

The Red & Black® 2025 DEI REPORT

THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE





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INTRODUCTION

Dear Reader,

Since The Red & Black was founded in 1893, it has been committed to covering the Athens-Clarke County and University of Georgia communities. However, this coverage has not always fully represented the breadth and depth of each.

Historically, The Red & Black's staff and reporters have been predominantly white, reflecting the demographics of the University of Georgia, a predominantly white institution. This reality has motivated us to examine the communities represented in our coverage but also to reflect on the makeup of our own newsroom. Our goal is to ensure that everyone can see themselves represented within our organization and in the stories we tell.

Continuing our efforts in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion, we decided to create an annual Diversity, Equity and Inclusion report. We were inspired by reports from other student newspapers like The University of California, Los Angeles' The Daily Bruin, which has been producing these kinds of reports in recent years.

This report details the demographics of our spring and fall 2025 staff, board of directors and contributors. In addition to looking internally, we looked externally and sought feedback from our readers through two community listening events. While the findings of the readership survey are not in this report, we used them to inform our goals and recommendations for the organization over the past year.

This is The Red & Black's fourth annual Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Report. The 2024 report, along with previous editions, is available on our website.

We strongly encourage the newsroom, led by the editor in chief and deputy editor, to produce an annual report such as this one after each calendar year, complete with findings from each academic semester. Each semester, our organization strives to strengthen our connections with each other and our community, ensuring we continue considering our position as a news organization and holding ourselves accountable.

Feedback is welcomed and appreciated. Direct all questions, comments and concerns to editor@randb.com.

Warm Regards,

Gabrielle Gruszynski

Deputy Editor of Standards & Practices | Fall 2025

Katie Guenthner

Editor-in-Chief | Fall 2025

Ellis Goud

Deputy Editor of Standards & Practices | Spring 2025

Allison Mawn

Editor-in-Chief | Spring 2025



STANDARDS & STAFFING BREAKDOWN

In summer 2020, editors at The Red & Black began holding regular meetings about diversity and inclusion in the organization. This was the start of a committee to address organization-wide issues, which developed into a formal Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee in spring 2021.

Over the past few years, the DEI Committee crafted initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion, hosted speakers, conducted workshops and reviewed content. Its mission revolved around promoting the presence of all lived experiences, including but not limited to Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) within the organization.

After careful thought and consideration, the DEI Committee was restructured into one deputy editor of standards and practices role in 2024. This position is a part of the leadership team and oversees both diversity and ethics in the newsroom as well as facilitating inclusion and recruitment efforts across the organization. The deputy editor creates weekly workshops at staff meetings, brings in guest speakers, reads over content for sensitivity, conducts corrections and DEI audits, completes wellness check-ins with all staff members and more. In an effort to include student leaders in the organization from editorial, advertising and sales, communications, creative services, and guides & magazines departments, the deputy editor also attends the weekly department head meeting.

This is the second year with the deputy editor of standards and practices role, which we hope will result in a new structure of accountability that will shift the responsibility of being diverse, equitable and inclusive onto every individual in the organization.

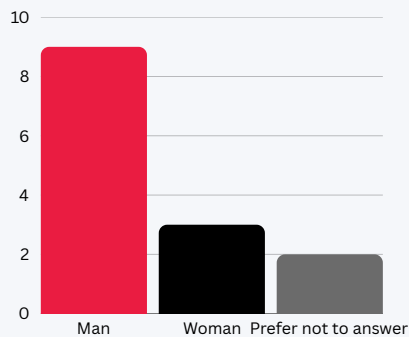
Fall 2025 Deputy Editor of Standards and Practices | **Gabrielle Gruszynski**
Spring 2025 Deputy Editor of Standards and Practices | **Ellis Goud**

AT A GLANCE SPRING 2025

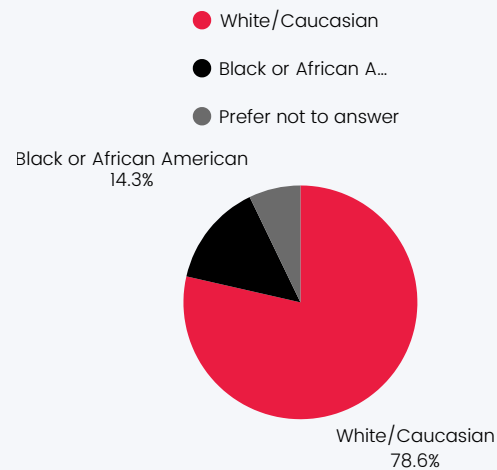
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISCLAIMER: The following pages' graphics are reflective of survey respondents, but not all members of The Red & Black.

Gender Identity



Race/Ethnicity



Improvements



Connecting with
the Athens
community



Connecting with
the UGA
community



R&B social/service
events



Mental health

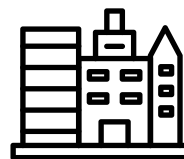
Future Priorities



Connecting with
the UGA
community



Diversifying
recruitment efforts



Connecting with
the Athens
community

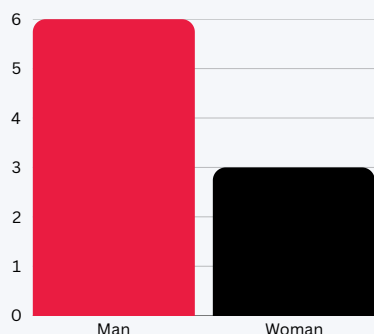


R&B social/service
events

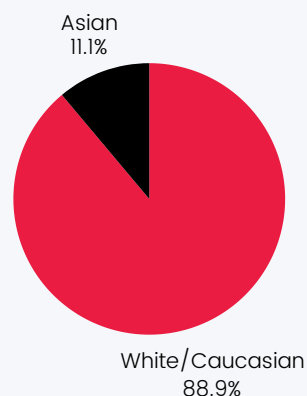
AT A GLANCE FALL 2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gender Identity



Race/Ethnicity



Improvements



Connecting with
the UGA
community



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the Athens
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R&B social/service
events



Diversifying
recruitment efforts

Future Priorities



Connecting with
the UGA
community



Diversifying
recruitment efforts



Connecting with
the Athens
community

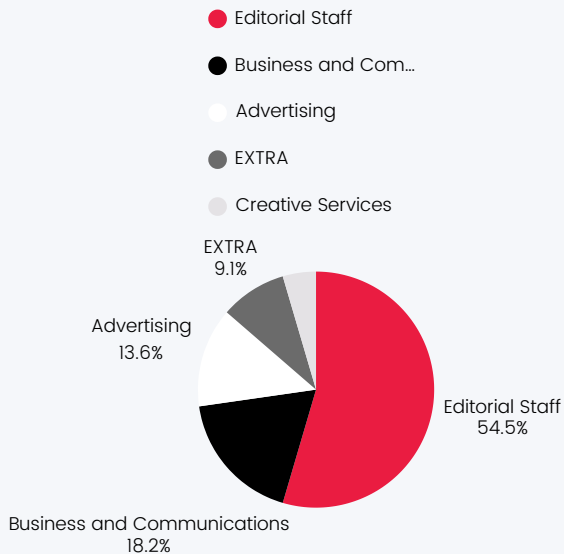


R&B social/service
events

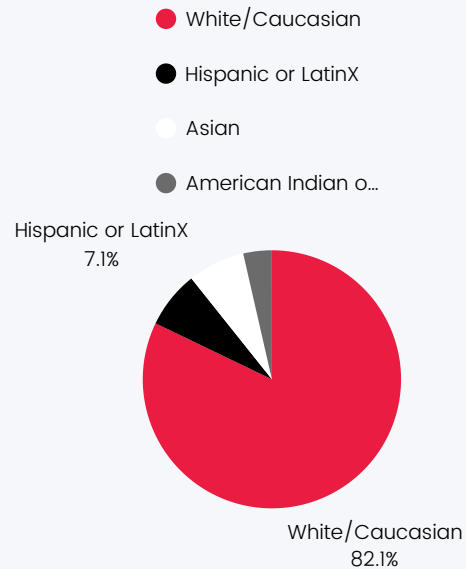
AT A GLANCE SPRING 2025

PROFESSIONAL & STUDENT STAFF

Department



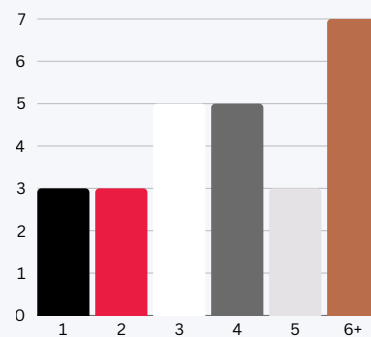
Race/Ethnicity



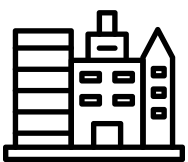
Gender Identity



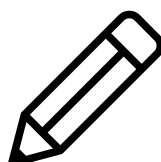
Semesters Active



Improvements



Connecting with
the Athens
community



Checking in more
frequently



Connecting across
the organization



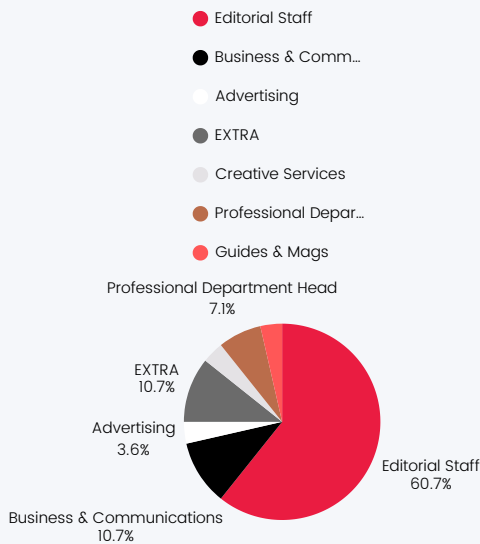
R&B social/service
events

AT A GLANCE FALL 2025

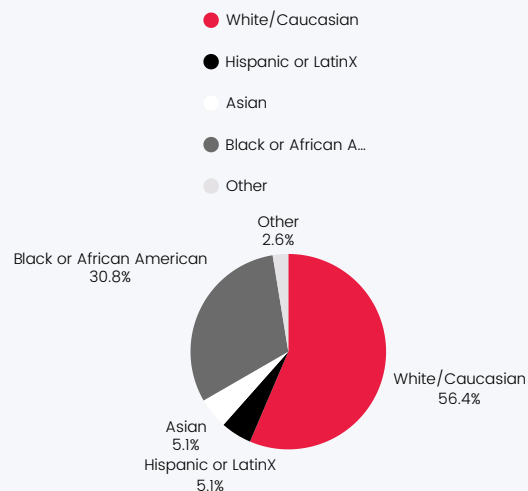
PAID STAFF

A NOTE: In the fall semester, the professional staff and student staff surveys were consolidated into one “paid staff” survey. This is reflected in the data below.

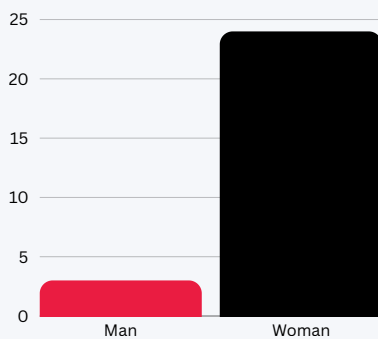
Department



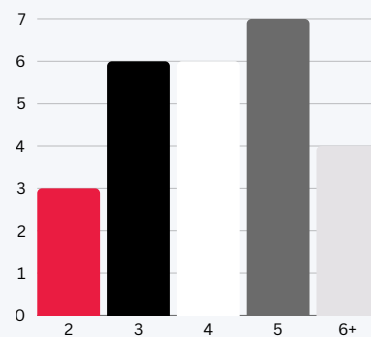
Race/Ethnicity



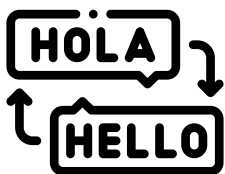
Gender Identity



Semesters Active



Improvements



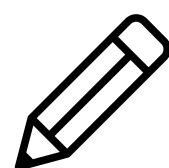
Spanish Coverage



Connecting with
the Athens
community



Connecting with
the UGA
community



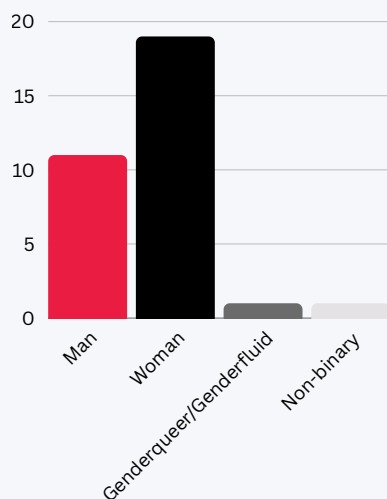
Checking in more
frequently

AT A GLANCE

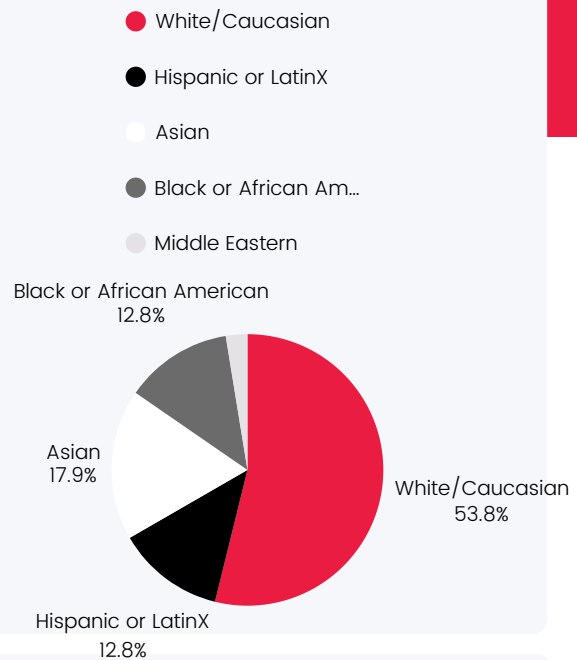
SPRING 2025

CONTRIBUTORS

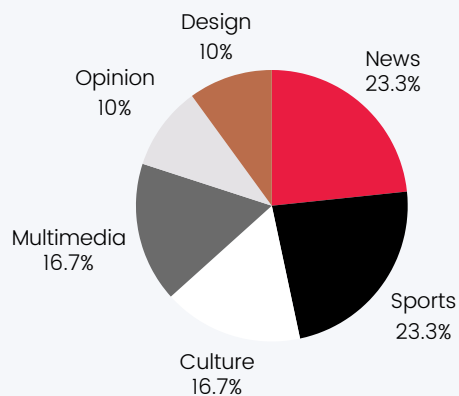
Gender Identity



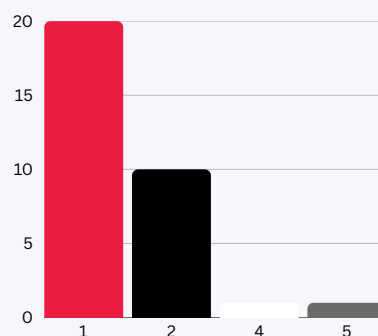
Race/Ethnicity



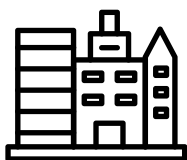
Editorial Desk



Semesters Active



Improvements



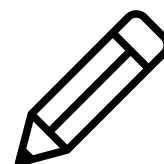
Connecting with
the Athens
community



R&B social/service
events



Connecting with
the UGA
community



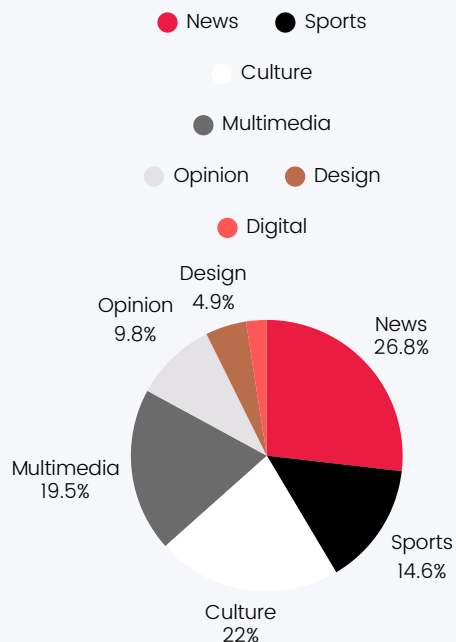
Checking in more
frequently

AT A GLANCE

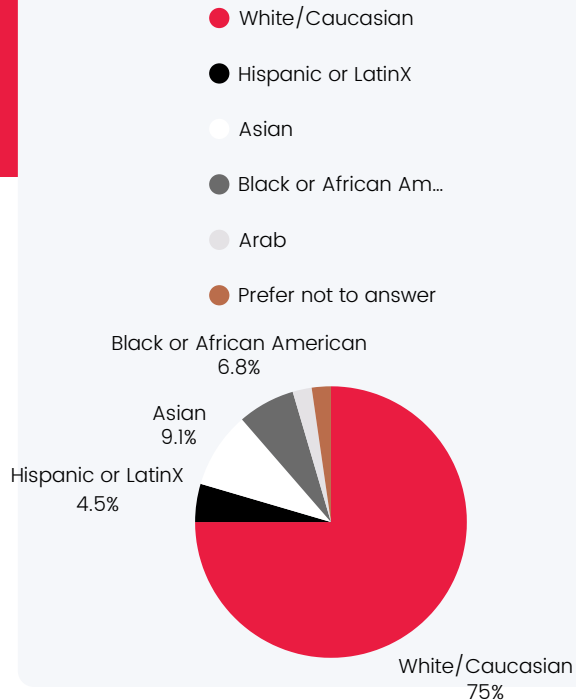
FALL 2025

CONTRIBUTORS

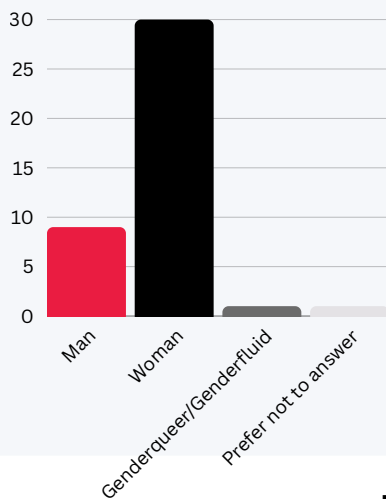
Editorial Desk



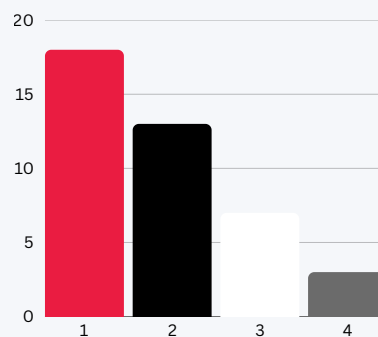
Race/Ethnicity



Gender Identity



Semesters Active



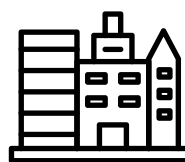
Improvements



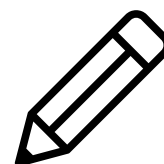
Connecting with
the UGA
community



Spanish Coverage



Connecting with
the Athens
community



Checking in more
frequently

**THE FOLLOWING
PAGES ARE THE
IN-DEPTH
RESULTS OF
EACH SURVEY.**

**JUMP TO PAGE 56
FOR FINAL
CONCLUSIONS AND
RECCOMENDATIONS.**

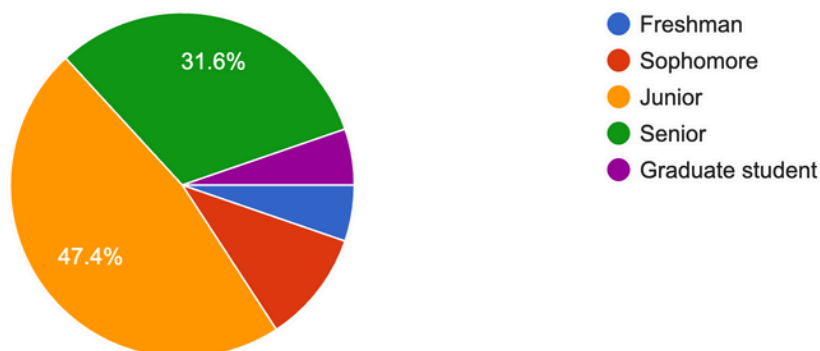
SPRING 2025

STUDENT STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

Note: Staff positions, both student staff and pro staff, are paid. Contributors are not paid. Contributors can apply to be on staff each semester. There were 19 student staff respondents.

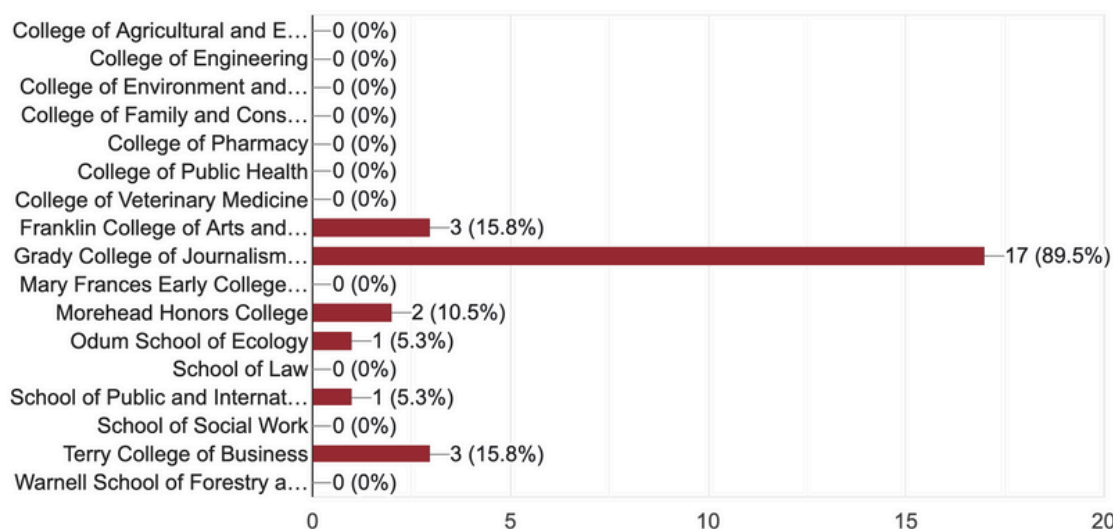
What year are you in?

19 responses



What college(s) are you in at the University of Georgia?

19 responses

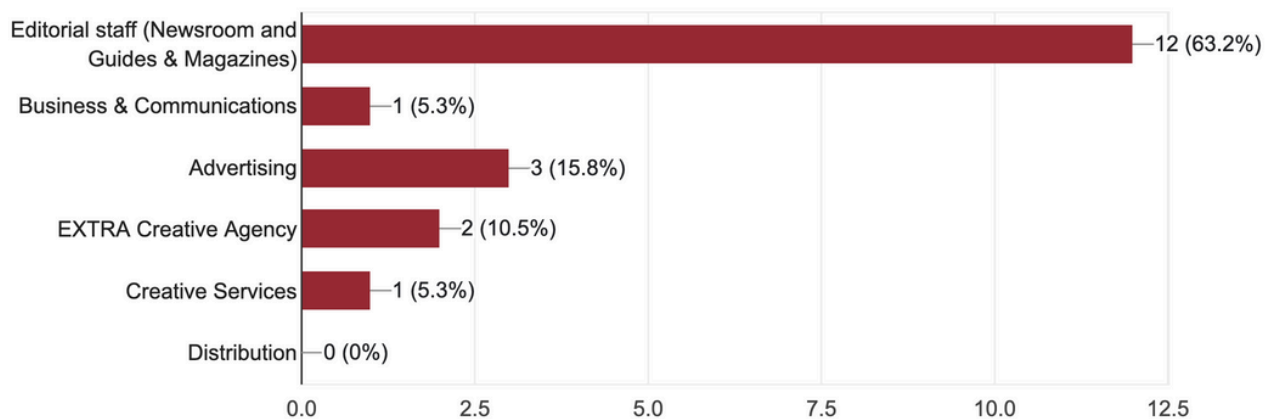


SPRING 2025

STUDENT STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

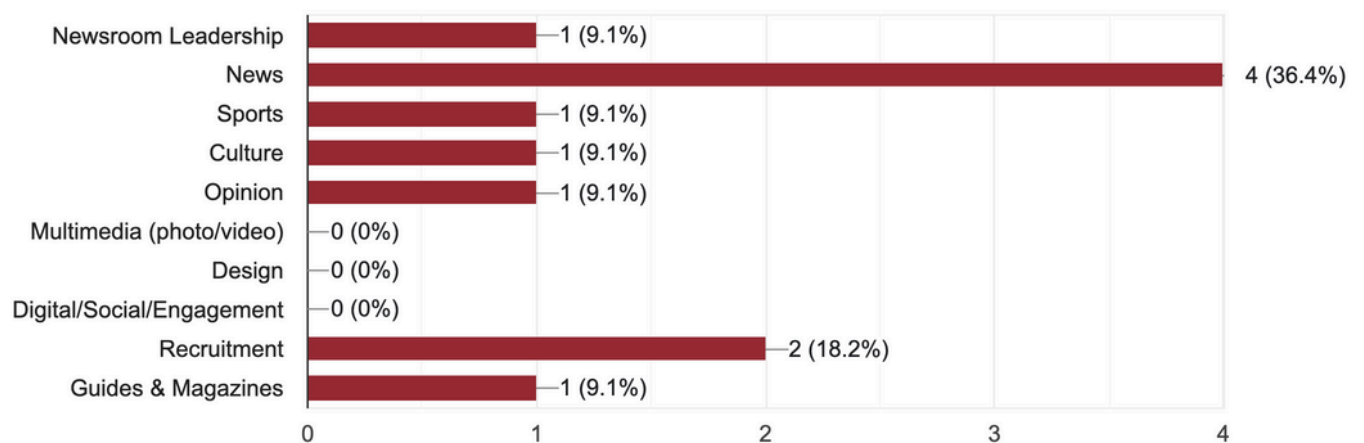
What department are you in at The Red & Black?

19 responses



If applicable, what editorial desk are you in?

11 responses

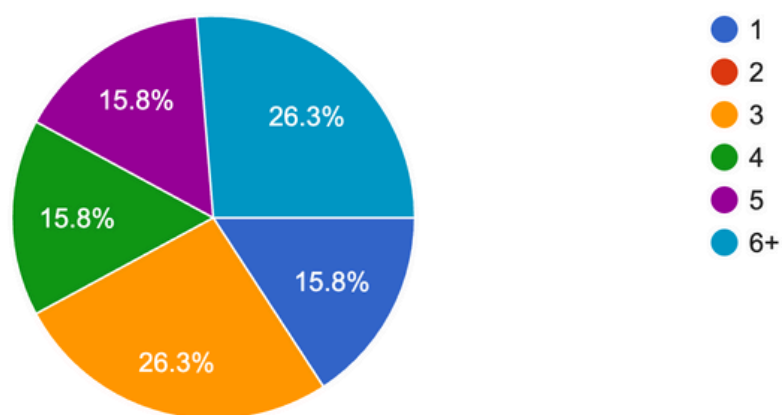


SPRING 2025

STUDENT STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

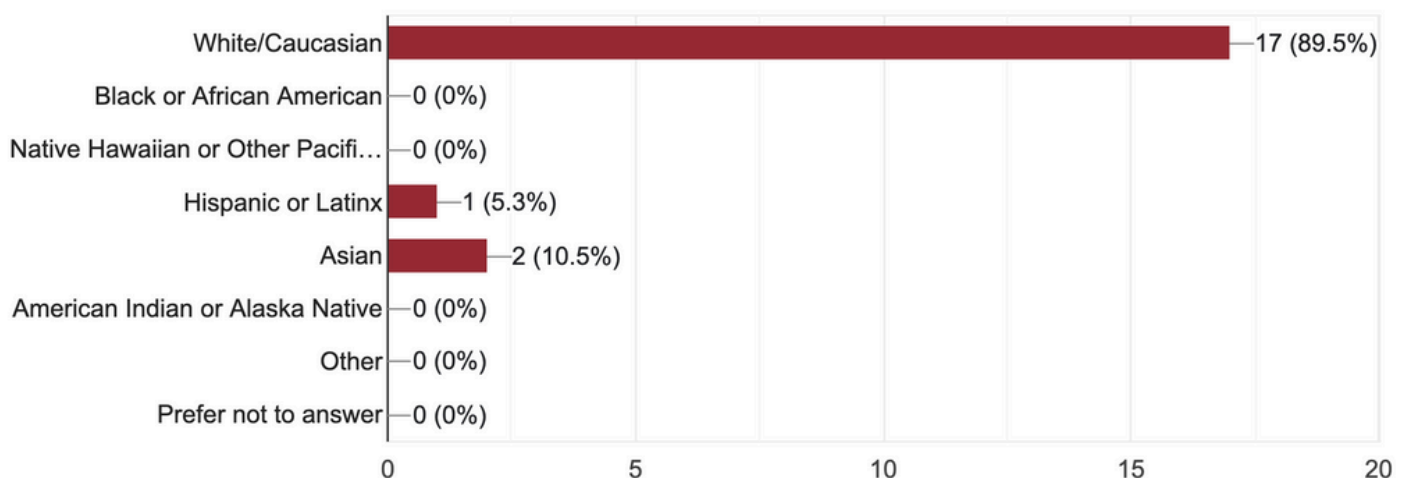
How many semesters have you been with The Red & Black? (Including as a contributor)

19 responses



What is your race/ethnicity?

19 responses

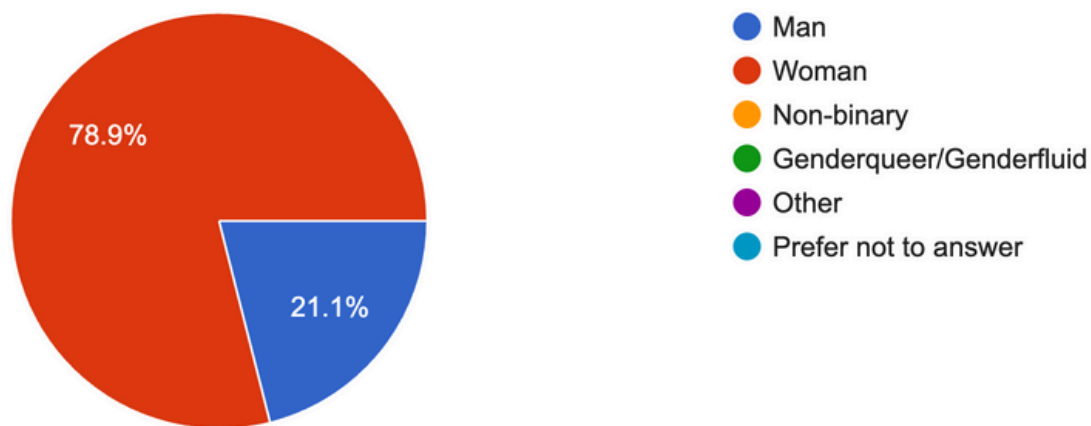


SPRING 2025

STUDENT STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

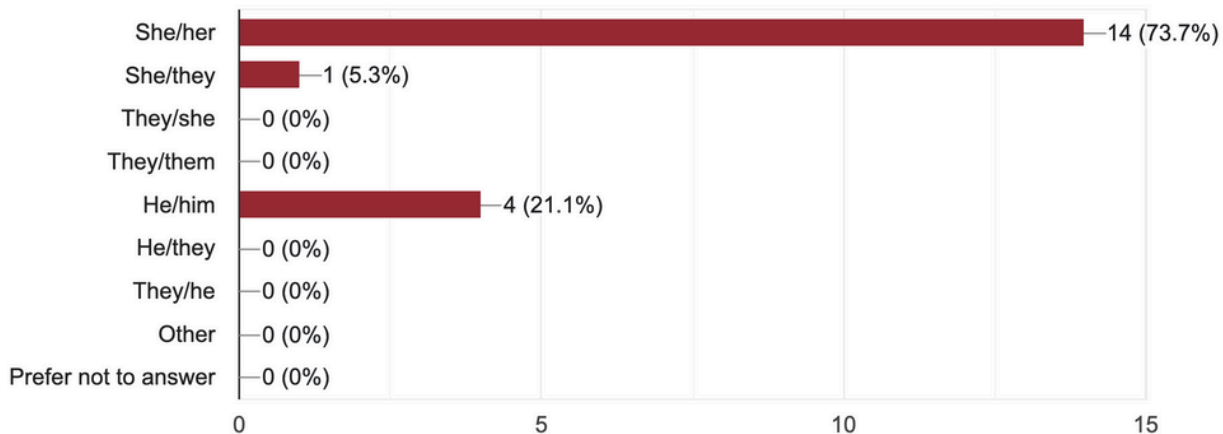
What is your gender identity?

19 responses



What pronouns do you use?

19 responses

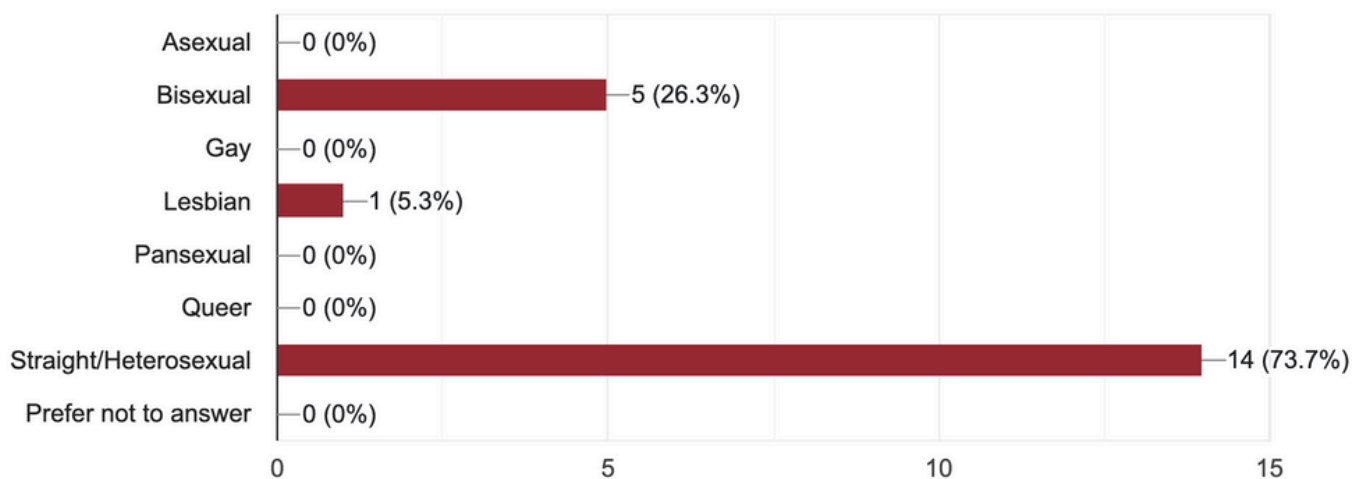


SPRING 2025

STUDENT STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

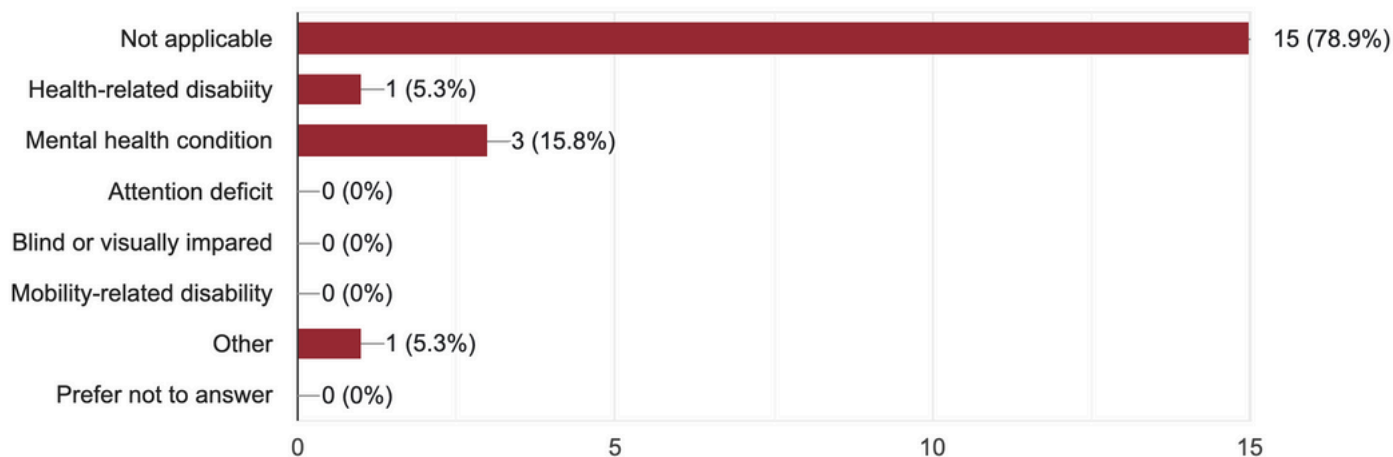
What is your sexual orientation?

19 responses



Do you have a disability or chronic condition? If so, how would you describe it?

19 responses

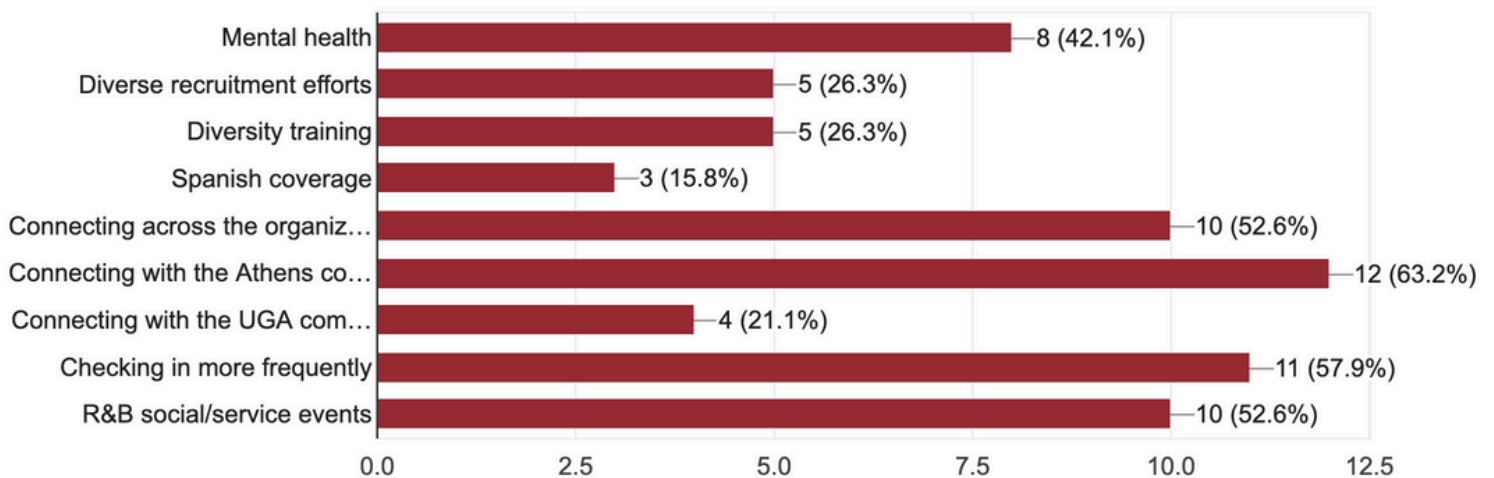


SPRING 2025

STUDENT STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

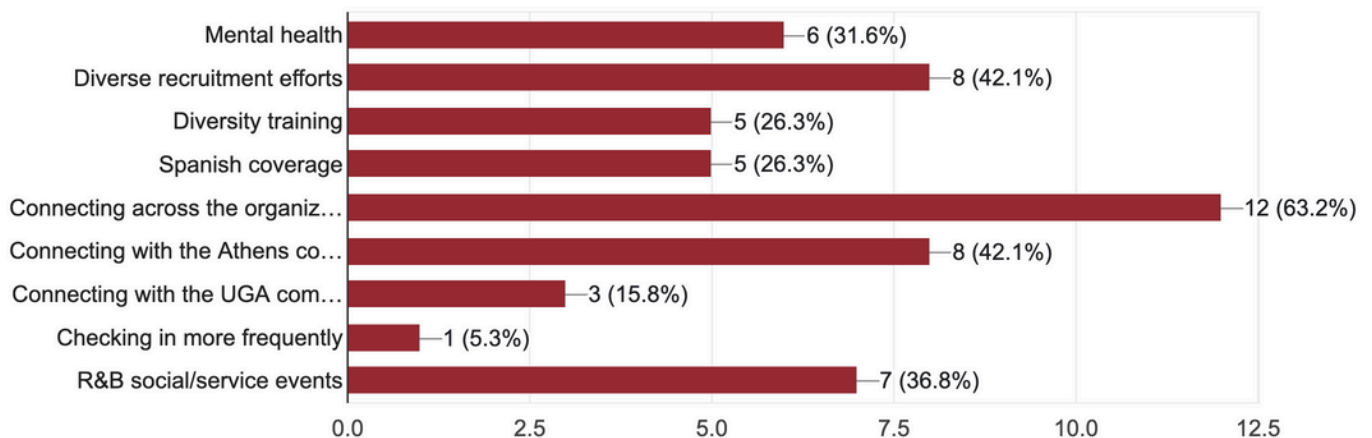
In what areas has The Red & Black improved this semester?

19 responses



Please select the top three priorities you think the Deputy Editor should focus on in the future.

19 responses



SPRING 2025

STUDENT STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

Areas Improved and Future Priorities

Student staff identified the top three areas The Red & Black improved in during the spring 2025 semester. Student staff members were allowed to select multiple answers for this question.

The top area of improvement was better connecting with the Athens community, followed by checking in with staff more frequently. There was a tie between better connecting across the organization and office-wide social/service events.

The top three priorities for the future deputy editor are connecting across the organization, connecting with the Athens community and diversifying our recruitment efforts. Student staff members were also allowed to select multiple answers for this question.

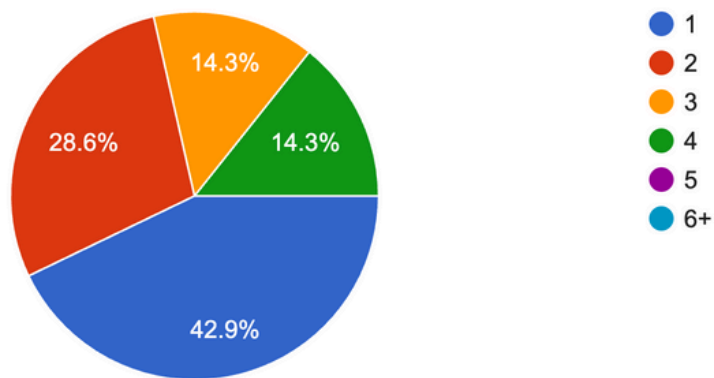
SPRING 2025

PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

Note: Staff positions, both student staff and pro staff, are paid. Contributors are not paid. Contributors can apply to be on staff each semester. There were 7 professional staff respondents.

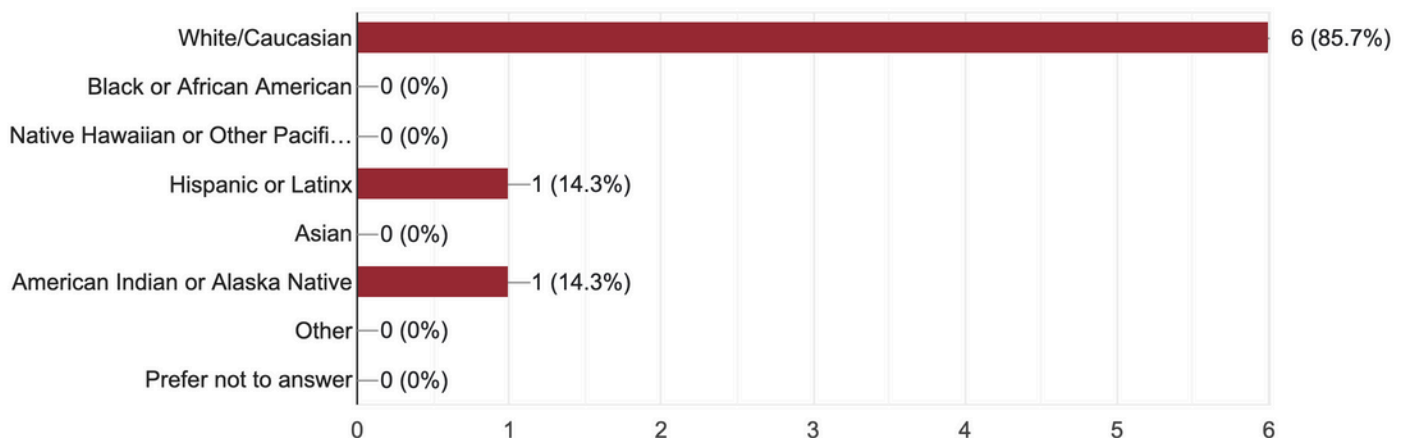
How many years have you been a professional staff member?

7 responses



What is your race/ethnicity?

7 responses

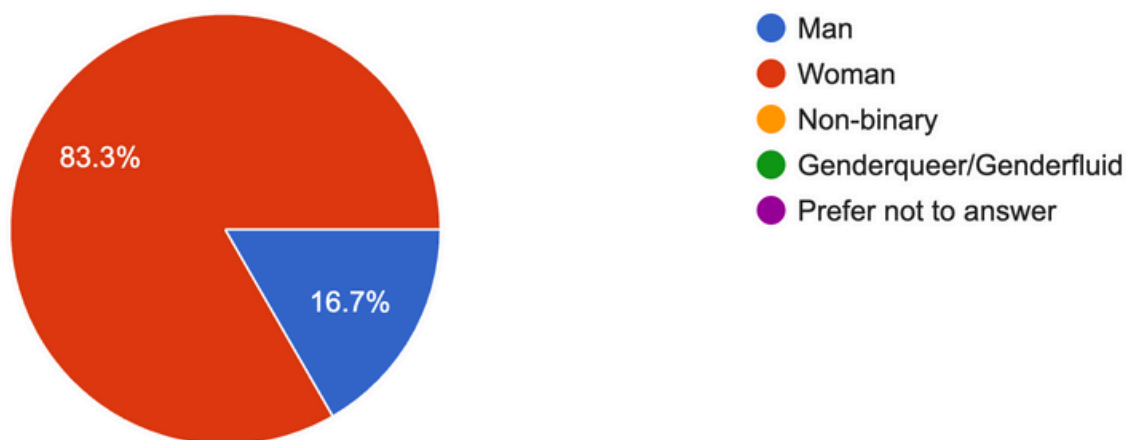


SPRING 2025

PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

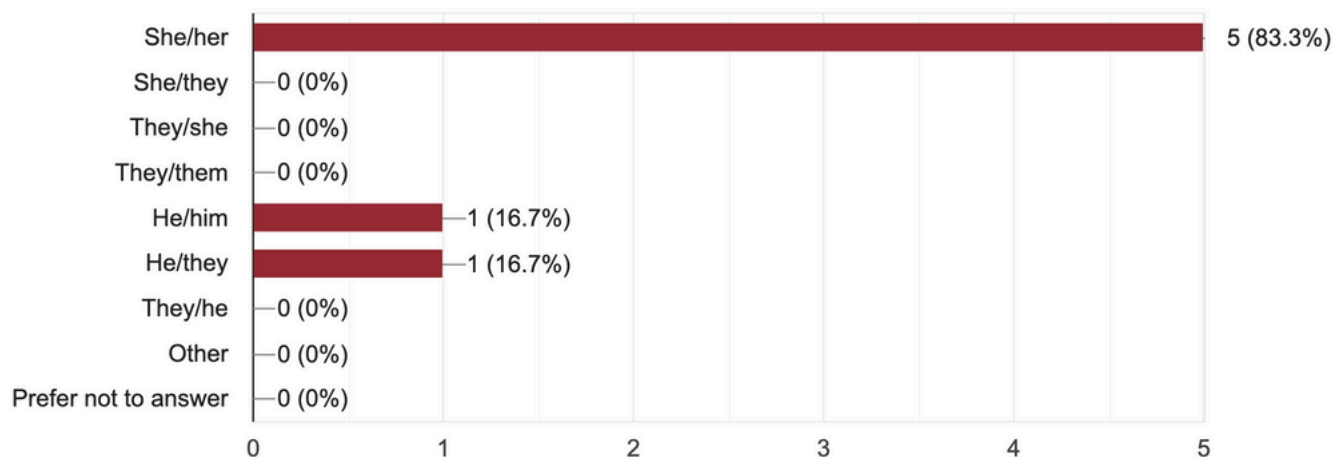
What is your gender identity?

6 responses



What pronouns do you use?

6 responses

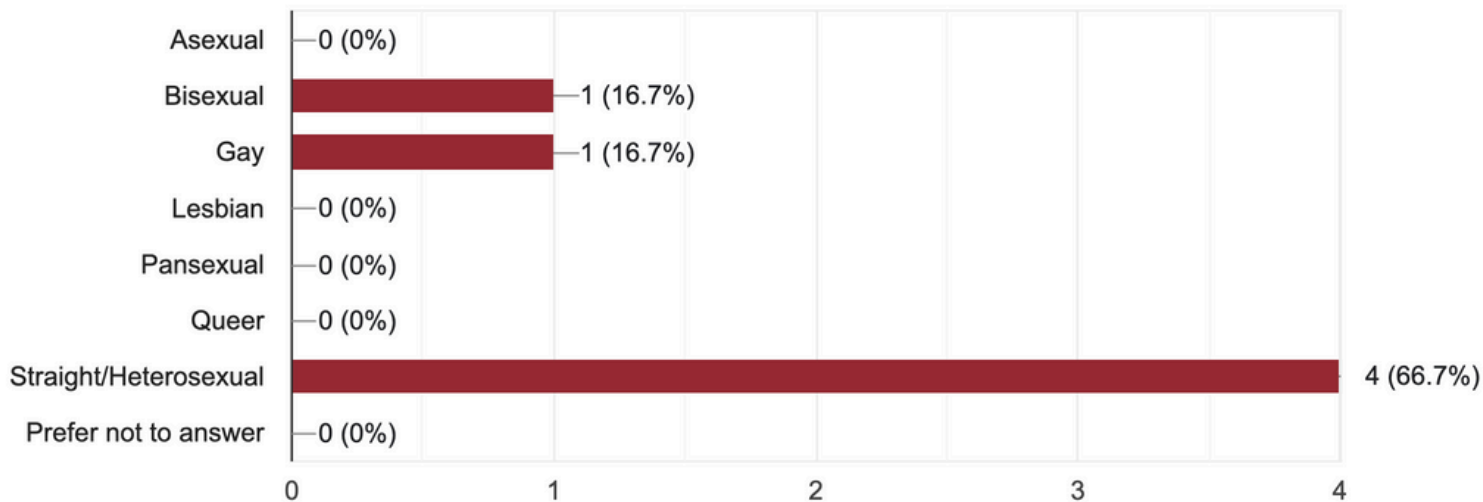


SPRING 2025

PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

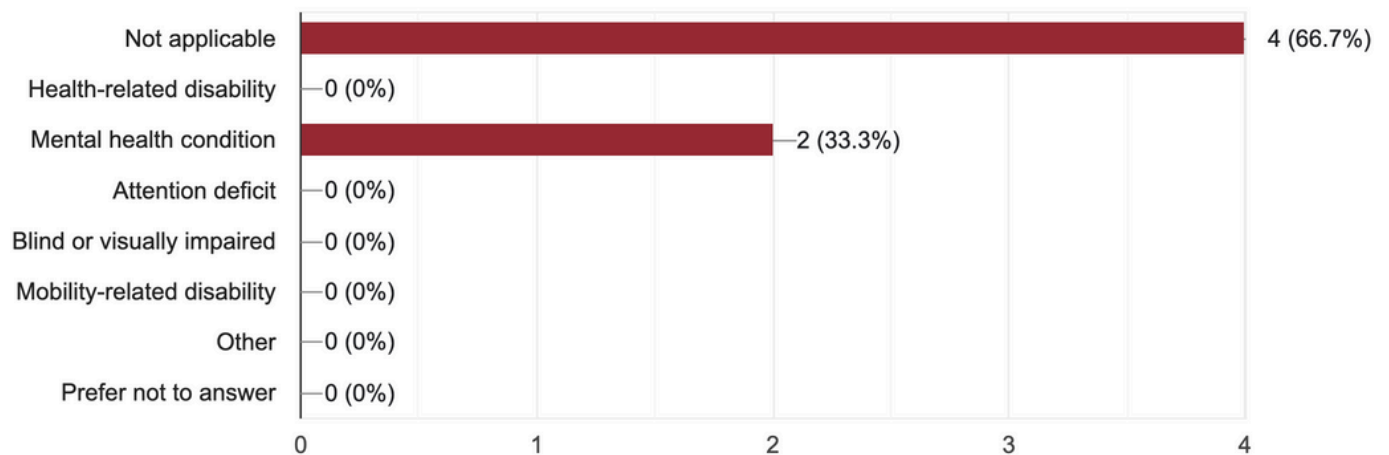
What is your sexual orientation?

6 responses



Do you have a disability or chronic condition? If so, how would you describe it?

6 responses

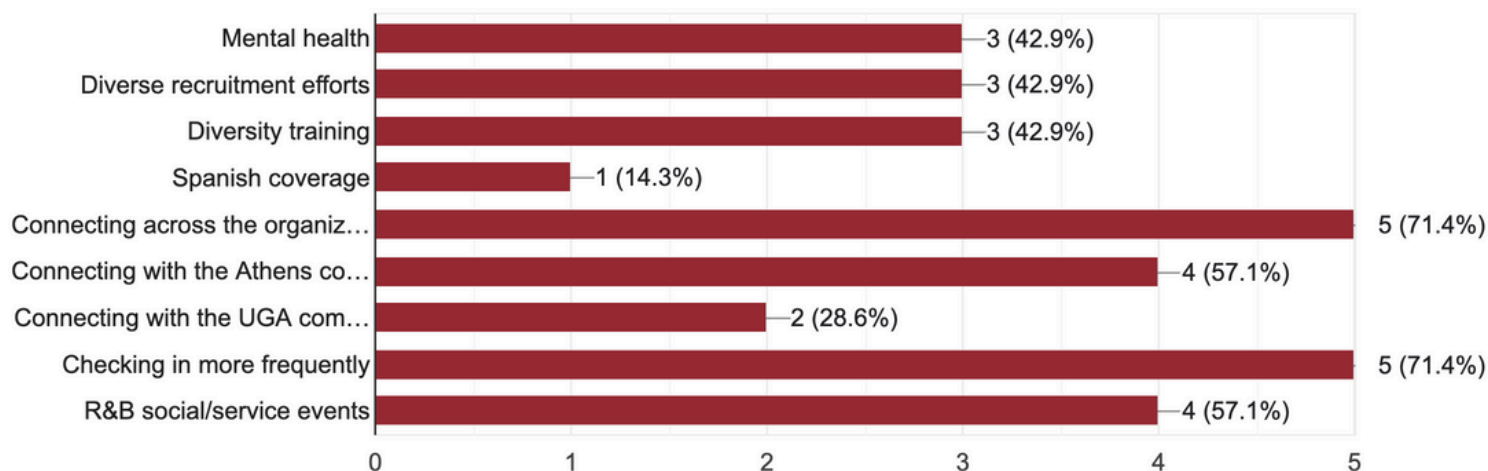


SPRING 2025

PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

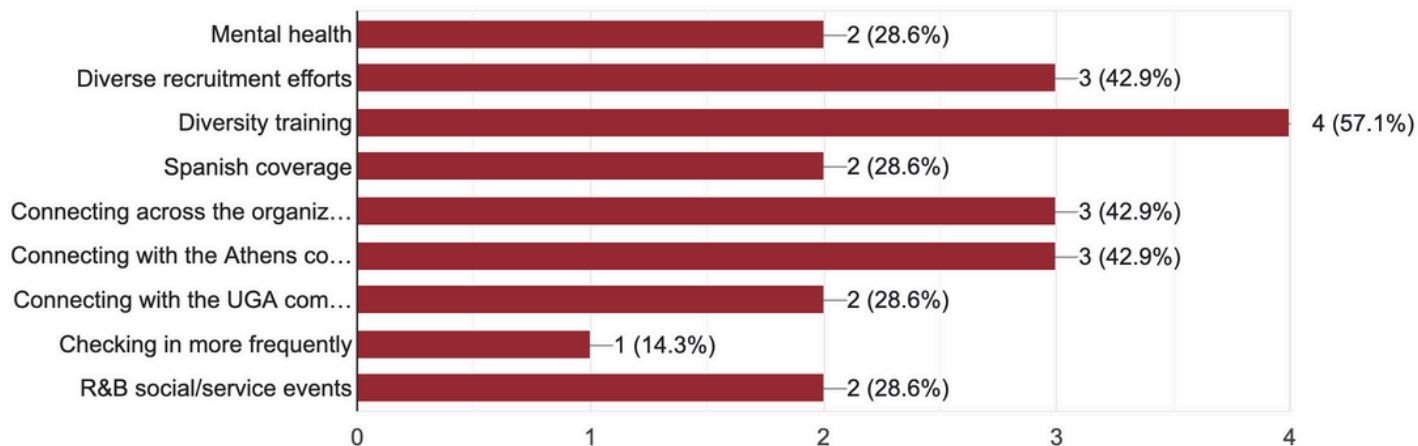
In what areas has The Red & Black improved this semester?

7 responses



Please select the top three priorities you think the Deputy Editor should focus on in the future.

7 responses



SPRING 2025

PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

Areas Improved and Future Priorities

Professional staff identified the top three areas The Red & Black improved in during the spring 2025 semester. Professional staff members were allowed to select multiple answers for this question.

There was a tie for top area of improvement: better connecting across the organization and checking in more frequently. There was also a tie for second-best area of improvement: connecting with the Athens community and office-wide social/service events. A three-way tie exists for third-best area of improvement: mental health, diversifying recruitment efforts and diversity training.

The top two priority for the future deputy editor is diversity training. There is another three-way tie for the future deputy editor's top priority: diversifying recruitment efforts, connecting across the organization and connecting across the Athens community. Professional staff members were also allowed to select multiple answers for this question.

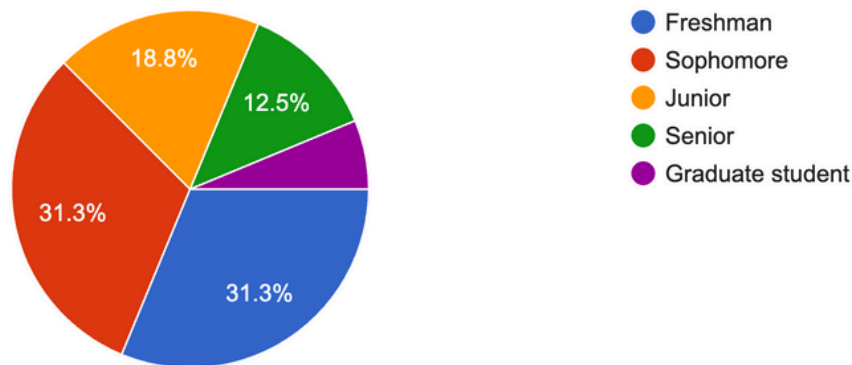
SPRING 2025

CONTRIBUTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

Note: Staff positions, both student staff and pro staff, are paid. Contributors are not paid. Contributors can apply to be on staff each semester. There were 32 professional contributor respondents.

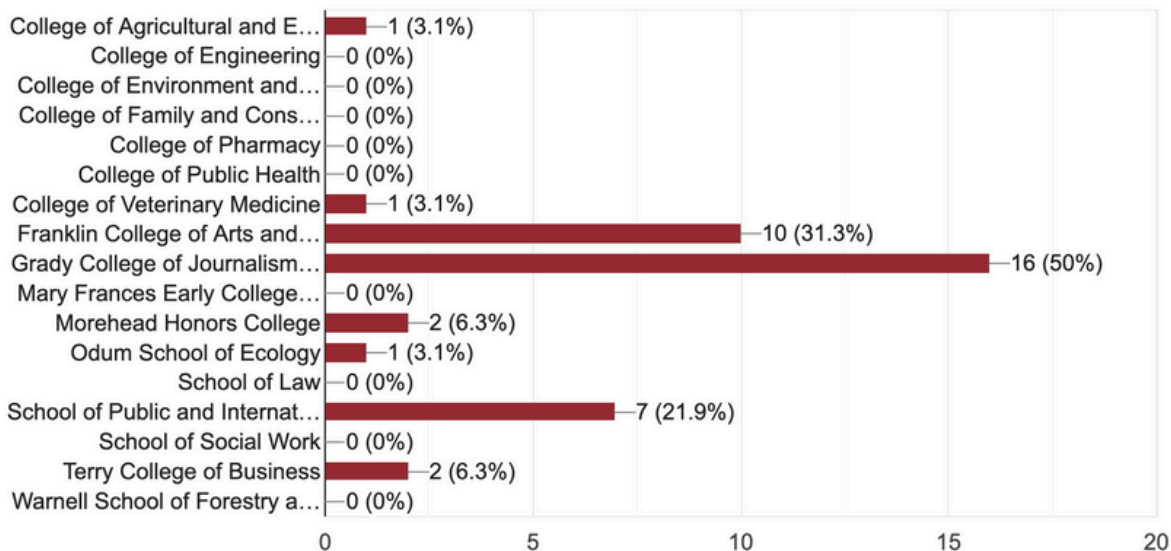
What year are you in?

32 responses



What college(s) are you in at the University of Georgia?

32 responses

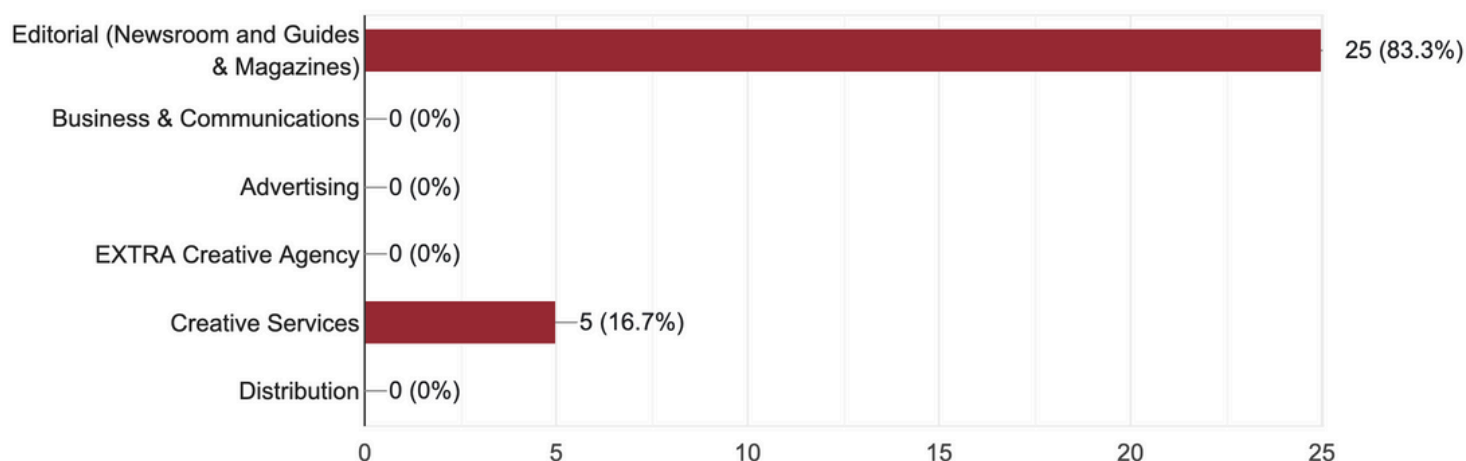


SPRING 2025

CONTRIBUTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

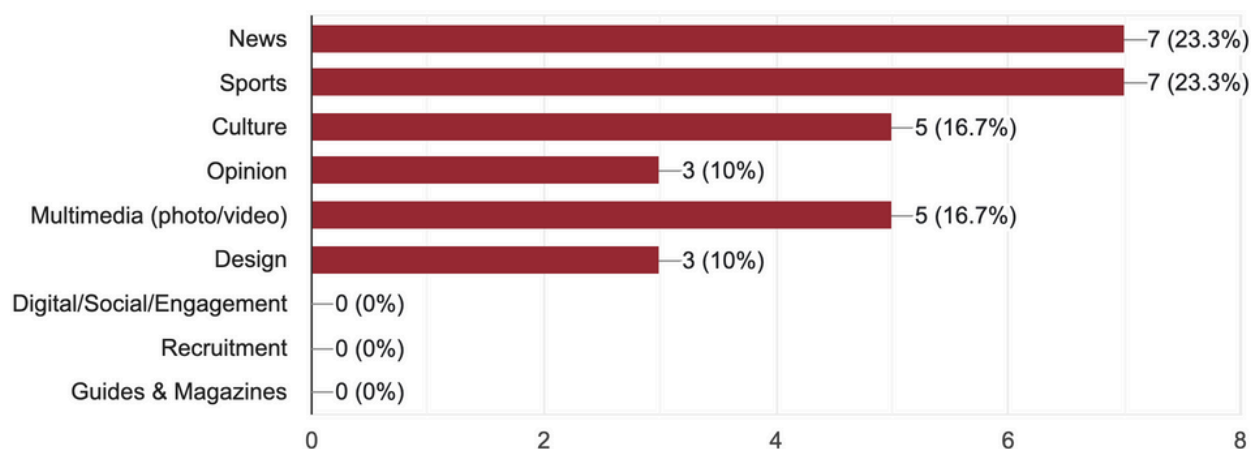
What department are you in at The Red & Black?

30 responses



If applicable, what editorial desk are you in?

30 responses

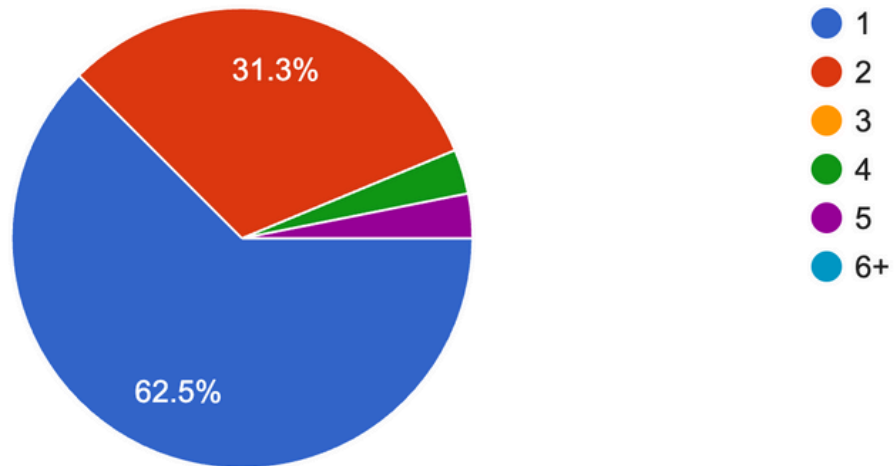


SPRING 2025

CONTRIBUTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

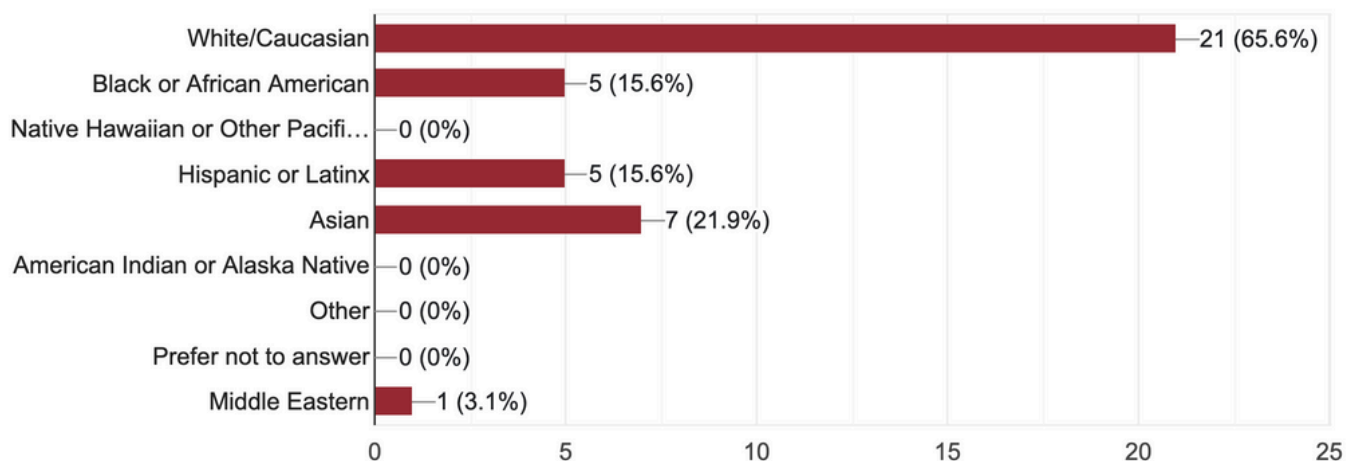
How many semesters have you been active at The Red & Black?

32 responses



What is your race/ethnicity?

32 responses

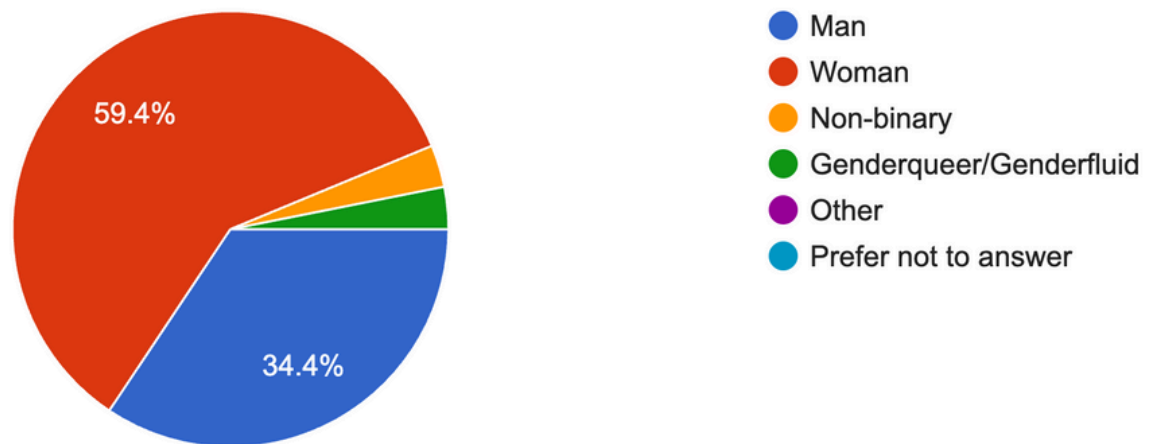


SPRING 2025

CONTRIBUTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

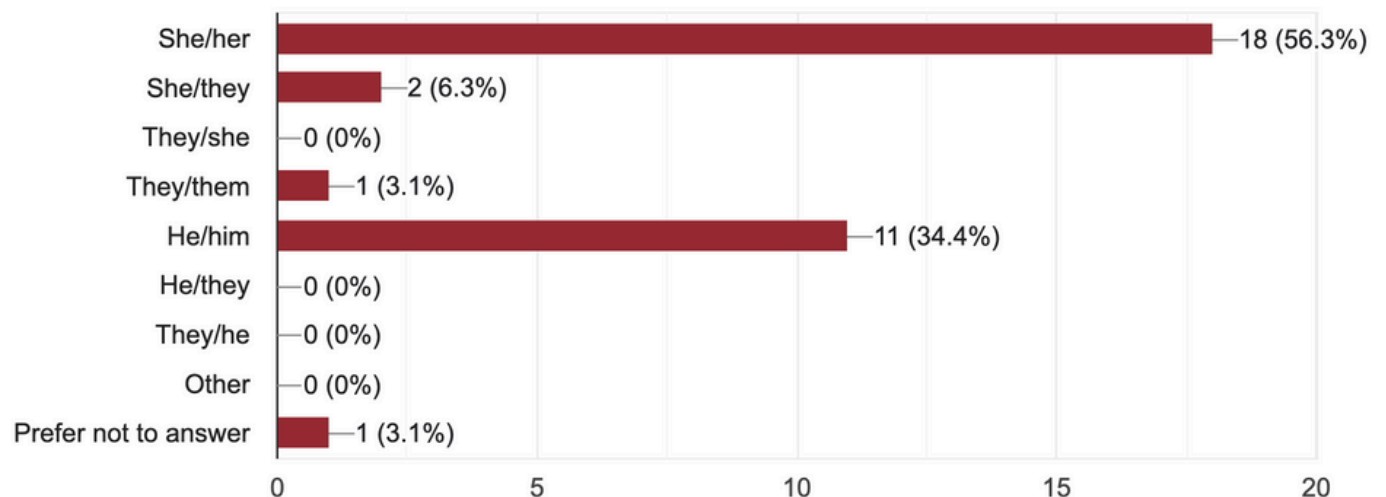
What is your gender identity?

32 responses



What pronouns do you use?

32 responses

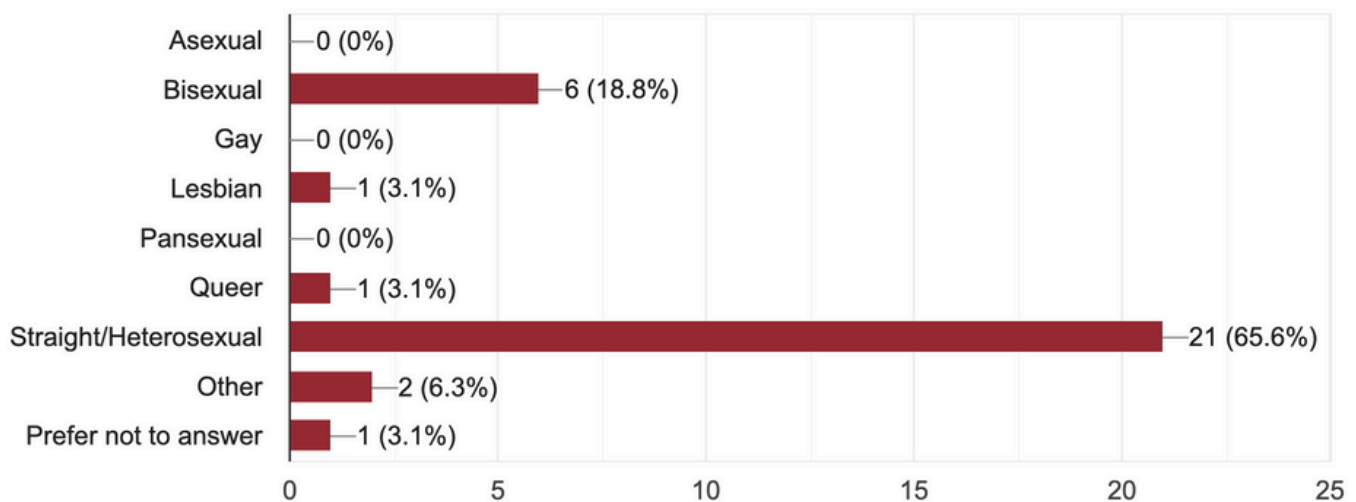


SPRING 2025

CONTRIBUTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

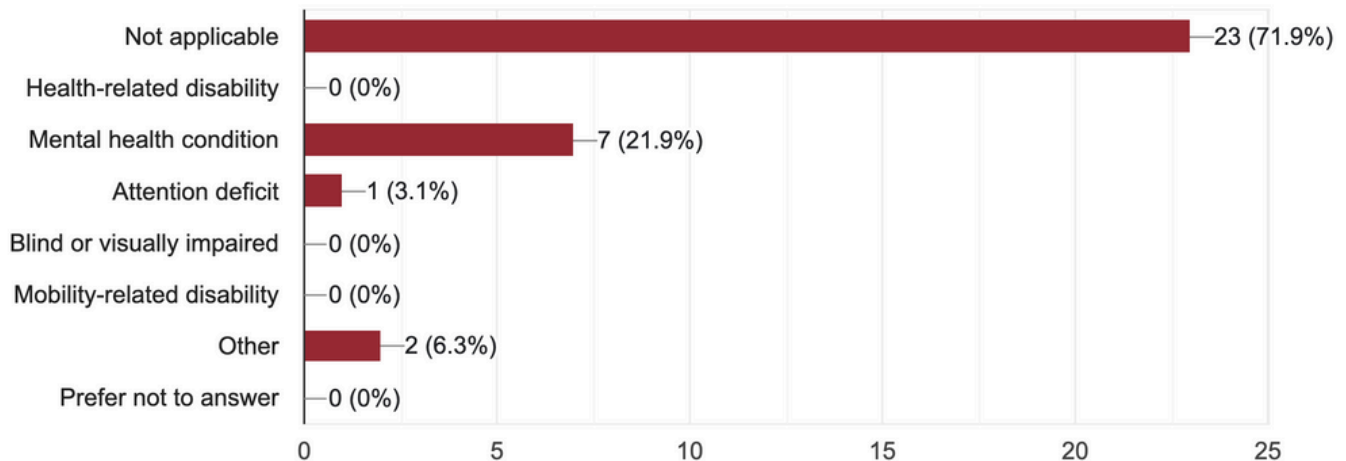
What is your sexual orientation?

32 responses



Do you have a disability or chronic condition? If so, how would you describe it?

32 responses

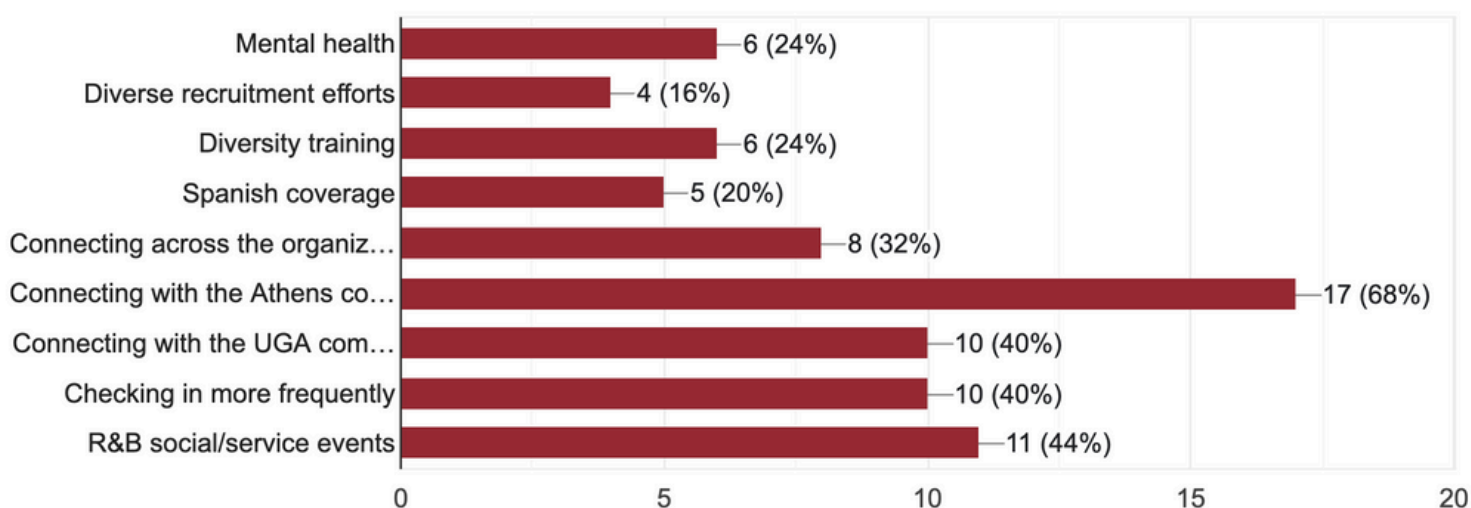


SPRING 2025

CONTRIBUTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

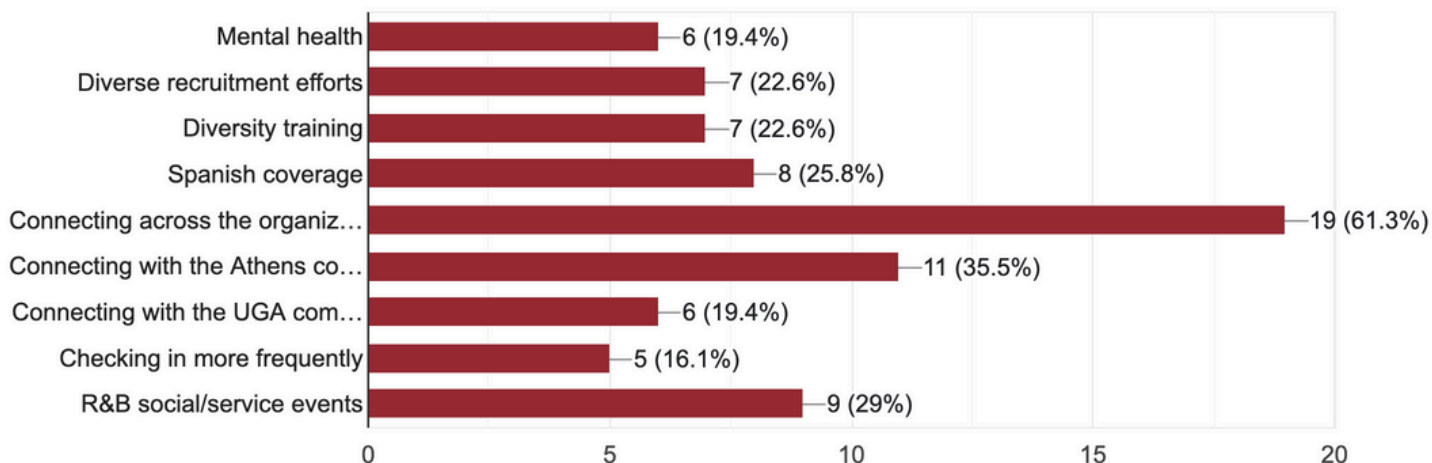
In what areas has The Red & Black improved this semester?

25 responses



Please select the top three priorities you think the Deputy Editor should focus on in the future.

31 responses



SPRING 2025

CONTRIBUTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

Areas Improved and Future Priorities

Contributors identified the top three areas The Red & Black improved in during the spring 2025 semester. Contributors were allowed to select multiple answers for this question.

The greatest area of improvement was better connecting across the organization, followed by office-wide social/service events and a tie between checking in more frequently and connecting with the Athens community.

The top priority for the future deputy editor was connecting across the organization, followed by connecting with the Athens community and office-wide social/service events. Contributors were also allowed to select multiple answers for this question.

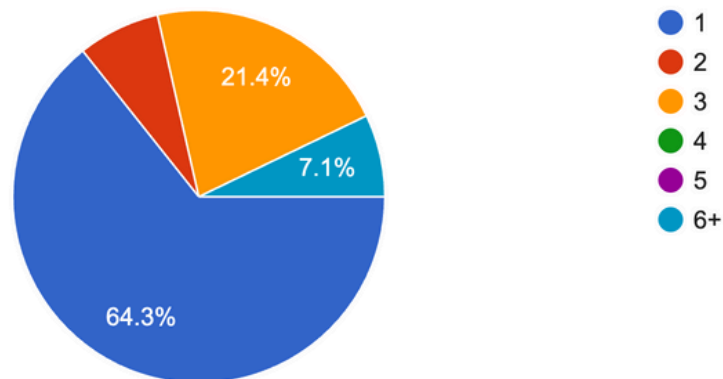
SPRING 2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DEMOGRAPHICS

Note:

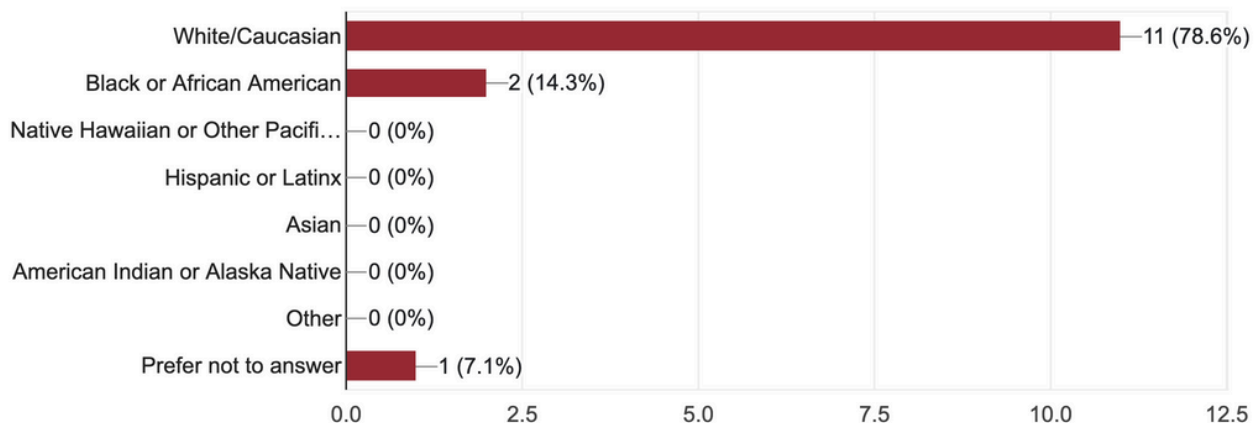
How many years have you been a Board of Directors member with The Red & Black?

14 responses



What is your race/ethnicity?

14 responses



A NOTE ON OUR

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DEMOGRAPHICS

Over the last several years, the board of directors of The Red & Black Publishing Company, Inc. has made a deliberate effort to increase the diversity of its members while also supporting the overall DEI efforts of the student and staff leaders at The Red & Black. The board membership includes two student positions — the editor-in-chief and the student advertising manager. In 2023, the board voted to create a new managing editor role, the Deputy Editor of Standards & Practices. This student serves as a liaison to the board of directors for any related DEI projects and oversees DEI, standards and practices within the organization as a whole.

Starting in 2022, board members opted to track and report their demographics, following the guidelines set out by Candid, the nonprofit industry standard. Following are the results for the 2024 report. At the end of 2024, The Red & Black welcomed five new board members to begin their three-year terms. The data in this report is representative of the board going into 2026. Data for the previous years' board can be found in the 2024 and 2023 DEI report. In 2025, there were 18 board members, 14 of whom completed the survey in the spring and 9 which completed the survey in the fall.

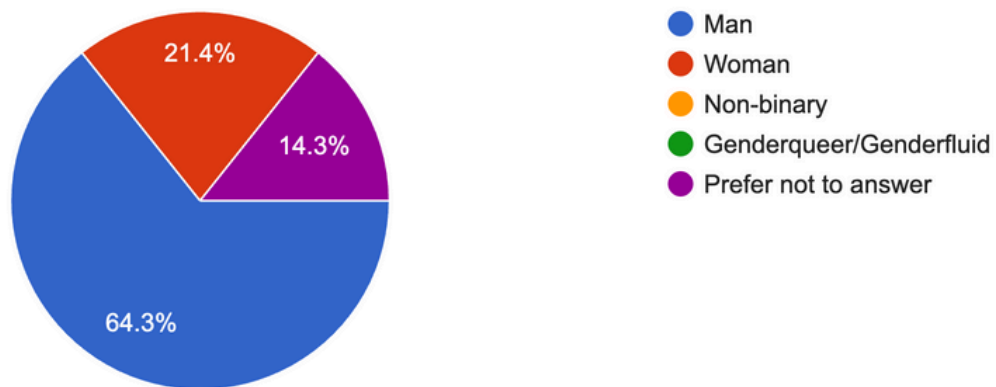


SPRING 2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DEMOGRAPHICS

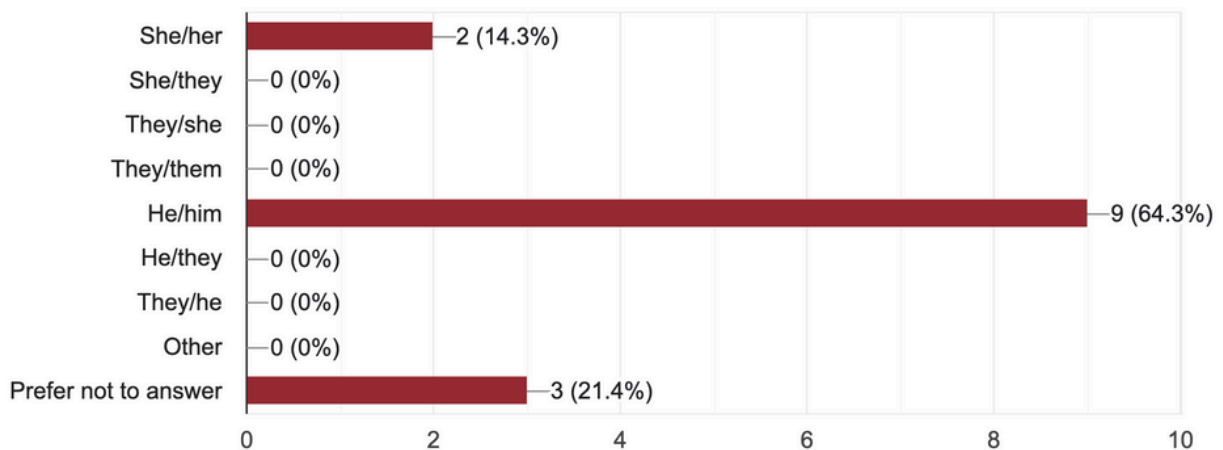
What is your gender identity?

14 responses



What pronouns do you use?

14 responses

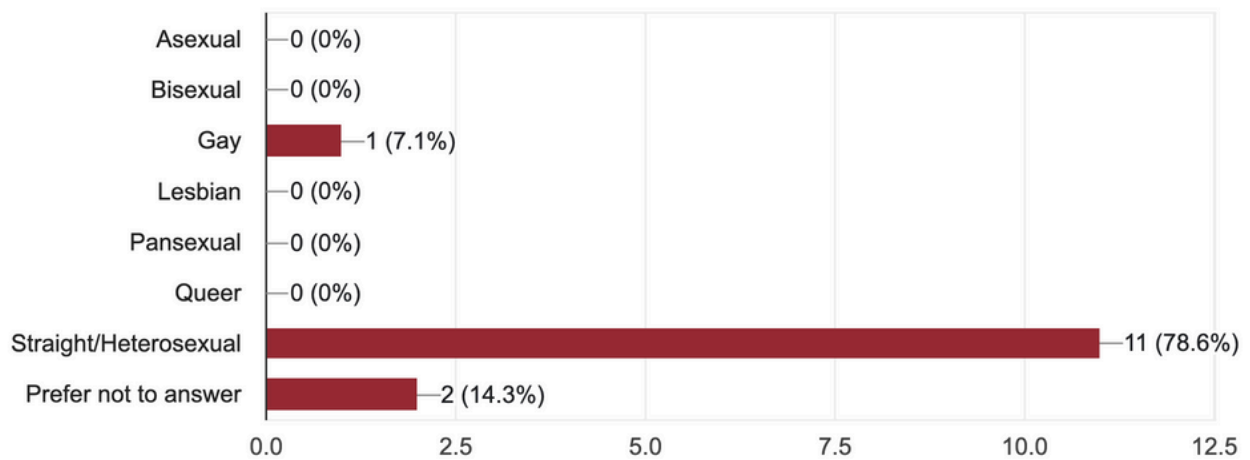


SPRING 2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DEMOGRAPHICS

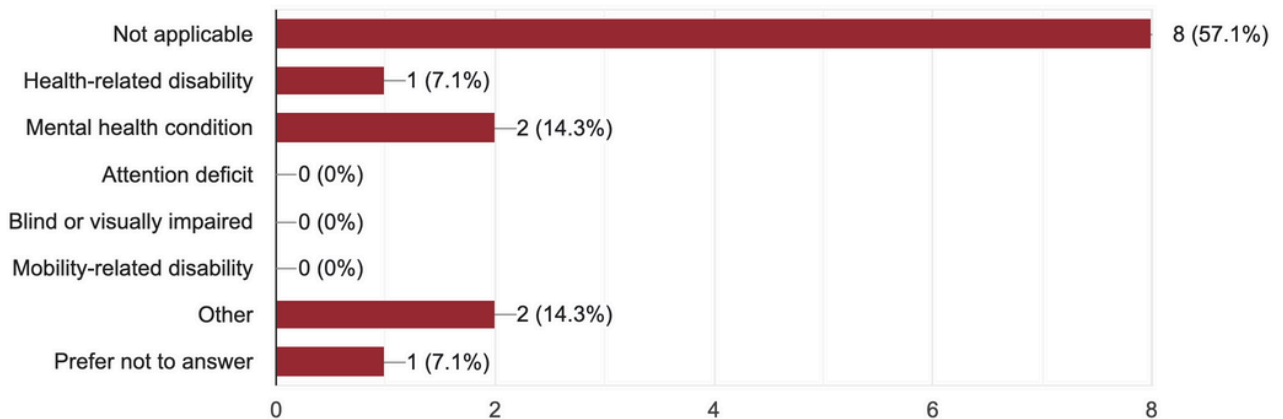
What is your sexual orientation?

14 responses



Do you have a disability or chronic condition? If so, how would you describe it?

14 responses

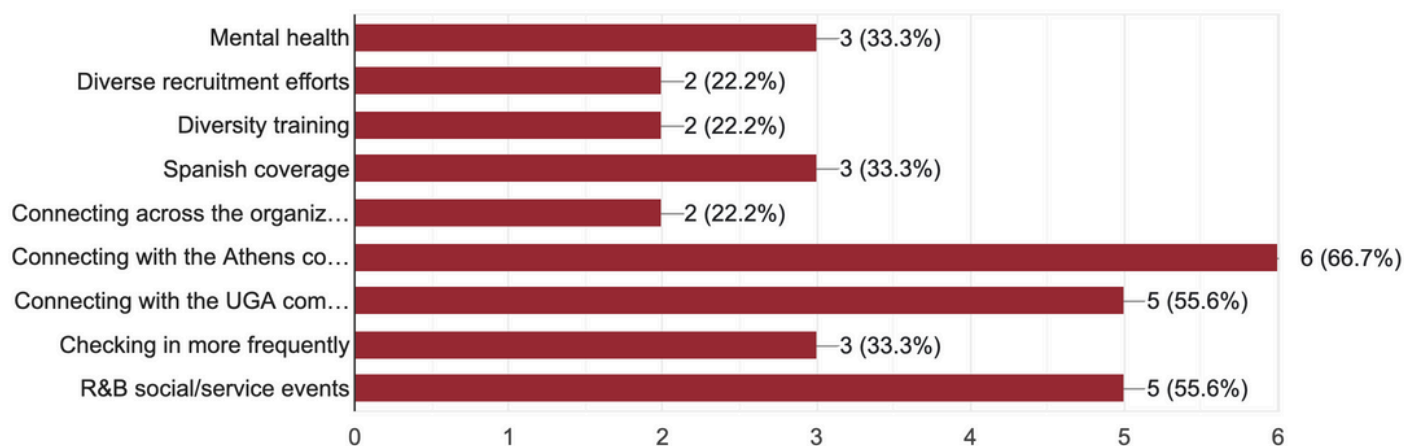


SPRING 2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DEMOGRAPHICS

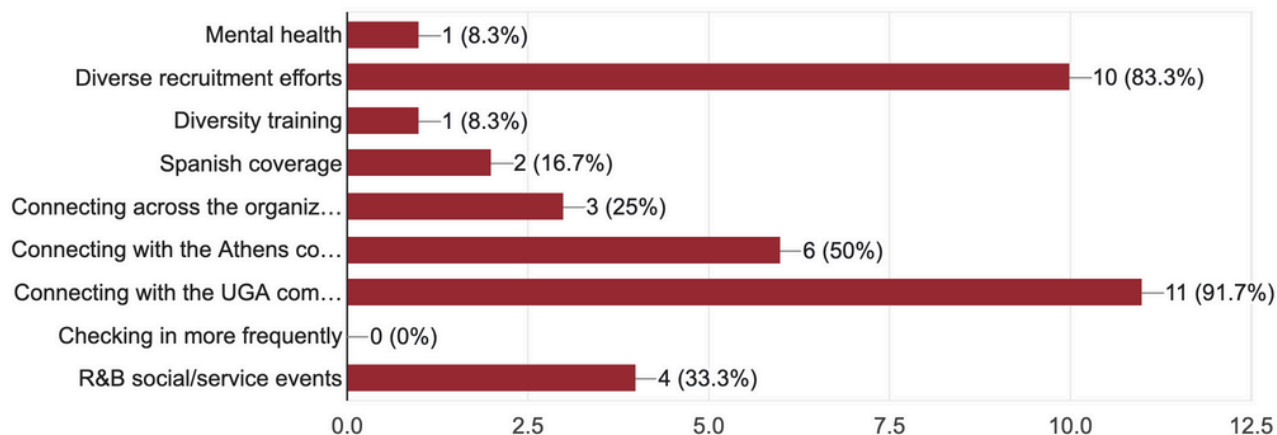
In what areas has The Red & Black improved this semester?

9 responses



Please select the top three priorities you think the Deputy Editor should focus on in the future.

12 responses



SPRING 2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DEMOGRAPHICS

Areas Improved and Future Priorities

The board of directors of The Red & Black Publishing Company, Inc. identified the top three areas The Red & Black improved in during the spring 2025 semester. The board of directors were allowed to select multiple answers for this question.

The greatest area of improvement was better connecting with the Athens community. There was a two-way tie between better connecting with the UGA community and office-wide social/service events. There was also a three-way tie between mental health, Spanish coverage and checking in more frequently.

The top priority for the future deputy editor was better connecting with the UGA community, followed by diversifying recruitment efforts and connecting with the Athens community. The board of directors were also allowed to select multiple answers for this question.

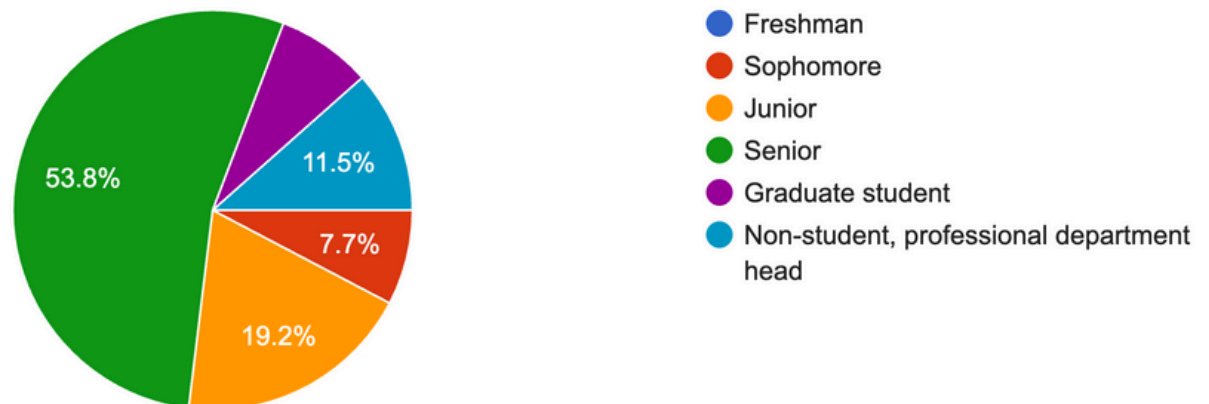
FALL 2025

PAID STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

Note: For the fall 2025 semester, both paid student and professional staff were consolidated into a single survey entitled “Paid Staff.” Certain questions were also altered to better fit the culture of the newsroom and to be more inclusive. There were two other separate surveys for the board of directors and contributors. Contributors are not paid, but can apply to be on staff each semester. We had 27 survey responses from paid staff members.

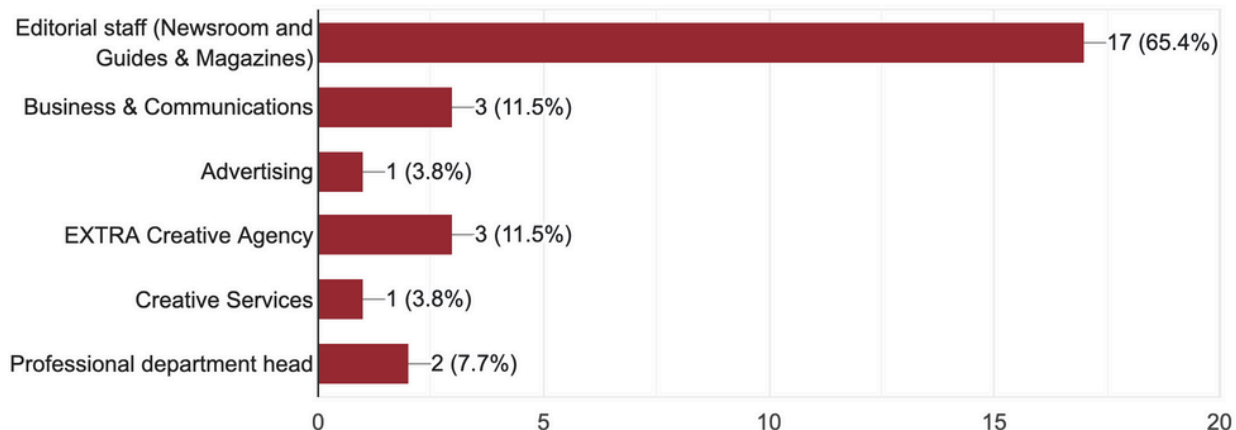
What year are you in?

26 responses



What department are you in at The Red & Black?

26 responses

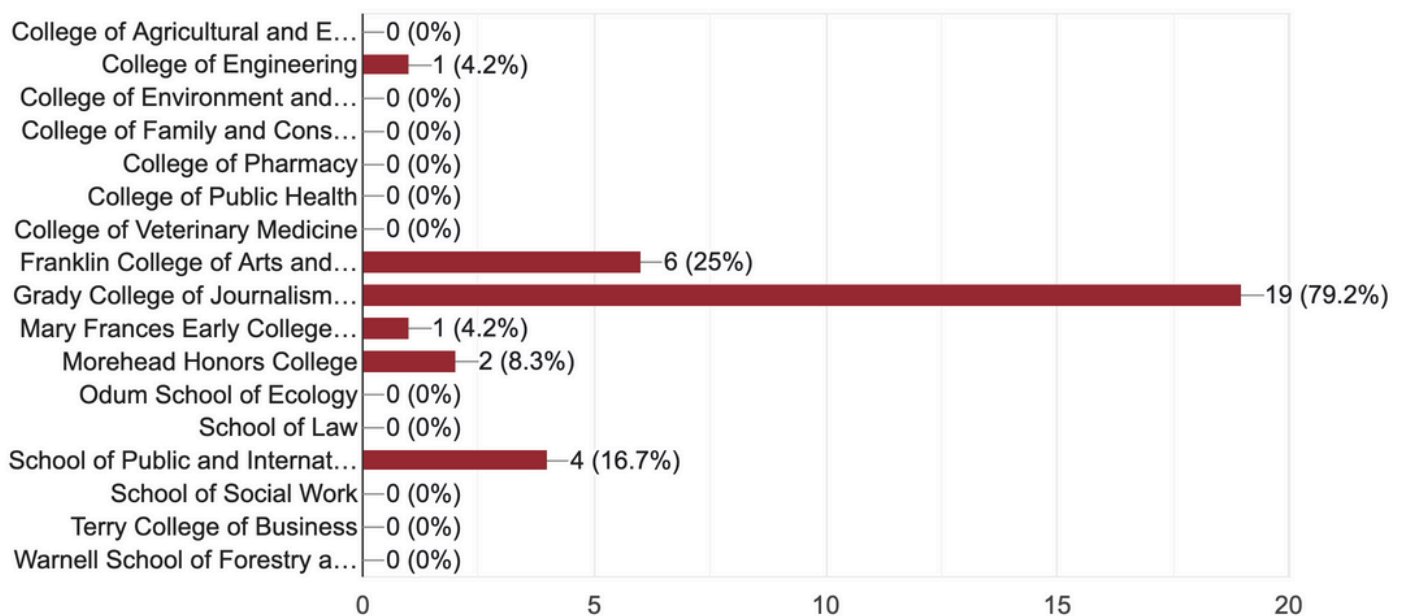


FALL 2025

PAID STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

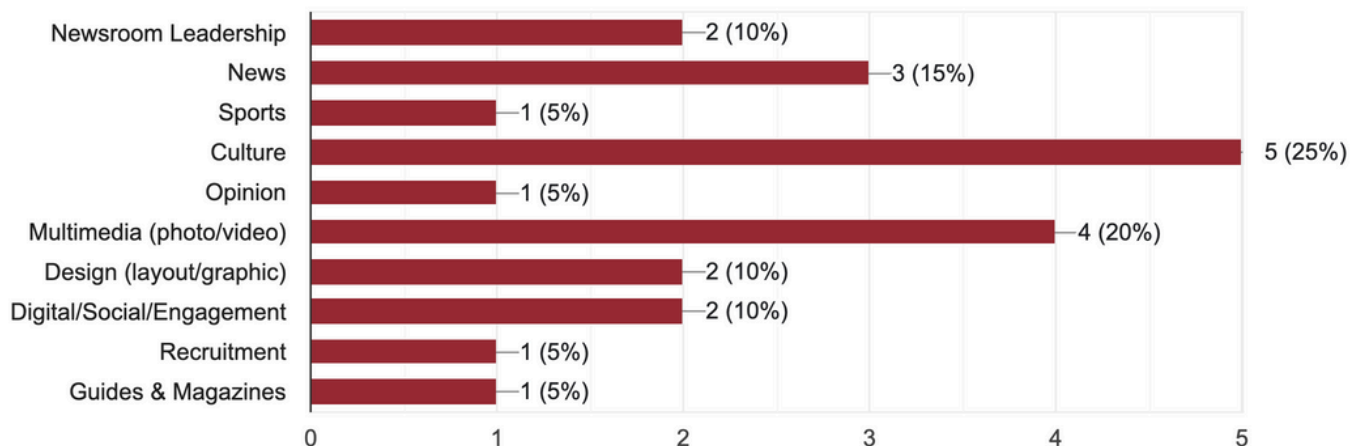
What college(s) are you in at the University of Georgia?

24 responses



If applicable, what editorial desk are you in?

20 responses

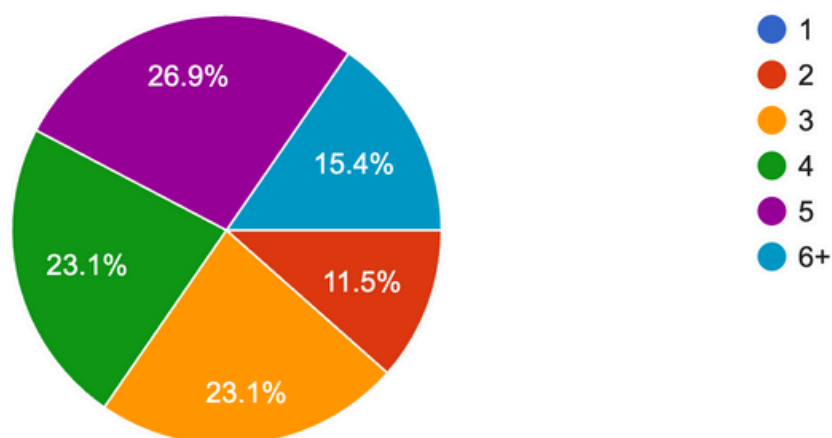


FALL 2025

PAID STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

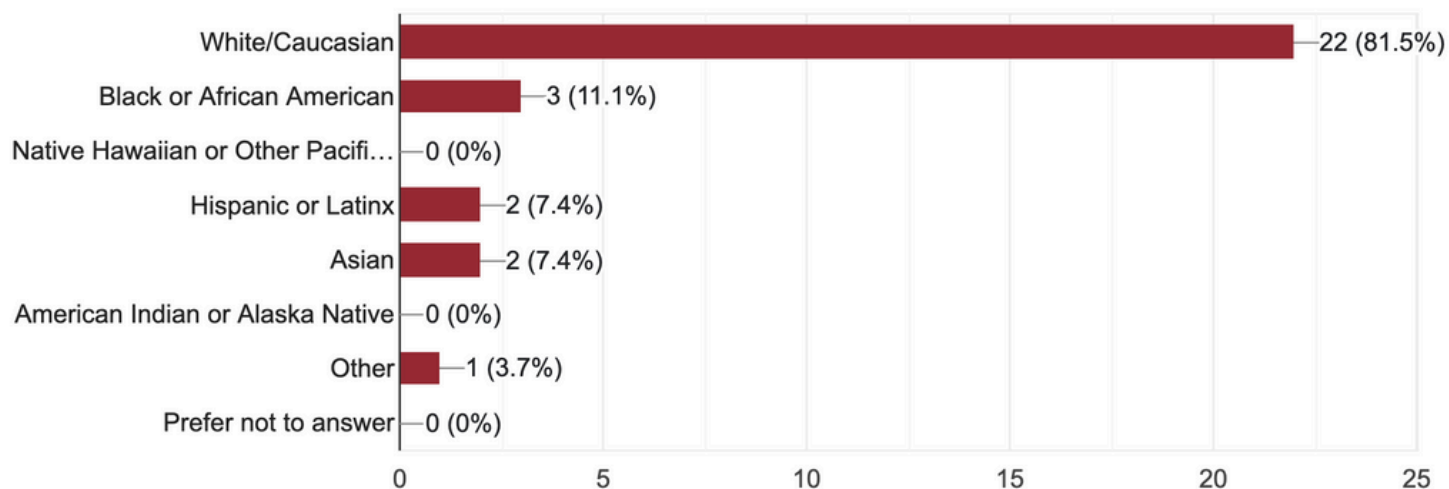
How many semesters have you been with The Red & Black? (Including as a contributor)

26 responses



What is your race/ethnicity?

27 responses

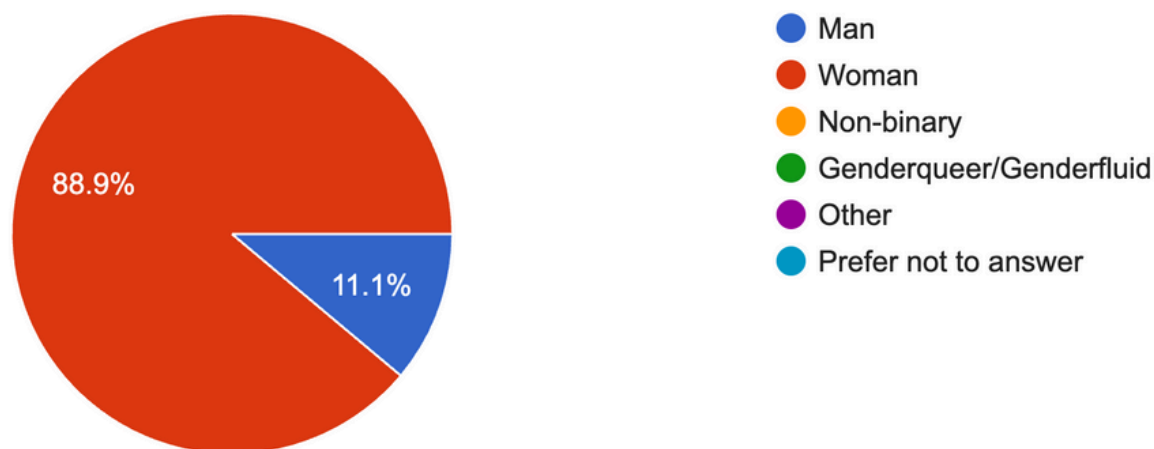


FALL 2025

PAID STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

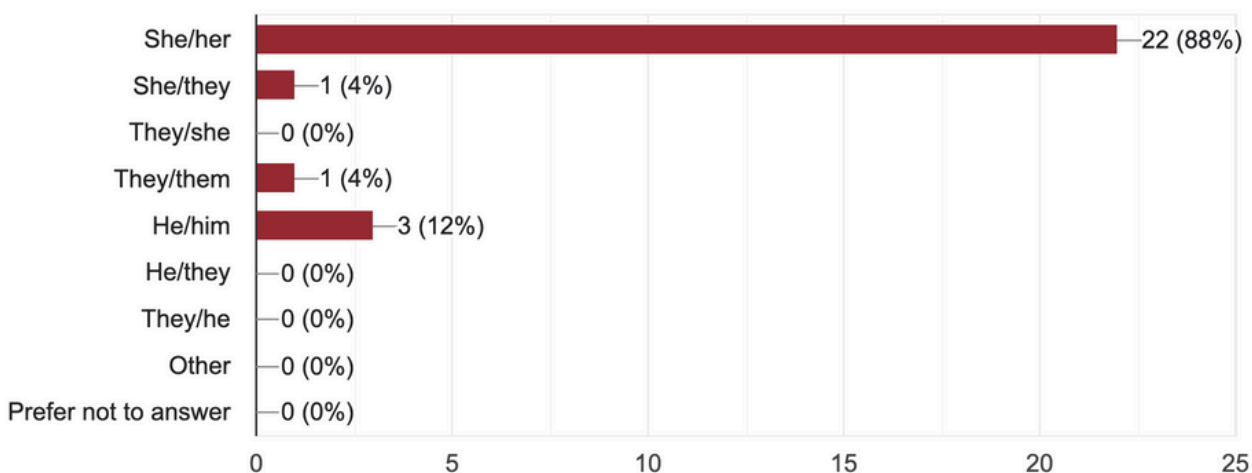
What is your gender identity?

27 responses



What pronouns do you use?

25 responses

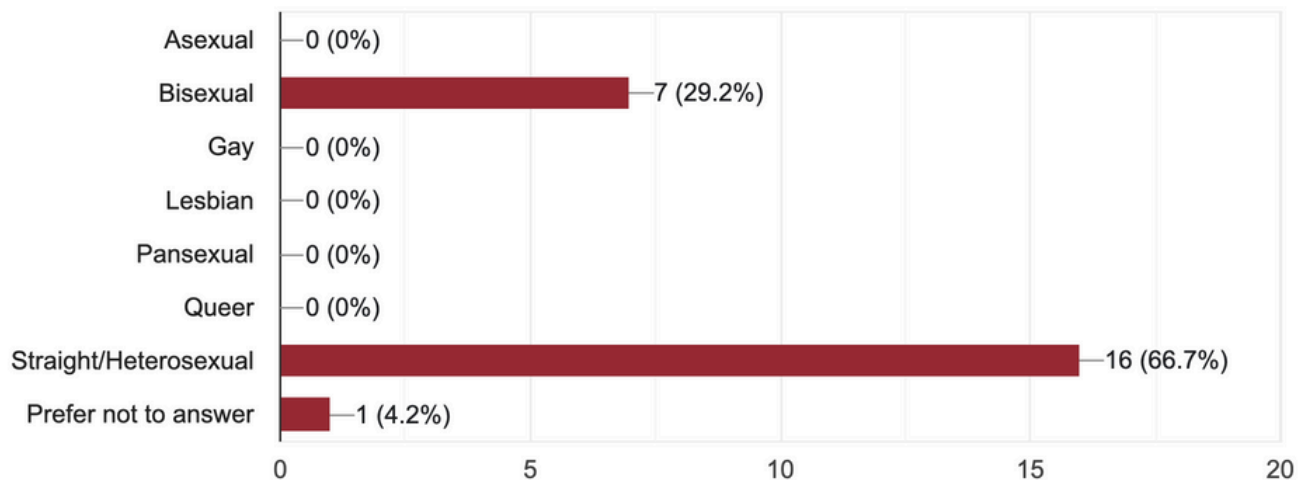


FALL 2025

PAID STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

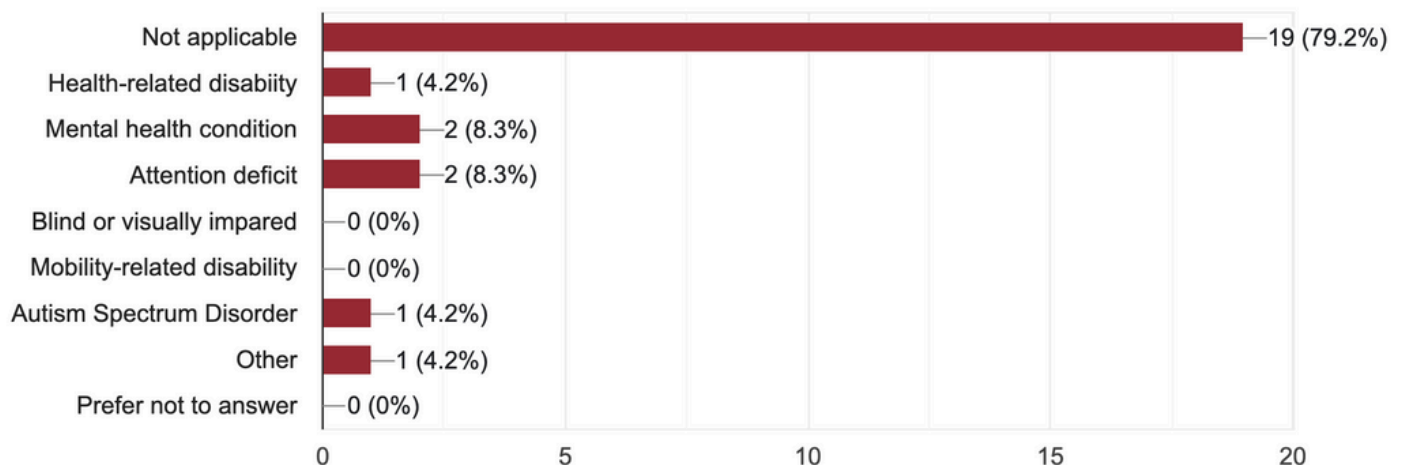
What is your sexual orientation?

24 responses



Do you have a disability or chronic condition? If so, how would you describe it?

24 responses

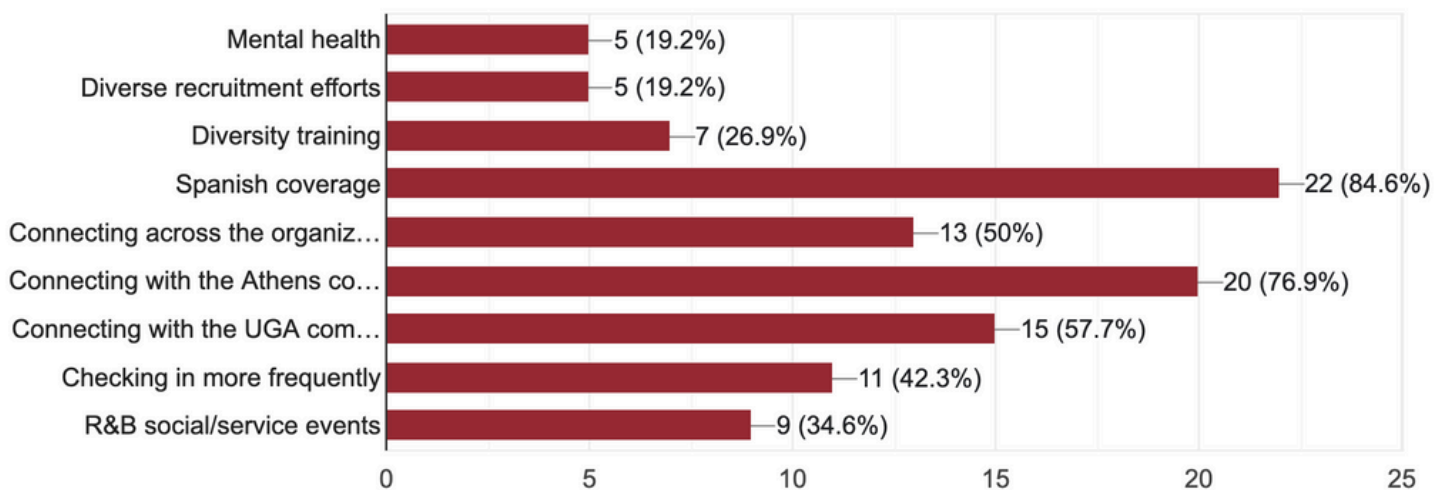


FALL 2025

PAID STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

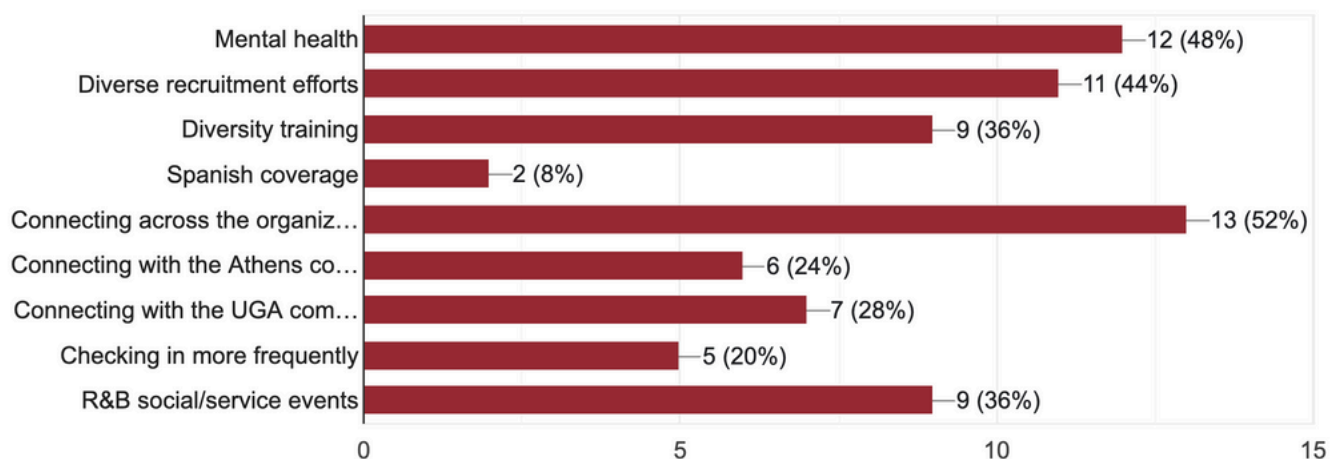
In what areas has The Red & Black improved this semester?

26 responses



Please select the top three priorities you think the Deputy Editor should focus on in the future.

25 responses



FALL 2025

PAID STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

Areas Improved and Future Priorities

Paid staff members identified the top three areas The Red & Black improved in during the fall 2025 semester. Paid staff members were allowed to select multiple answers for this question.

The greatest area of improvement was Spanish coverage, followed by connecting with the Athens community and connecting with the UGA community.

The top priority for the future deputy editor was better connecting across the organization, followed by mental health and diversifying recruitment efforts. Paid staff members were also allowed to select multiple answers for this question.

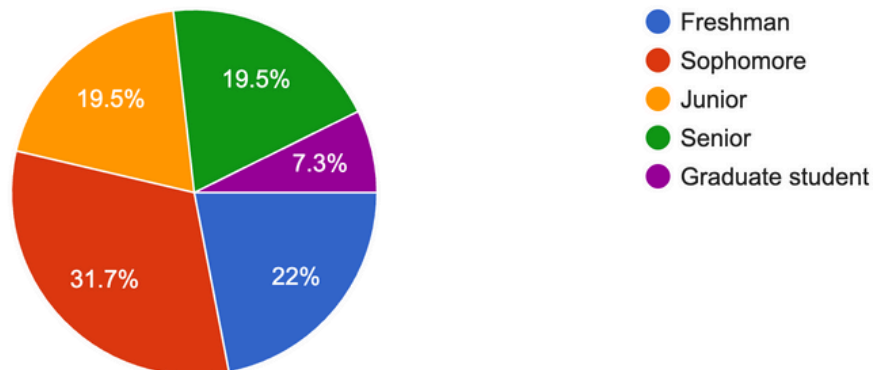
FALL 2025

CONTRIBUTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

Note: For the fall 2025 semester, both paid student and professional staff were consolidated into a single survey entitled “Paid Staff.” Certain questions were also altered to better fit the culture of the newsroom and to be more inclusive. There were two other separate surveys for the board of directors and contributors. Contributors are not paid, but can apply to be on staff each semester. We had 41 survey responses from contributors.

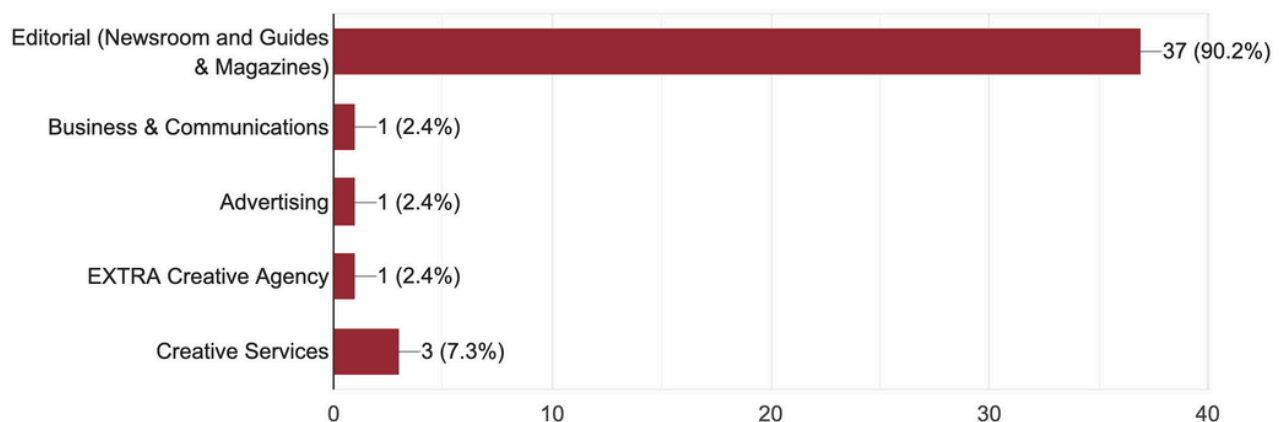
What year are you in?

41 responses



What department are you in at The Red & Black?

41 responses

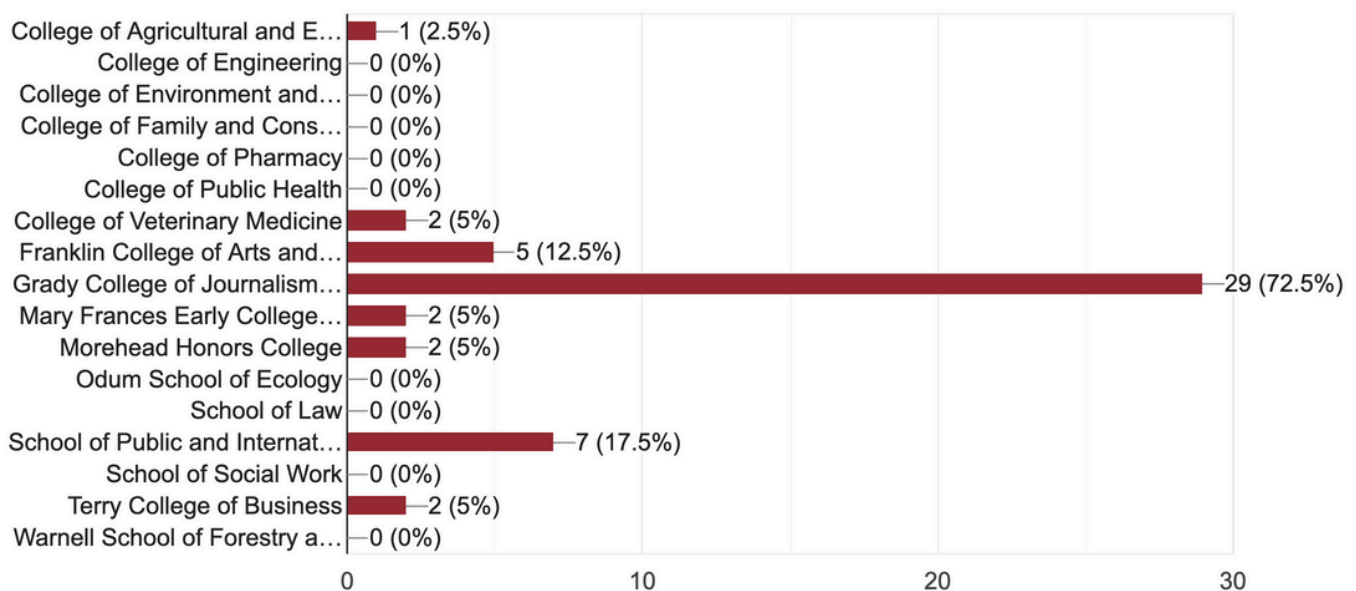


FALL 2025

CONTRIBUTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

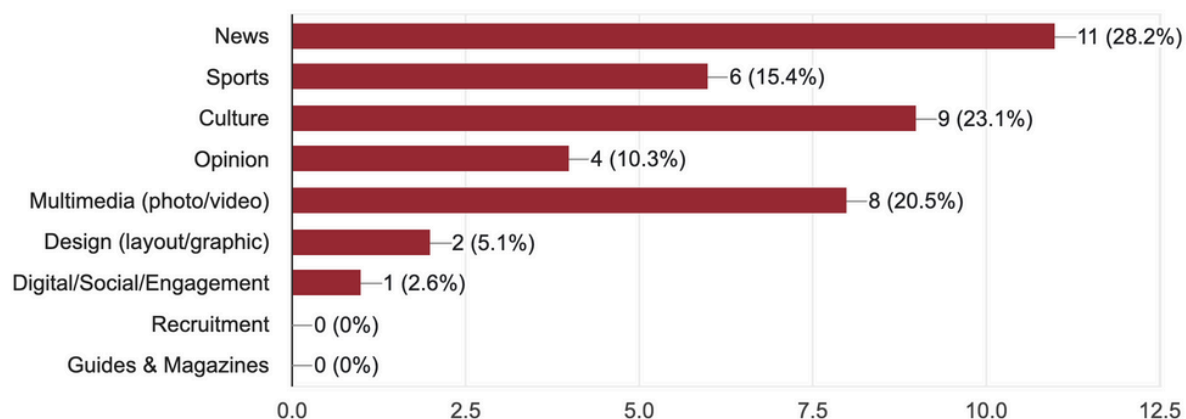
What college(s) are you in at the University of Georgia?

40 responses



If applicable, what editorial desk are you in?

39 responses

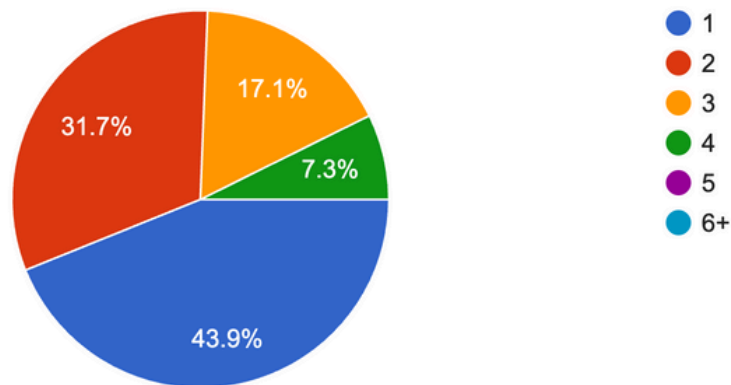


FALL 2025

CONTRIBUTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

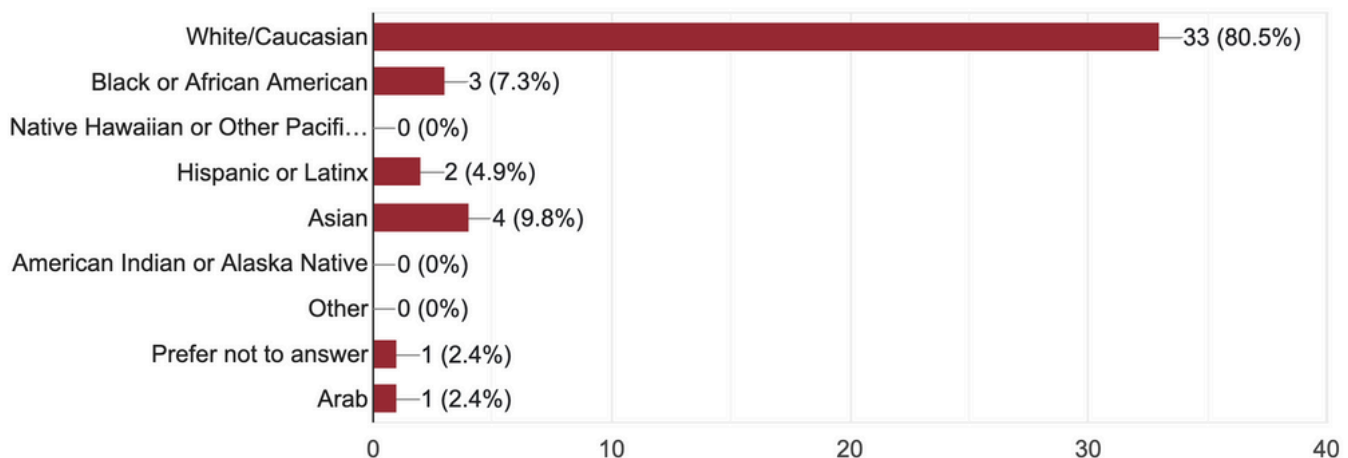
How many semesters have you been active at The Red & Black?

41 responses



What is your race/ethnicity?

41 responses

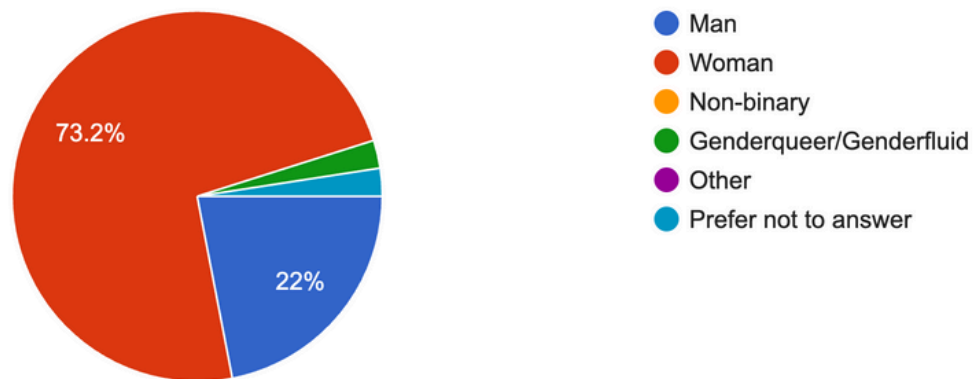


FALL 2025

CONTRIBUTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

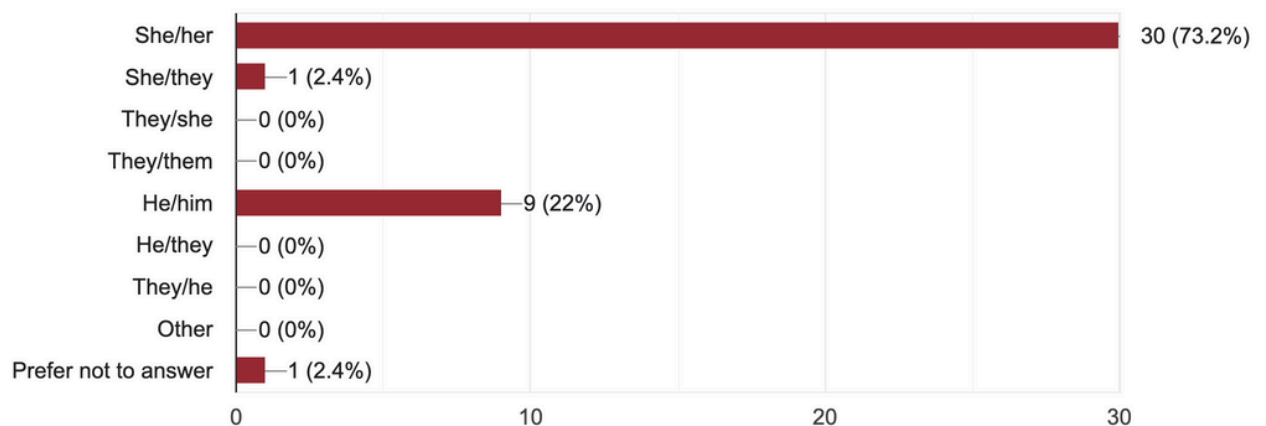
What is your gender identity?

41 responses



What pronouns do you use?

41 responses

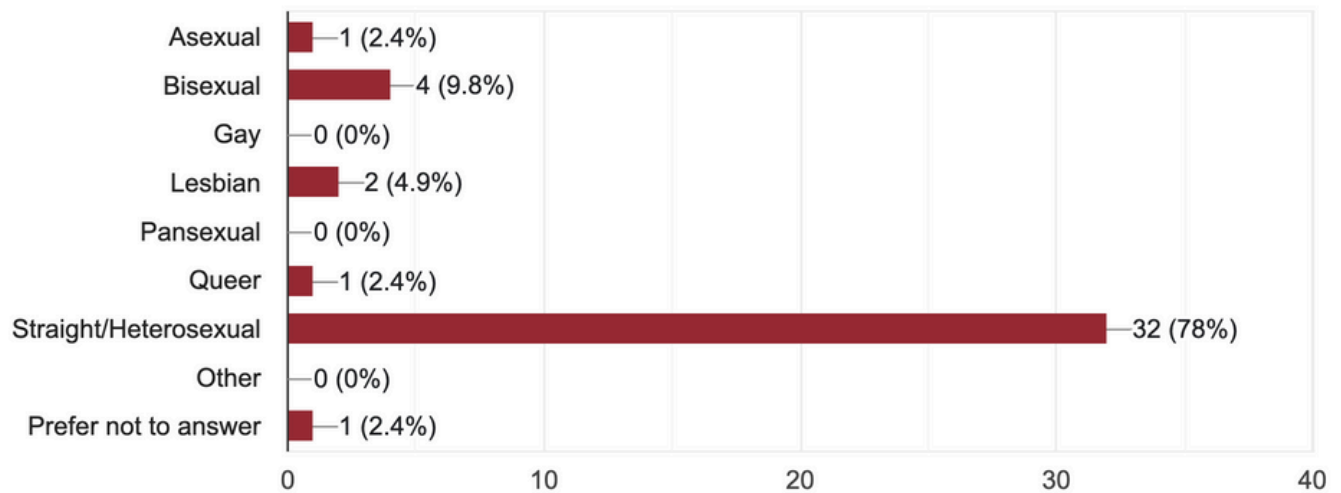


FALL 2025

CONTRIBUTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

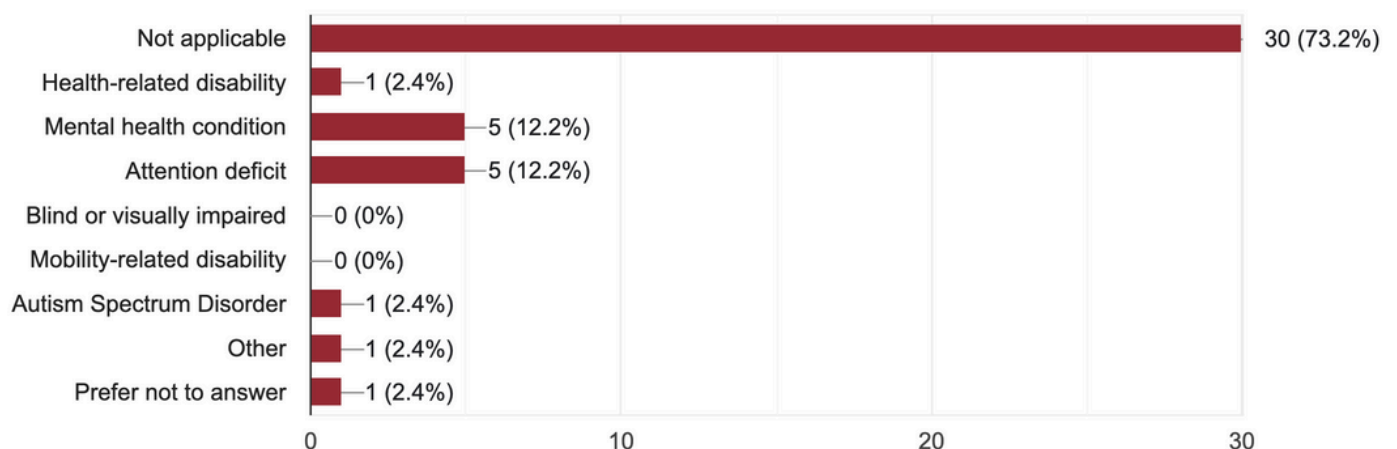
What is your sexual orientation?

41 responses



Do you have a disability or chronic condition? If so, how would you describe it?

41 responses

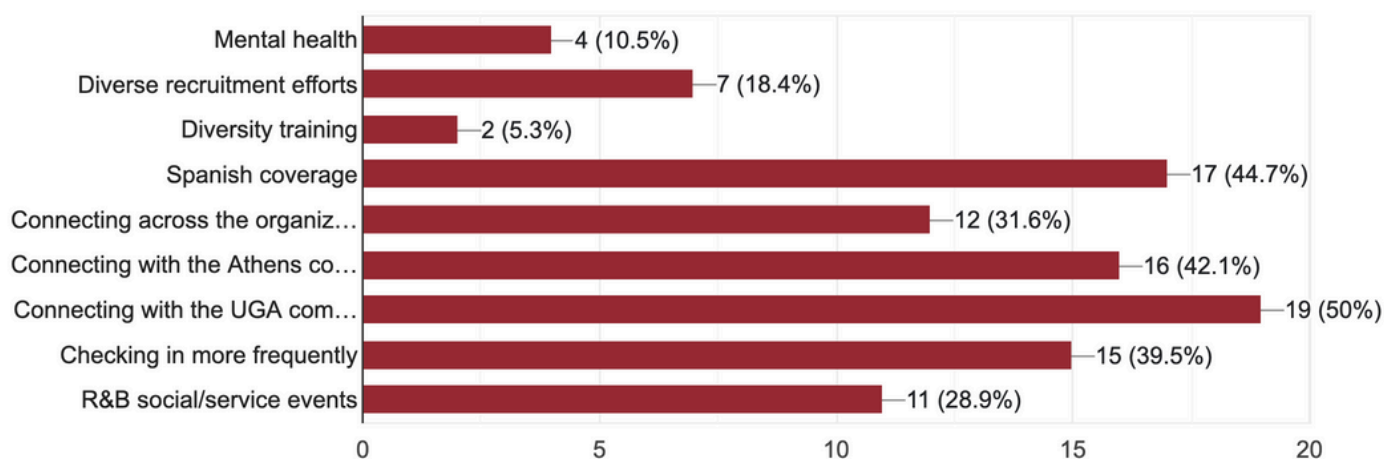


FALL 2025

CONTRIBUTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

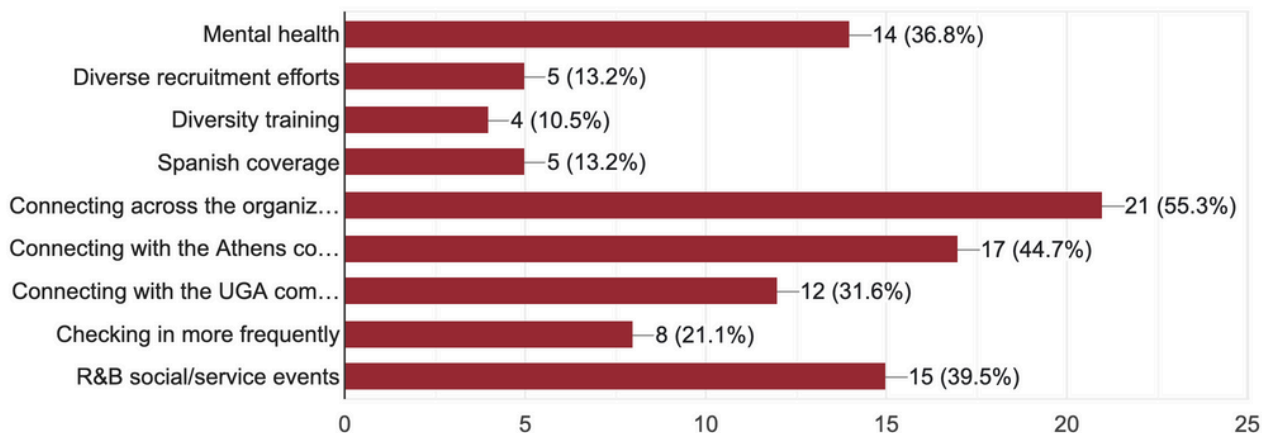
In what areas has The Red & Black improved this semester?

38 responses



Please select the top three priorities you think the Deputy Editor should focus on in the future.

38 responses



FALL 2025

CONTRIBUTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

Areas Improved and Future Priorities

Contributors identified the top three areas The Red & Black improved in during the fall 2025 semester. Contributors were allowed to select multiple answers for this question.

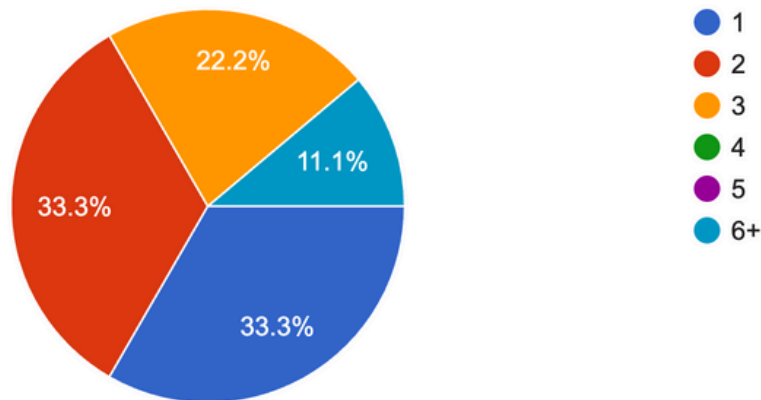
The greatest area of improvement was better connecting with the UGA community, followed by Spanish coverage and connecting with the Athens community.

The top priority for the future deputy editor was better connecting across the organization, followed by connecting with the Athens community and office-wide social/service events. Contributors were also allowed to select multiple answers for this question.

FALL 2025

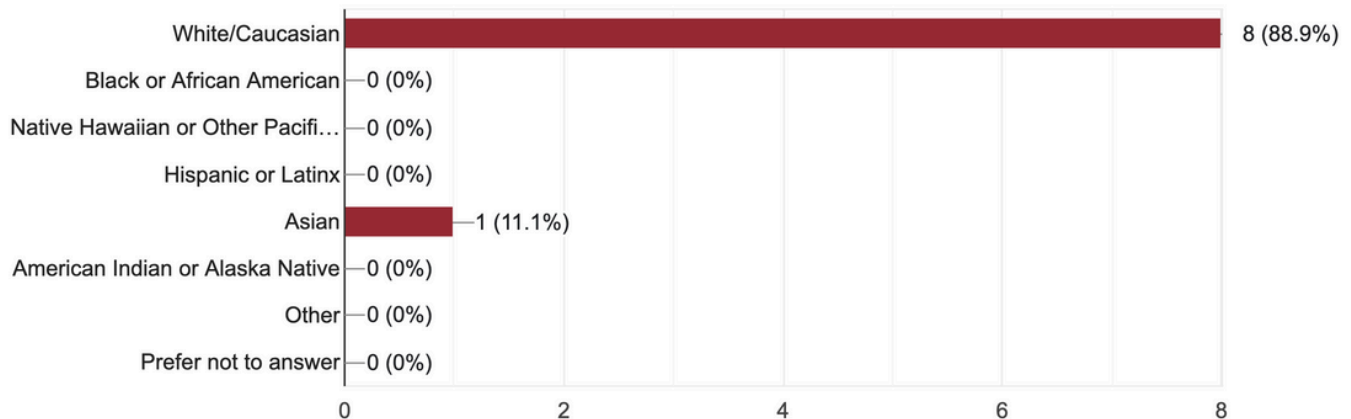
BOARD OF DIRECTORS DEMOGRAPHICS

How many years have you been a Board of Directors member with The Red & Black?
9 responses



What is your race/ethnicity?

9 responses

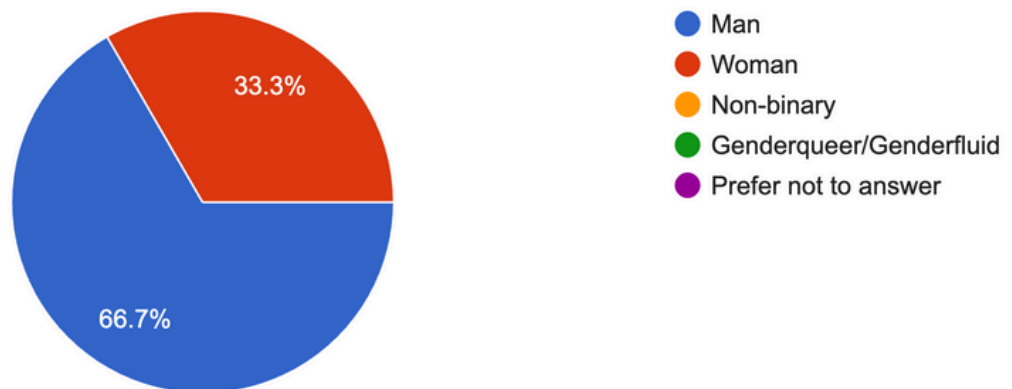


FALL 2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DEMOGRAPHICS

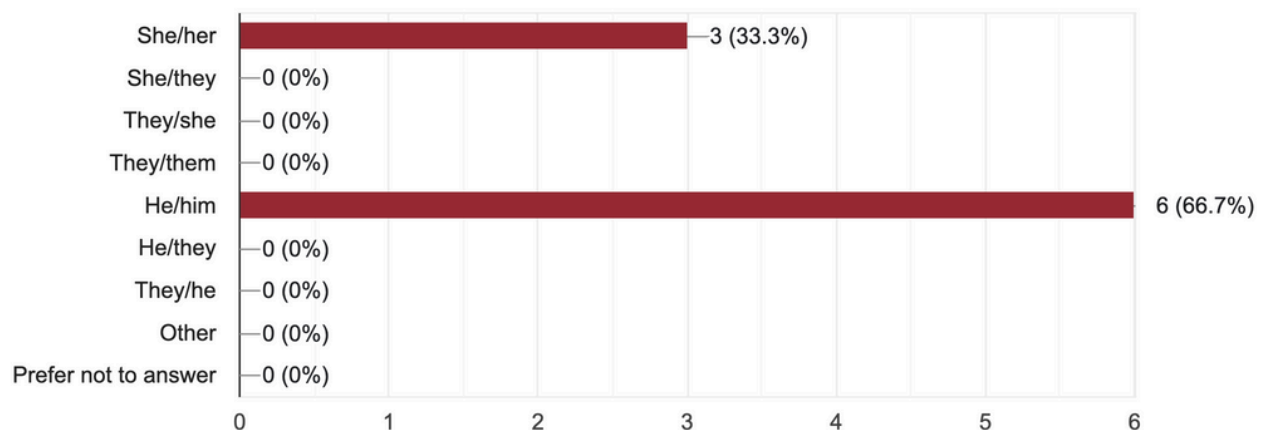
What is your gender identity?

9 responses



What pronouns do you use?

9 responses

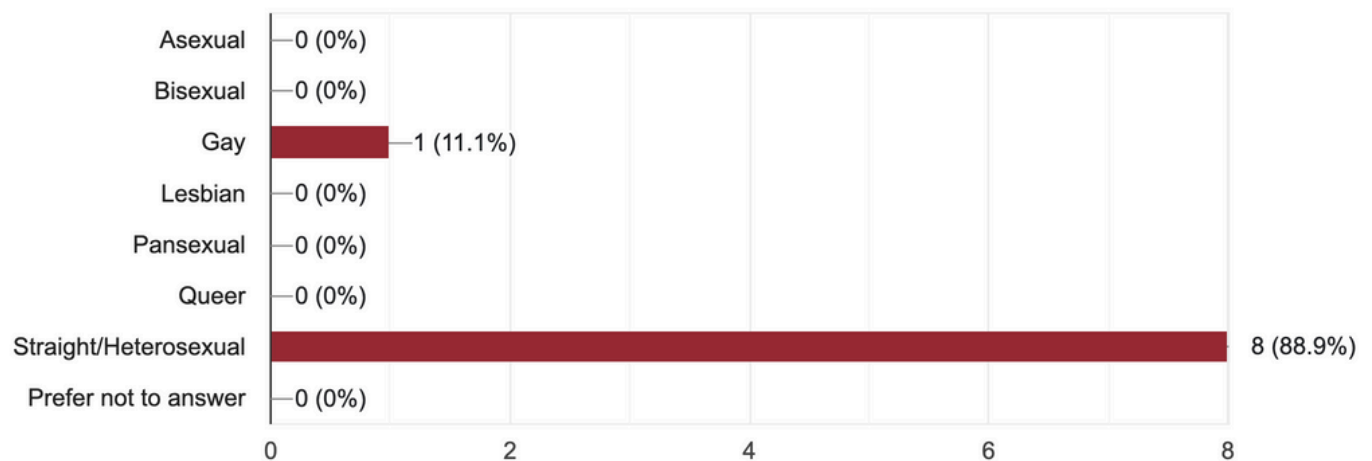


FALL 2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DEMOGRAPHICS

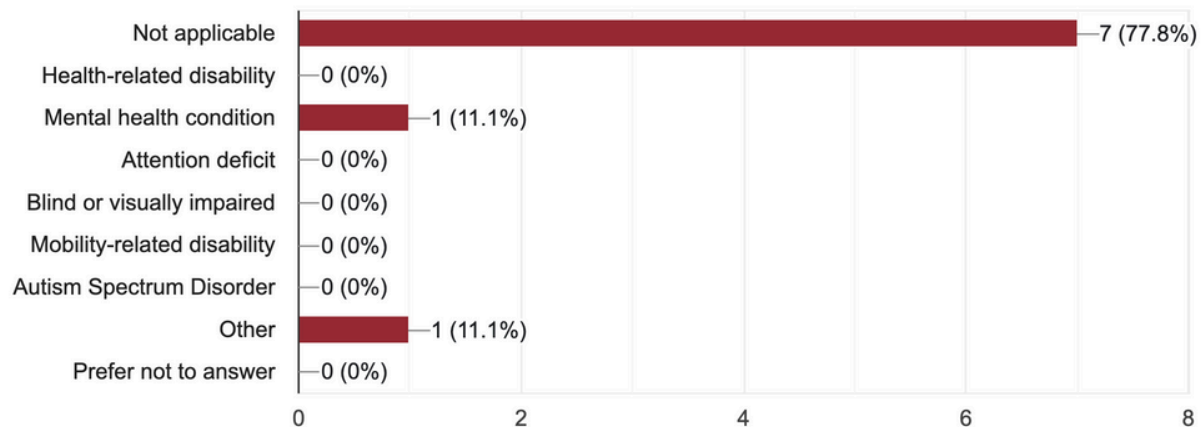
What is your sexual orientation?

9 responses



Do you have a disability or chronic condition? If so, how would you describe it?

9 responses

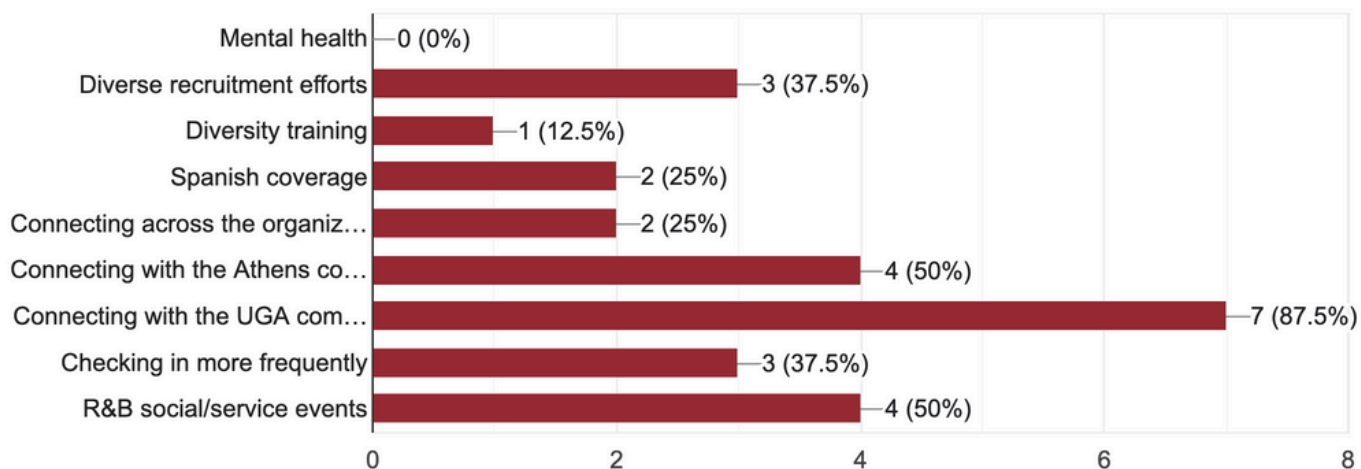


FALL 2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DEMOGRAPHICS

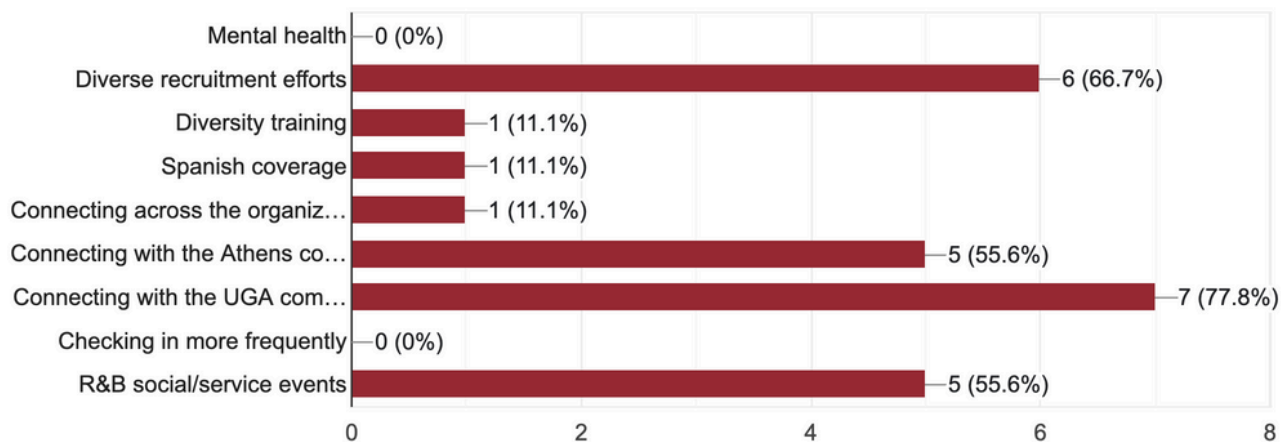
In what areas has The Red & Black improved this semester?

8 responses



Please select the top three priorities you think the Deputy Editor should focus on in the future.

9 responses



FALL 2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DEMOGRAPHICS

Areas Improved and Future Priorities

The board of directors of The Red & Black Publishing Company, Inc. identified the top three areas The Red & Black improved in during the fall 2025 semester. The board of directors were allowed to select multiple answers for this question.

The greatest area of improvement was better connecting with the UGA community, followed by a tie between connecting with the Athens community and office-wide social/service events. There was an additional tie between diversifying recruitment efforts and checking in more frequently.

The top priority for the future deputy editor was better connecting with the UGA community, followed by diversifying recruitment efforts and a tie between connecting with the Athens community and having more office-wide social/service events. The board of directors were also allowed to select multiple answers for this question.



PROGRESS UPDATES

From Ellis Goud Spring 2025 Deputy Editor

In my second semester as deputy editor, I focused on building upon the progress we made in the fall. As a familiar face from the previous semester, I felt that my initiative to foster communication in and across the newsroom flourished. I continued meeting with staff members throughout the semester to discuss personal and desk-wide goals for their coverage, in addition to weekly feedback in analytics emails and in-depth DEI assessments every six weeks. This semester, staff members became more comfortable with and confident in discussing stories with myself and the rest of the leadership team, which was reflected in our storytelling. In line with feedback from staff, I also focused on supporting and inviting in-person speakers for our weekly diversity workshops, including university professors and our editor-in-chief, Allison Mawn. We opened up the workshops to the whole newsroom, focusing on broader topics that would apply to all of our staff and contributors.

Staff and service events continued. Mirroring last semester, we hosted two social events, two staff-focused information events, one Red & Black service event and one community engagement event. Our book club in particular grew in popularity, reaching our biggest attendance yet, and we had the opportunity to collaborate with a local business – Entangled Cat Cafe – to host one of our meetings. I hope that my time as deputy editor with The Red & Black has left a lasting mark on the organization, and that we continue to produce thoughtful, accurate and impactful journalism for many years to come.



PROGRESS UPDATES, CONTINUED

From Gabrielle Gruszynski, Fall 2025 Deputy Editor of Standards and Practices

One of my main goals this semester was to become someone my staff felt genuinely comfortable approaching. I want them to see me not only as their editor, but also as a supportive peer and confidant. I've been pleasantly surprised by how openly they've shared their thoughts, feelings, frustrations and everything in between. Those conversations have already led to meaningful improvements within the newsroom, and, more importantly, they've sparked several new ideas I'm excited to bring into the spring.

This semester, I expanded our digital production guest speaker lineup to include experts from outside traditional journalism. I believe it's essential for our newsroom's storytelling and culture to be shaped by voices different from our own. Highlights included a professor of women's studies and employees from UGA Law's First Amendment Clinic. Next semester, I hope to collaborate with other desk editors, such as opinion and Spanish, to continue broadening our speaker series. Potential future topics include ICE and immigration as well as the experiences of the Black community in Athens-Clarke County.

Watching our Spanish coverage grow from a single translator into a full-fledged desk has been one of the greatest joys of my tenure so far. It's been rewarding to see how much our reporting has expanded over the past few months.

Compared to our total output of 69 in 2024, we've increased our translated stories to 183 and counting in 2025. Much of this growth is thanks to our Spanish translator, who will step into the role of our first Spanish editor next semester. Connecting with the Hispanic community in Athens–Clarke County has been one of my personal goals as Deputy Editor, and having both a motivated translator and a supportive leadership team has made that goal achievable. It's still a work in progress. Building trust with readers and with communities across Athens takes time. That's exactly why I believe establishing a fully developed Spanish desk is a necessity for our newsroom.

GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Addressing burnout & mental health concerns

The EIC and I have discussed at length the need to confront burnout and mental-health challenges more directly in the year ahead. While we plan to address these topics fully and clearly during our January staff training, it is important to recognize that a single workshop cannot resolve ongoing wellness concerns in a student newsroom. Training will set expectations and open the door for transparent conversations. Though meaningful progress will depend on consistent reinforcement throughout the semester.

To cultivate a healthier and more inclusive work environment, we recommend normalizing regular conversations about workload, stress and boundaries across all desks. Editors should feel encouraged and equipped to check in with their writers proactively, identify early signs of burnout and adjust expectations when necessary. These routine check-ins help create a culture where staff feel supported rather than overwhelmed, and where seeking help is treated as a strength rather than a failure.

Addressing burnout also requires structural change. One of the most sustainable solutions is diversifying the workload so responsibility does not fall disproportionately on a small number of editors. This year's introduction of multiple assistant editors across various desks is a critical step toward making coverage more manageable and reducing chronic overextension. By spreading tasks more evenly and offering clearer pathways for leadership support, we can strengthen both the quality of our work and the well-being of our team.

GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementing more office-wide social/service events

Across the spring and fall survey results, one of the highest priorities identified for the future deputy editor role is the coordination of office-wide events. Throughout the fall semester, the leadership team and I have worked to introduce gatherings that go beyond our traditional digital productions and provide space for staff to unwind. Events such as our recent Trivia Night, our annual Friendsgiving, Book Club meetings, and other casual events have helped foster that sense of camaraderie.

However, we also recognize the clear feedback from staff who feel that these opportunities are not frequent enough. While the events we have hosted have been well received, it is evident that our newsroom benefits from more regular, low-stakes moments of connection. These findings reinforce the need for intentional planning and dedicated leadership around morale and wellness initiatives.

Moving forward, I hope to expand the deputy editor's responsibilities to include a structured calendar of monthly community events, developed in coordination with desk editors to avoid major production weeks. These gatherings should be diverse in format and accessibility, ranging from casual drop-ins and collaborative workshops to themed socials and off-campus activities. By offering consistent opportunities for staff to bond and decompress, we can help reduce burnout, strengthen relationships across desks, and create a more supportive and inclusive newsroom culture.

GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking accountability & connecting with the Athens community

This fall, The Red & Black issued an unusually high number of corrections. Many of these corrections have stemmed from avoidable fact errors that should have been caught by contributors, staff members and editors alike. These mistakes, while often small, accumulate into something much larger: a break in trust between our newsroom and the Athens community.

We cannot serve or connect with Athens if our reporting is not consistently accurate. Accountability is the foundation of community engagement, and rebuilding that trust requires stronger internal standards and clearer expectations. To address this, we will implement a new accuracy policy beginning in the spring. For staff editors, every three fact errors issued within a pay period will result in a \$10 reduction in their biweekly stipend, resetting with each new cycle. For unpaid contributors, three or more corrections will prompt a sit-down meeting with desk leadership and senior editors to identify gaps, provide support and prevent repeated issues.

This policy is not meant to punish. It is meant to reinforce the responsibility we all share in producing trustworthy journalism. By holding ourselves to higher standards and taking our role in the Athens community seriously, we can strengthen our relationships, improve the integrity of our reporting and ensure that the stories we publish truly reflect the people we serve.

FINAL THOUGHTS

In conclusion, we want to acknowledge the progress our organization has made after years of intentional effort toward becoming more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. Our contributors, staffers, and board of directors have played vital roles in identifying our needs and helping us grow into a stronger, more mindful newsroom.

Since 2023, the creation of the deputy editor position has helped us begin to distribute the responsibility of diversity, equity, and inclusion more evenly across the organization. These changes mark an important step toward ensuring that our values are embedded in every part of The Red & Black's culture.

Looking ahead, we hope to build on this foundation through targeted initiatives — such as developing desk-specific DEI guides and implementing monthly individual check-ins led by the deputy editor. These efforts aim to foster a deeper sense of inclusivity and care throughout our newsroom. Additionally, organizing more community-centered events, like our family dinners and game or movie nights, will help cultivate camaraderie across desks and departments.

We recognize that there are still long-standing systems and norms that do not reflect our current standards of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Unlearning and dismantling these barriers is a gradual but essential process — one necessary for the continued health and integrity of our newsroom.

The ongoing publication of this report should serve as a testament to the progress we've made and as a tool to hold future generations accountable for continuing this work. We hope that by pursuing the goals and recommendations outlined here, The Red & Black will become an even more welcoming and inspiring space for all who wish to be part of it.

Gabrielle Gruszynski

Deputy Editor of Standards & Practices | Fall 2025

Ellis Goud

Deputy Editor of Standards & Practices | Spring 2025