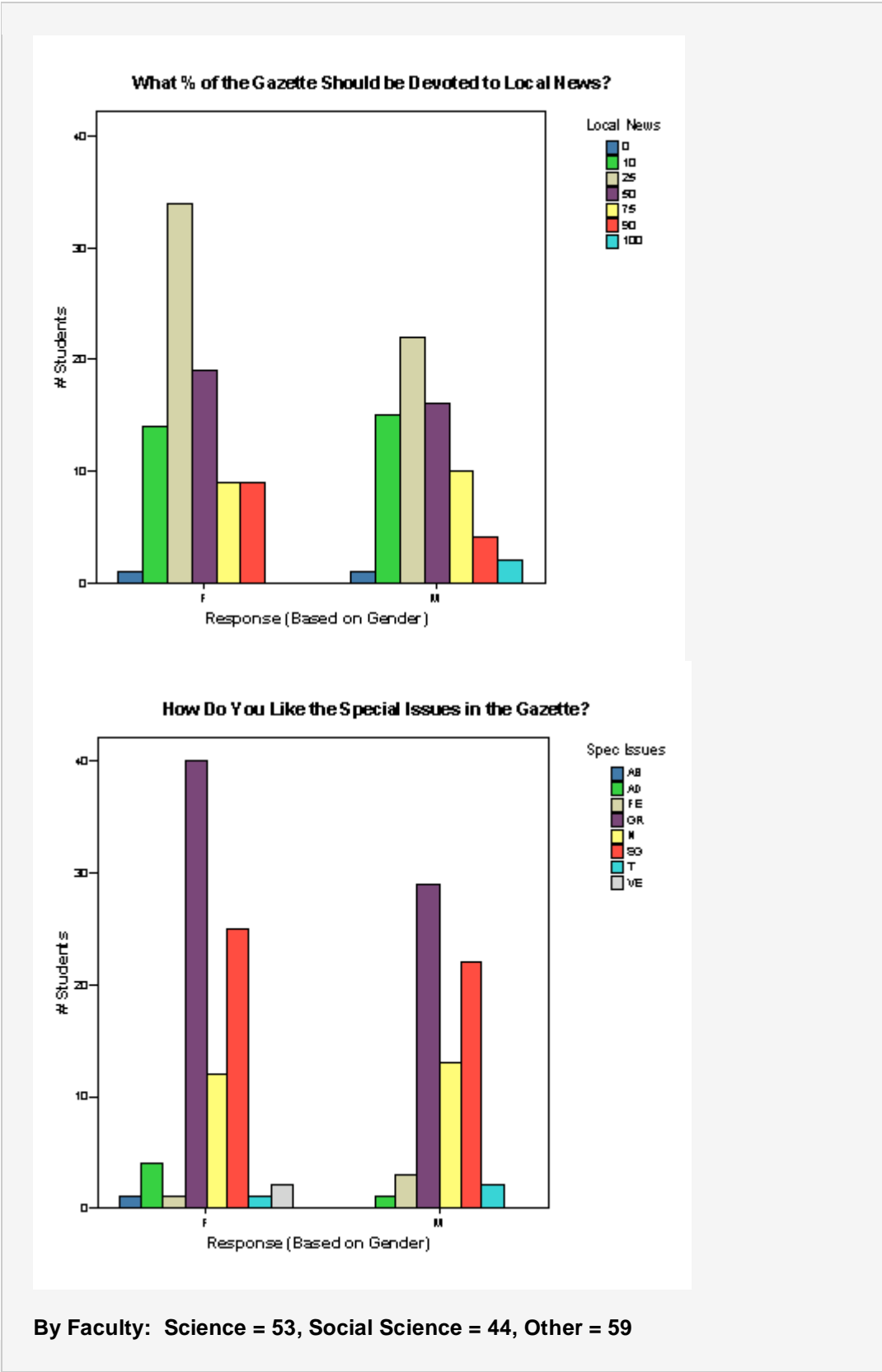
Aisha Omar and Kabir Chauhan

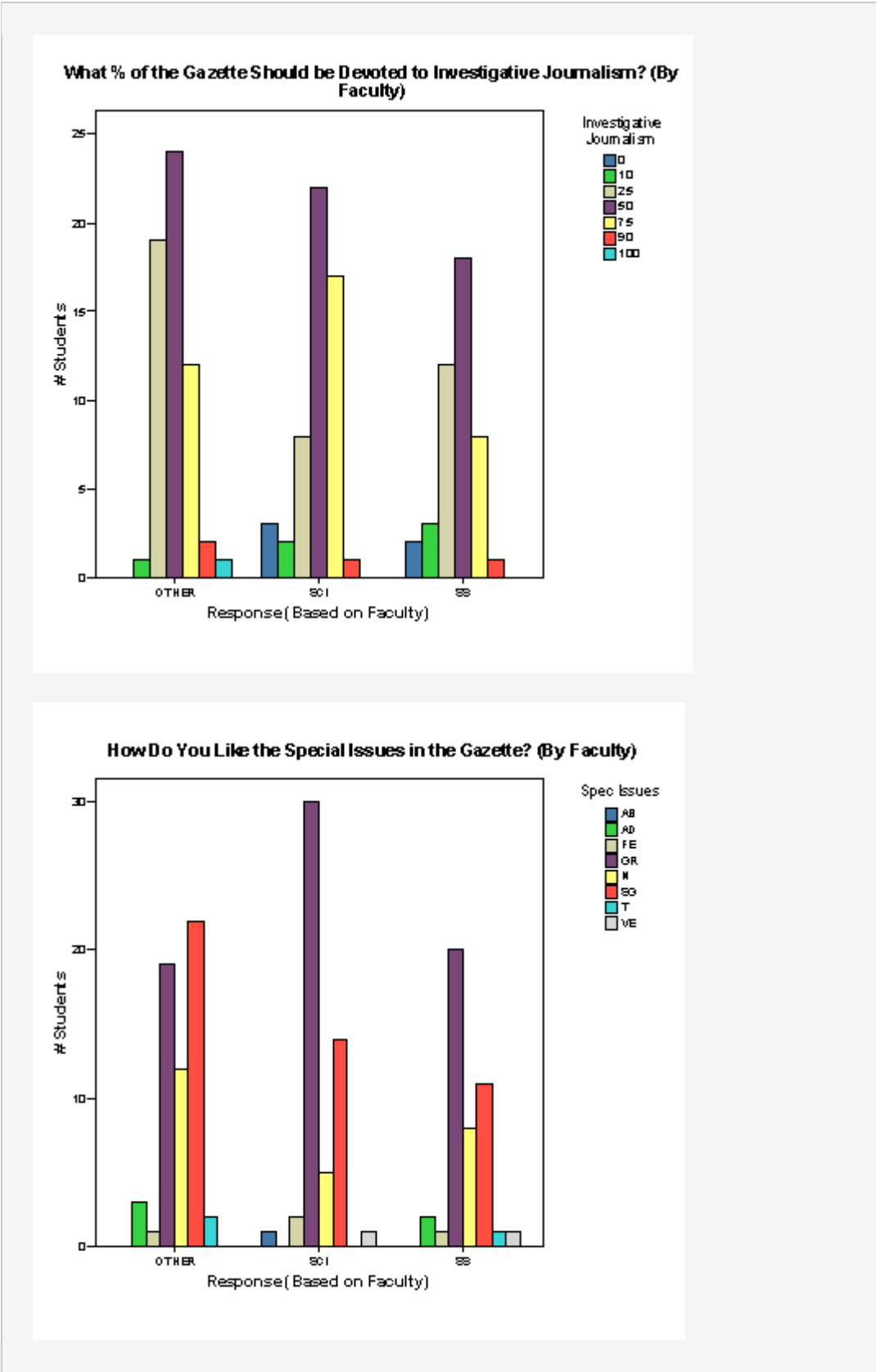
**Pick-Up Point Results - Appendix 2.1**

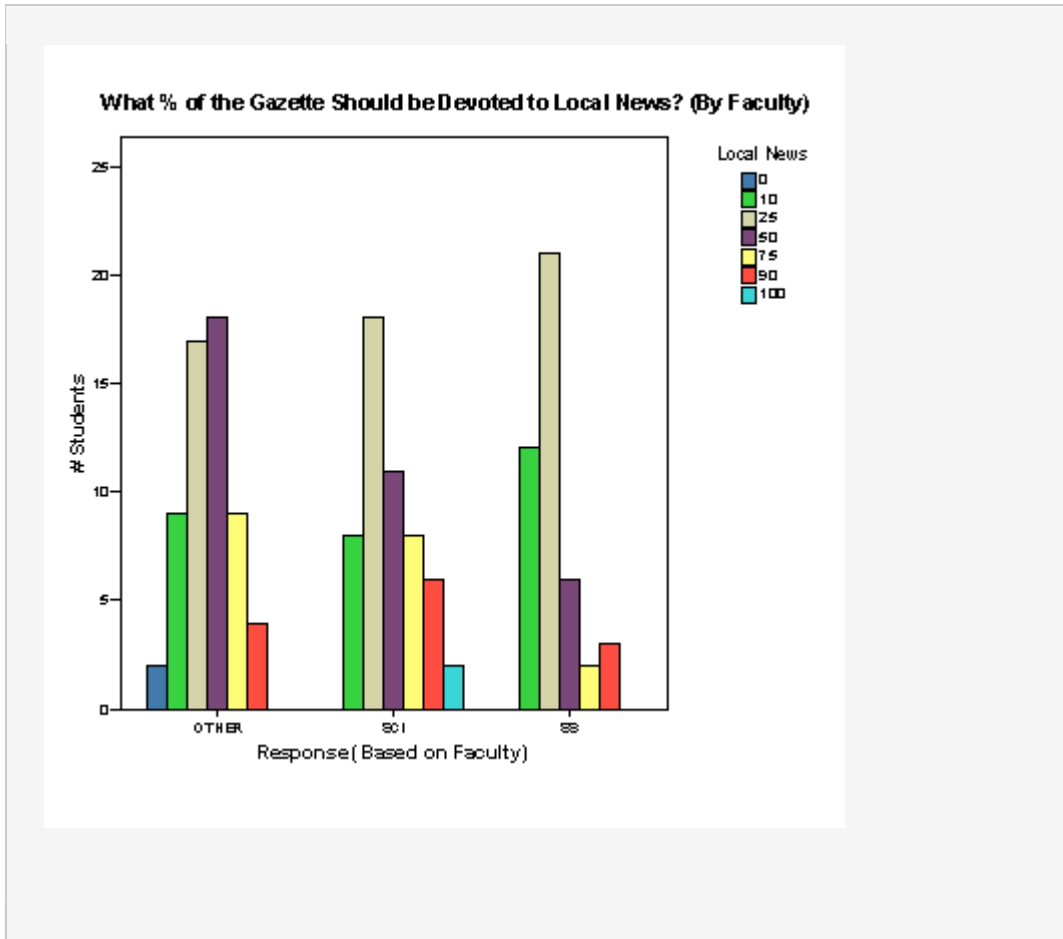
Total Students Surveyed =156

**By Gender: M = 70, F = 86**









### Focus Group Plan - Appendix 3.0

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this focus group is to facilitate discussion about *The Gazette* from a sample of Western students. The focus group will serve as qualitative support for the quantitative research conducted thus far, including the online census and pickup point surveys. The focus group is not an open forum of complaint and is not designed to brainstorm solutions, but rather a discussion about existing feelings and insights. It is designed to identify issues with the goal of making viable recommendations for the newspaper.

#### METHOD

##### Participants

An e-mail will be sent to all active students ([accting1@uwo.ca](mailto:accting1@uwo.ca)) asking for participants to discuss an "important campus issue." All students are qualified to participate, with the exception of USC staff members and *Gazette* staff. The goal is to have 5-8 students per focus group session, with 3-5 individual sessions running through the first full week of February (depending on the number of respondents). Due to likely no-shows, focus group sessions will allow for up to 12 students in a single session, with chairs and adequate space made available should this many

students show up. The sessions will last between one and two hours.

A modest incentive will be used to encourage student participation. Suggestions for an incentive include small gift certificates for each participant or one larger gift awarded by lottery to one participant. Due to the modesty of the gift, this should not affect the internal validity of the focus group.

To discourage biased student participation, the purpose of the focus group will not be revealed until students register. Registration occurs by clicking a link directing applicants to a web form, which contains a selection of dates and a box for their name and e-mail address. After an applicant replies, a follow-up e-mail will be sent to the participant, prompting them about contact information, a reminder of the date and time for which they registered, and the topic of discussion.

One day prior to the scheduled focus group, each participant will receive a reminder e-mail. A second reminder e-mail will be sent the day of the session.

Upon arrival, participants will read and sign a form of consent stating that they understand the purpose, obligations, privacy and risks of the focus group. Moderators will explain that the cumbersome legality is required by privacy legislation.

- All participants are free to leave the session at any time without penalty.
- The session will be recorded with an audio recording device placed at the centre of the table.
- Participants will never be identified personally in resulting reports.
- Participants can refuse to sign the form of consent; if they refuse they must leave the focus group session immediately.
- A copy of the consent form will be provided to participants for their records.

Nametags will be provided for participants and moderators. Refreshments will be made available before and after the focus group discussion.

#### *Moderators*

There will be two focus group moderators present at each session. The first moderator will conduct the discussion to ensure a constant and productive flow of opinions and ideas. The second moderator will take notes and ensure that all topics are covered.

Moderators will make every effort to encourage discussion without influencing the participants' answers. Moderators will also do their best to create a relaxed, open, casual and non-combative environment. There is no such thing as a wrong answer, and all responses no matter how unpredictable, are acceptable (with exception to the blatantly offensive, etc.)

#### *Questions*

Questions will be presented to the group as a whole, rather than to a specific individual. All questions are open-ended and should progress from generalized subjects to specific points of interest. Questions should not be posed in a way that seeks a direct answer, but rather in a way that encourages a long and productive discussion.

Areas of interest and several sample questions are provided below. It is assumed that each response will be elaborated upon and discussed amongst the group for

some time. Discussion may progress in any order as long as all topics are covered.

1. Warm-up questions
  - What is your general impression of *The Gazette*?
  - How often do you read *The Gazette*?
2. Content and Style
  - What sections of *The Gazette* do you enjoy reading?
  - What kinds of stories appear in *The Gazette*?
  - What is *The Gazette's* writing style?
    - Is it too relaxed? Too serious?
3. Openness
  - How accessible is *The Gazette* to you as a student?
    - How easy is it for students to write for *The Gazette*?
    - Who has an opportunity to write for *The Gazette*?
    - Do students make use of these opportunities? Why or why not?
4. Accountability
  - What is the purpose/role/responsibility of *The Gazette*?
  - Do you feel that *The Gazette* represents you?
    - If not, how might they do this better?
  - What do you do if you are upset by a story in *The Gazette*?
    - Is this method of response effective?
5. Special Issues
  - What do you think about special issues, such as the Frosh Issue, the Sex Issue (or Valentine's Day Issue), and the Spoof Issue (or April Fool's Day Issue)?
  - Why do you think *The Gazette* publishes special issues like the Sex or Spoof issue?

#### NEXT STEPS

The following steps must be completed before the focus group sessions:

1. Book the USC boardroom (or other meeting place) for each afternoon, beginning Monday, February 4<sup>th</sup> and ending Friday, February 9<sup>th</sup>
2. Draft an e-mail soliciting participants for the focus group
3. Create a website form for students to register for a preferred session date and enter their contact information (name and e-mail); the website should be editable so that session dates can be removed as focus groups become full
4. Draft an e-mail for respondents informing them of the nature of the focus group, with a link to the inquiry survey
5. Draft the consent form and print two copies for each participant
6. Draft two reminder e-mails, for one day prior and for the day of the focus group
7. Secure a reliable audio recording device
8. Purchase or secure incentives
9. Purchase and organize refreshments for the focus group sessions
10. Purchase name tags

## Consent Form – Appendix 3.1

### Consent Form

Title of Study: Gazette Study Group - Focus Group

Moderators: Stuart Thompson  
Kabir Singh Chauhan

Study Contact email: [sthomp63@uwo.ca](mailto:sthomp63@uwo.ca)

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You are being asked to take part in a focus group. To join the group is voluntary. You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the group, for any reason, without penalty.

The focus group is part of a larger initiative designed to investigate Western's student newspaper, *The Gazette*. This information may be used to help make recommendations to improve *The Gazette*.

Details about the focus group are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in the focus group. You will be given a copy of this consent form.

You should ask the moderators named above if you have any questions about the focus group at any time.

#### **What is the purpose of this focus group?**

The purpose of this focus group is to gather opinions and facilitate discussion about Western's student newspaper, *The Gazette*. Topics covered will include content, openness, accountability, special issues, accessibility, etc.

#### **How many people will take part in this study?**

If you decide to be in this group, you will be one of 5-8 people per session, with 3-5 sessions running in total. All participants were chosen based on their response to an e-mail sent to all active students.

#### **How long will your part in this study last?**

Your participation in this focus group will last approximately one hour.

#### **What will happen if you take part in the study?**

The group will be asked to discuss various aspects of *The Gazette*. No questions will be directed to you individually, but instead will be posed to the group. You may choose to respond or not respond at any point during the discussion. The focus group discussion will be audiotaped so comments can be captured in a transcript for analysis. You will not be identified personally in any future documents, reports, or recommendations.

#### **What are the possible benefits from being in this focus group?**

This focus group is designed to inform future recommendations to improve *The Gazette*, which will benefit all students. You may not benefit personally from being in this research study.

#### **What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this focus group?**

We do not anticipate any risks or discomfort to you from being in this focus group. It is emphasized that all participants keep comments made by themselves and others



With the USC Spring Elections beginning soon, and even more leadership positions available in the coming months, the USC is continuing to provide you with ways to grow and develop outside the classroom. Below are a few current opportunities for you become involved in.

### **The Gazette**

Participants are urgently needed for upcoming focus group sessions. All students are qualified to participate.

Participants will receive a \$10 gift certificate to the Wave as compensation.

The focus group sessions will take place during the following dates and times:

1. February 6th at 4:00 – 5:00PM – UCC Board Room (Room 307)
2. February 7th at 4:00 – 5:00PM – UCC Board Room (Room 307)
3. February 8th at 4:00 – 5:00PM – UCC Board Room (Room 307)

Refreshments will be served. Participants will be asked to voice their opinions about an important campus issue. The subject of discussion will be revealed after registration.

All interested students, please email [sthomp63@uwo.ca](mailto:sthomp63@uwo.ca) to register. Please include your name and preferred date.

### **USC Student Awards**

Are you a student? Are you a leader?

Apply for a USC Award and you could receive monetary rewards and public recognition for your achievements.

Check out <http://www.uscawards.ca> for further details on the awards. Application deadline: Friday, February 8th at 4:00PM.

Warm regards,  
Your University Students' Council

## **Western Web 2 – Appendix 3.3**

### **GAZETTE STUDY GROUP**

Participants are urgently needed for upcoming focus group sessions. All students are qualified to participate. Participants will receive a \$10 gift certificate to the Wave as compensation.

The focus group sessions will take place during the following dates and times:

1. February 4 at 4:00–5:00 pm – UCC boardroom Rm. 307

2. February 5 at 4:00–5:00 pm – UCC boardroom Rm. 307
3. February 6 at 4:00–5:00 pm – UCC boardroom Rm. 307
4. February 7 at 4:00–5:00 pm – UCC boardroom Rm. 307
5. February 8 at 4:00–5:00 pm – UCC boardroom Rm. 307

Refreshments will be served. Participants will be asked to voice their opinions about an important campus issue. The subject of discussion will be revealed after registration. All interested students please email [sthomp63@uwo.ca](mailto:sthomp63@uwo.ca) to register, and please include your name and preferred date.

### **Focus Group Results – Appendix 3.4**

#### ***Introduction***

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When making conclusions based on focus group data, it is important to understand that the methodology for doing so is far different than other forms such as surveys. In a focus group, consensus is not necessary and majority opinion is less important.

The purpose of a focus group is to discuss feelings, attitudes, and perceptions, and learn the vocabulary and thinking patterns of the target population. Based on this definition, this summary is intended to reflect the zeitgeist of the cumulative focus group experience. While popular opinions are identified, so too are the subtle patterns that emerged throughout the sessions. Thus, this summary represents the reoccurring themes concerning style, content, accessibility, the Gazette's role, the Spoof issue, and special issues in general.

#### ***Style***

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Participants responded positively to the Gazette's writing style, noting that the relaxed tone and humour contributed to the "student feel" of the newspaper. Some individuals who found the paper to be immature came to later agree that there is a balance between the humorous content and the serious content. There appeared to be at times an unresolved contradiction with some participants who claimed that they desired a more serious (and thus more respected) paper, while citing the capacity for humour to convey the "student voice." Participants compared the Gazette to Western News as justification for a more relaxed style of reporting.

Among participants who claimed the Gazette has gone "too far" with their relaxed style, the editorial section appeared to provide the most frustration; some cited that the "Letters-to-the-Editor" are at times inappropriately titled (e.g. 'The next Virginia Tech'). A conclusion to be drawn from this statement is that the editorial section, including headlines and captions, should represent the "serious" side of the paper.

#### ***Content***

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As mentioned above, the preferred section among focus group participants is the Editorial page – specifically the Letters-to-the-Editor. Reasons for this were

consistent throughout the groups: student letters are less inhibited by newspaper restrictions and are therefore more passionate, biased and controversial.

This seems to point to a contradiction: on one hand, participants want the Gazette to balance its humorous side with its serious side without going “too far,” however, they enjoy the ‘Letters’ section precisely because it does go “too far.” Noting this double-standard in the future will become important when judging the compatibility of some letters with the newspaper’s journalistic mandate. It is also noteworthy that some participants expressed dismay over swearing and foul language running unedited in these letters.

Much like the tone and style of the Gazette, there was some disagreement over whether the relaxed/humorous content had a justifiable place in the paper. Some were particularly passionate about how the ‘soft’ content adequately represented the “majority” of Western students, while others flagged stories about drugs or drinking as examples of the Gazette’s immaturity and, ultimately, sources of controversy.

An ‘events calendar’ was frequently suggested, despite the fact that the Gazette currently runs an events column under the “Charlotte Montgomery...” headline. Some participants suggested that instead of using a “community column” to represent minority interests, the events calendar could be used to raise awareness about minority events; interviews and event coverage written by Gazette staff could then be used to supplement this minority coverage.

A repeated suggestion was to include more world news in the newspaper. Several participants agreed that student-related world news would be useful in breaking the paper out of the “Western bubble.” Presumably, local non-Western news would be included in this category. One participant noted that while they wanted world news, they expected these articles to be brief, suggesting a “Top 5 World News Stories” section similar to that of the Globe and Mail.

Another notable trend across each focus group was that the Sports section is either unread or disliked. Of those who read the section, they did so mostly for the score and to discover the winner, leading to the suggestion to include box scores. When asked why the sports section goes unread, the most popular responses were that they had no interest in varsity sports and that the articles are too long; one participant cited that only the mainstream sports teams are represented, with less popular teams largely ignored (e.g. fencing); another vocal participant felt that the dominance of the sports section was representative of the university’s un-P.C. “jock mentality.” Interestingly, this negative feedback about the Sports section is congruent with survey data.

### ***Accessibility***

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When asked about how easy it is for students to write for the Gazette, responses were at first concerned with writing a letter to the editor. This suggests that participants either do not consider becoming a volunteer, or that they value letters to the editor as an easier means of accessibility. Some participants responded that while it would be easy to get your letter published in the paper, they are concerned about how the Gazette will title their letter (e.g. ‘The next Virginia

Tech') and how other students would respond and/or disagree with their opinion.

When asked specifically about becoming a volunteer, participants responded favourably, assuming that anyone who wanted to write for the Gazette could do so. What is interesting about this response is that while becoming a volunteer appears to be an easy process, none of these participants had actually pursued the opportunity. For some, the barrier began with the confusing location of the Gazette office and a general lack of education about writing opportunities and procedures.

The few that had pursued a writing opportunity experienced an intimidating and often "cliquey" impression of Gazette staff. The most prominent reasons for not pursuing the opportunity to write were an impression of commitment (i.e. if one were to write an article, one would be 'part of the Gazette' and beholden to extraneous writing commitments) and a high existing work load. Solutions for this may include advertising the "freelance" capacities of volunteer writers. Additionally, some participants were confused by the current Gazette advertising for volunteer writers, calling it confusing, misleading, or visually unappealing (i.e. they wouldn't think to read it).

### ***Role of the Gazette***

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Participants who found the relaxed style and content of the Gazette agreeable came to define its responsibilities in the same way: as light entertainment, reasonably informative and representative of the majority of Western students. Likely prompted by the language of the moderator, "representing the student voice" emerged repeatedly as the principle mandate of the paper. Much like the style of writing, the Gazette's role appears to be ratified in the minds of some participants by the existence of Western News.

When questioned about the Gazette's mandate to represent all students – and not simply the majority – participants were uncertain. Some felt that the Gazette already represents all students, while others argued that it is only representing the majority and not minority interests. One group specifically agreed that it would be difficult to provide a minority-related story consistently and that the paper is not required to do so. However, when moderators pursued the issue of representation, suggesting possible solutions such as a "community column" for minority voices, participants were in agreement. In the words of one participant, even if these articles were only read by the minority group in question, it would at least provide the image of accessibility and fair representation – it would show that the Gazette is trying.

### ***Spoof Issue***

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In every group, the topic of last year's Spoof issue was brought forward by one of the participants before a moderator introduced it. While not all participants were aware of the issue, those who were believed that the Gazette went "too far."

What appeared to irritate these individuals the most was the lack of accountability. Participants claimed that the Gazette only apologized after it became a national news story, that they either did not sincerely apologize at the town hall meeting or did not show up at all, and that they did not do enough to apologize in general.

The \$1500 donation was never mentioned by a participant, nor were the editorial policies, resulting Study Group or Advisory Board. This is a gross deficit in student awareness about the Gazette's actual response.

### **Special Issues**

The main purpose of Gazette special issues, according to the majority of participants, is to function as a marketing tool. Most individuals responded positively to these issues, saying how they are "must-read" material.

Those who responded negatively to last year's spoof issue also felt that the comedic license available with special issues has been exploited in the past, calling the humour "low brow" and not representative of students. The Frosh Issue also received criticism by some who felt that it was misrepresenting the campus as a "party school" – an image that the university is attempting to correct.

### **Other**

During the group, a number of improvements were suggested, some of which may prove useful. A selection is listed below:

- Students often take a fresh copy of the Gazette instead of picking up a used copy from a bench or table, prompting concerns over pollution and a potential for a recycling initiative.
- When moderators revealed that there are new editorial policies spawning from last year's Spoof Issue, participants expressed that the Gazette should advertise these. Perhaps the most appropriate place and form for them would be in the masthead as an Internet link.
- From discussions about representing the student voice, some focus groups proposed that the Gazette should provide more stories about student experiences, university research and professor biographies, which would contribute to a more relatable Gazette.
- While there may be justifiable reasons for the "no unsolicited articles" policy, participants who felt intimidated by the Gazette "clique" said that they would rather pursue writing opportunities through e-mail.
- The results of the Gazette Study Group and focus groups should be published and advertised so that both the participants involved and students at large could see the direct connection between investigation and eventual changes.

## **Newspaper Research Plan – Appendix 4.0**

### **PART ONE**

We will perform research on four student newspapers and four professional newspapers in four key areas of interest: Basic Information, Policies, Openness, and Content.

#### *Campus Newspapers*

2. University of Toronto's *The Varsity*
3. McMaster University's *The Silhouette*
4. Queen's University's *The Journal*

5. The University of Western Ontario's *The Gazette*

*National Newspapers*

2. The Globe and Mail
3. The National Post
4. The Toronto Star
5. A community newspaper

Information will be collected using available resources and (when needed) telephone interviews. The below questions will be used as a guideline while conducting research.

Basic information

- o How often do they publish?
- o What is their circulation?
- o Composition of their newsroom staff (male/female, year, age, etc.)

Policies

- o Do they have a written Code of Ethics?
  - o Is it based off of an existing policy, such as the SPJ policy?
- o What kind of sensitivity training do they perform for writers and editors?
- o What methods are in place to deal with serious reader complaints?
- o Do they make use of an advisory board, ombudsperson, both, or other?

Openness

- o What methods do they use to provide more opportunities for openness? (ex. weekly column, public editor, forums, letter from the editor, etc.)
- o What methods are employed to solicit new writers? (ex. advertising, signage, etc.)

Content

- o Have they had major "sensitivity issues" in the past?
  - o How have they resolved these issues?
- o Do they publish special issues?
  - o Have their special issues been problematic?
    - How have they resolved these issues?
    - If not, why?

PART TWO

Current academic literature on topics such as newspaper openness and accountability will be assessed to provide scholarly context.

PART THREE

After Part One has been completed and the information has been organized, it will be useful to discuss findings with Mr. Benedetti, Mr. Kearney, and/or members of the Advisory Board before proceeding with our final recommendations.

DEADLINES

Part One and Two will occur simultaneously over the course of the winter break, ideally concluding before January 7, 2008. It is expected that telephone interviews will be difficult to arrange and complete during the holiday season. Therefore, extra time will be granted when needed, ideally completing before January 14, 2007.

The completion of Part Three will depend largely on the individuals available for consultation and their respective schedules.

#### **The University of Toronto's *The Varsity* – Appendix 4.1**

1. Does the Varsity have its own written code of ethics in addition to the Society of Professional Journalists' code of ethics?
  - No. There is an implicit and inarticulable agreement on how people should be treated.
2. Does the Varsity perform any staff sensitivity training in regards to writing bias concerning racial, sexual discrimination, etc.?
  - No.
3. Is there a procedure in place to deal with reader complaints beyond publishing them in the Varsity and online?
  - No.
4. Is there a specific person appointed to respond to reader complaints?
  - There is a comments editor who fulfills this role amongst others.
5. Does the Varsity have an advisory board or ombudsperson to implement constructive action in response to specific recurring fairness complaints from readers?
  - The Varsity has an advisory board, which acts as needed and **controls funding.**
6. Are there any methods are employed to solicit new writers besides the tab on the Varsity website? (advertising, signage, etc.)
  - They hold open houses, they advertise in the printed publication and they have posters around campus.
7. Does the Varsity publish special themed issues? (e.g. a Valentine's Day or April Fool's issue)
  - U of T You Don't Know Issue, Joke issue, **Religion Issue**, Careers Issue, Arts Issue, April Fools Issue

#### **McMaster University's *The Silhouette* – Appendix 4.2**

##### The Silhouette

##### Basic information

- Publish weekly (Thursday)
- Circulation of 10,000

##### Policies

1. As part of the McMaster Student Union (MSU), The Silhouette has two written documents:
  - "Operating Policy 1/K" outlines parameters for: operation; personnel structure and selection; the role of the editorial board, editors and staff; policy for dismissals and vacancies; finances; publication schedule; amendments; external affiliations; grievance procedures; and code of ethics.
    - Article 2.9 states: "in order that The Silhouette will best serve this function for McMaster students, the Editors and staff of The

- Silhouette shall remain completely autonomous in terms of the editorial content and the basic format of the newspaper”
- Article 18.1 (“Grievance Procedures”) states that: complainants will meet with the Executive Editor to attempt to find a mutually satisfactory solution; if no solution can be reached, the Board of Publication will review the matter, allowing the Executive Editor and the complainant an opportunity to discuss, explain, or give evidence; the Board of Publication has an opportunity to consult the MSU Board of Directors and MSU lawyers; the Board of Publication will rule on the issue, which may require The Silhouette to print an apology, correction, or retraction; the decision is binding.
  - “Operating Policy 1/Ka” is concerned with the Board of Publication: its purpose, membership, and duties.
    - Article 2.1 states that the Board shall consist of:
      - 2.1.1 Executive Editor;
      - 2.1.2 Managing Editor;
      - 2.1.3 One (1) Silhouette Editor;
      - 2.1.4 Underground Media & Design Manager;
      - 2.1.5 One (1) member of the Executive Board;
      - 2.1.6 One (1) member of the SRA;
      - 2.1.7 Vice-President (Finance), who shall be named Chairperson;
      - 2.1.8 Business Manager.
    - Article 3.1.2 states that the Board will “serve as an arbitrator in cases of a possible violation of the laws of libel or in other grievances, according to the Procedures outlined in OPERATING POLICY 1/K... otherwise, the Board of Publication may not fringe on the autonomy of the Silhouette.”
    - Article 3.1.3 states: “Act as an advisory body to the Editorial Board and The Silhouette staff.”
    - Article 3.1.9 states: “**At the end of each academic term, review, evaluate, and make recommendations to the Editorial Board regarding the editions of The Silhouette published within the respective term.**”
  - According to the editor, The Silhouette is presently drafting a new document concerning newsroom ethics, which will function as an employee handbook. They are searching for “a program that reflects [their] challenges.”
2. What methods are in place to deal with serious reader complaints?
- See above
  - If the complaint is about an editor or writer, the Executive Editor will “deal with them first” before moving ahead with the issue.
  - The Silhouette has had at least one issue in the past where the complainant threatened to take to the issue to a third party. Through mediation with the Executive Editor and the complainant, the issue was successfully resolved.
3. Do they make use of an advisory board, ombudsperson, both, or other?
- Yes, The Silhouette is beholden to the MSU ombudsperson and legal department, should a particular issue warrant such assistance.
- Openness
- What methods do they use to provide more opportunities for openness? (ex. weekly column, public editor, forums, letter from the editor, etc.)

- The Silhouette employs a mailing list for interested readers (although the success of such a list is questionable); the website uses a **commenting feature** to solicit feedback on individual articles; the Editor described a feeling of transparency about the paper on campus, with the “physical production processes” accessible to any student; they rely on word of mouth recommendations for new writers.
- The Silhouette makes available information concerning the training and hiring process.
- For new writers, an editor will request a sample to gauge their writing abilities. There are individual handbooks for each section of the newspaper.
- The Editor described these methods successful at soliciting new writers.
- What methods are employed to solicit new writers? (ex. advertising, signage, etc.)
  - Information concerning the training and hiring process

#### Content

- Have they had major “sensitivity issues” in the past?
  - One “joke story” received a number of complaints (“68 complaints in 3 hours”) and required a printed clarification. The issue did not go to the Board of Publication, as the editors were able to resolve the issue with the complainant. According to the Editor, the issue did not warrant a correction or apology because the story was “taken out of context.”
- Do they publish special issues?
  - The Silhouette publishes a Welcome Week issue, a sex issue in collaboration with the GLBT group and the Health department, and a spoof issue. None of these issues have raised any significant complaints.

### Queen’s University’s *The Journal* – Appendix 4.3

- Founded in 1873
- Two issues printed/week
- Outside input comes in the form of the opinion and letters to the editor sections
- Policies and Bylaws as per Queen’s Journal Policy, Amended April 2004
- “The Letters [to the editor] section is a service to the Queen’s community” (6.01)
- “The letters section is not a message board... Letters are not to be solely promotional in nature” (6.07)
- All complaints are directed to managing editors or editors-in-chief and must be responded to in three days
- If a complainant is not satisfied the a meeting with the Journal Board of Directors is arranged and if necessary the Editorial Board and the Ontario Press Council, of which the Journal is a member
- Writers are considered staff and listed on the masthead after four submissions to the current volume of the paper
- The Journal's circulation is 9,000, but readership is higher thanks to their

website. Although it was defunct last year, this year it's functional and it gets an average of close to 1,000 hits per day

- Try to solicit new writers through **word of mouth, advertising in the newspaper and presence at Queen's clubs nights.**
- Don't hold sensitivity-specific training, although **the editors in chief and the business manager attend the Alma Mater Society's brief sensitivity training workshop at the beginning of the year.** We do have contributor and staff training sessions that cover journalistic ethics in addition to writing, interviewing, etc
- The Journal publishes "extras" for breaking news--these are essentially short issues published in addition to a two-issue-a-week schedule when news is important enough to warrant immediate coverage rather than wait until our next issue comes out.
- Have supplements, which are special sections within the regular paper and comprise several articles on a theme. These themes have included frosh, health & wellness, literature and love & sex.

#### *The Globe and Mail – Appendix 4.4*

- Circulation: 2,024,320 (2 million)  
Source: <http://www.cna-acj.ca/client/cna/ult.nsf/CCData/The%20Globe%20and%20Mail>
- Publish: Monday – Saturday (none on Sunday)
- Senior Editors: 3 female – 15 male (Editor-in-Chief male)  
Source: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/v5/content/help/contact-paper#editors>
- Do not list editorial policies on their website

#### *The National Post – Appendix 4.5*

- Founded in 1998, publishes daily
- The NP contains an opinion section subdivided into editorials and “issues and ideas,” a system common to most Canadian newspapers
- A special section, “Full Comment” is also printed which is intended to “create a lively spot where our columnists, editorial writers, readers and friends debate the issues of the day.”
- Full Comment **allows readers to comment on articles in the Post as well as voice their opinions and debate on pertinent issues presented in the paper**
- Readers are also given the opportunity to take part in “virtual” editorial meetings with politicians and business figures creating a greater opportunity for input
- Comments can be submitted via letter, email or mobile text
- Iranian Law Controversy: The Post printed an article claiming religious minorities were required to where ID badges.
  - The article received widespread attention and prompted remark from world leaders
  - Experts later proved the article to be false and as a result the

editor-in-chief, published a public apology for the article

***The Toronto Star – Appendix 4.6***

A **community column** composed of 12 readers of various age, ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. Their responsibilities include:

- Debating issues of interest, in order to tell the reader what the Star is doing right, wrong, or is neglecting.
- Meeting monthly with Star editors and reporters to discuss their concerns.
- Writing columns on local issues that concern them.
- In past years, members have made suggestions that have resulted in Toronto Star articles in news, business, sports, entertainment and food sections.

They also have an ombudsperson to deal with fairness issues.