

The Red & Black 2024 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 and University of Georgia communities. However, this coverage has not always fully represented the breadth and depth of each.

Historically speaking, The Red & Black staff and reporters have been predominantly white, reflecting UGA, a predominantly white institution. This inspired us to not only examine the communities in our coverage but also the demographics in our newsroom. We want to ensure every person can find a place here and in what we produce.

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 2024 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 third annual Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Report. The 2023 report and others are 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.

Thanks,

Liz Rymarev

Editor-in Chief | Spring 2024

Martina Essert

Deputy Editor of Standards & Practices | Spring 2024

Ellis Goud

Deputy Editor of Standards & Practices | Fall 2024

Libby Hobbs

Editor-in-Chief | Fall 2024



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 first 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.

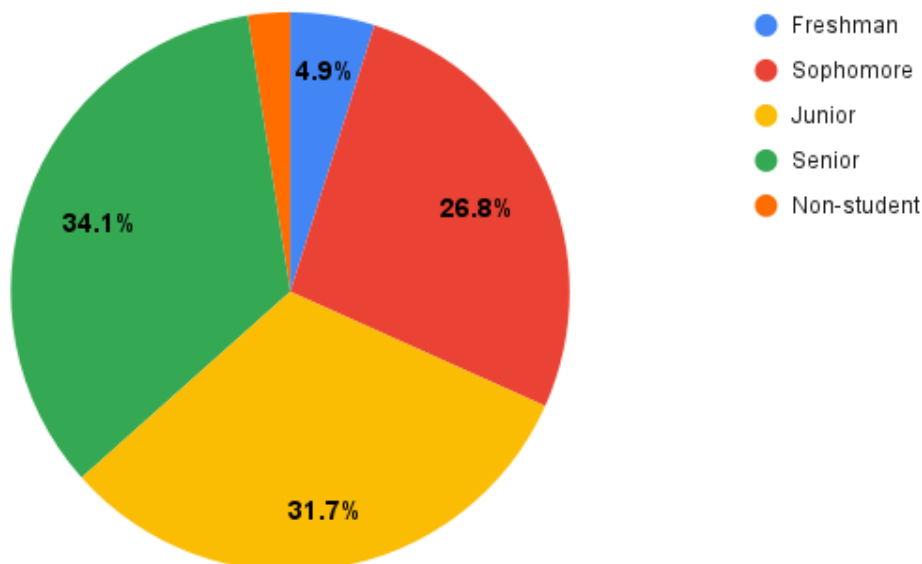
Spring 2024 Deputy Editor of Standards and Practices | **Martina Essert**
Fall 2024 Deputy Editor of Standards and Practices | **Ellis Goud**

SPRING 2024

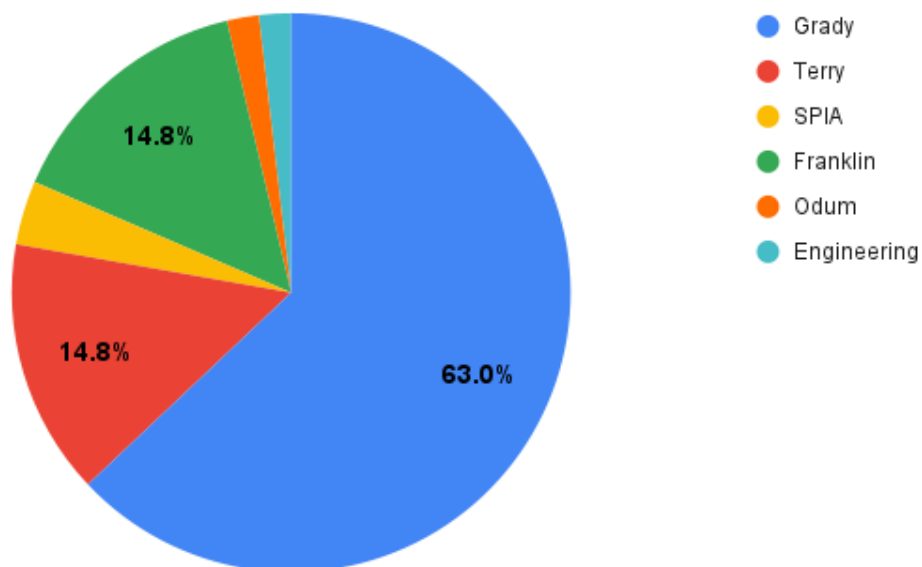
STUDENT STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

Note: Staff positions are paid, contributors are not. Contributors can apply to be on staff each semester. There were 41 student staff respondents.

Year



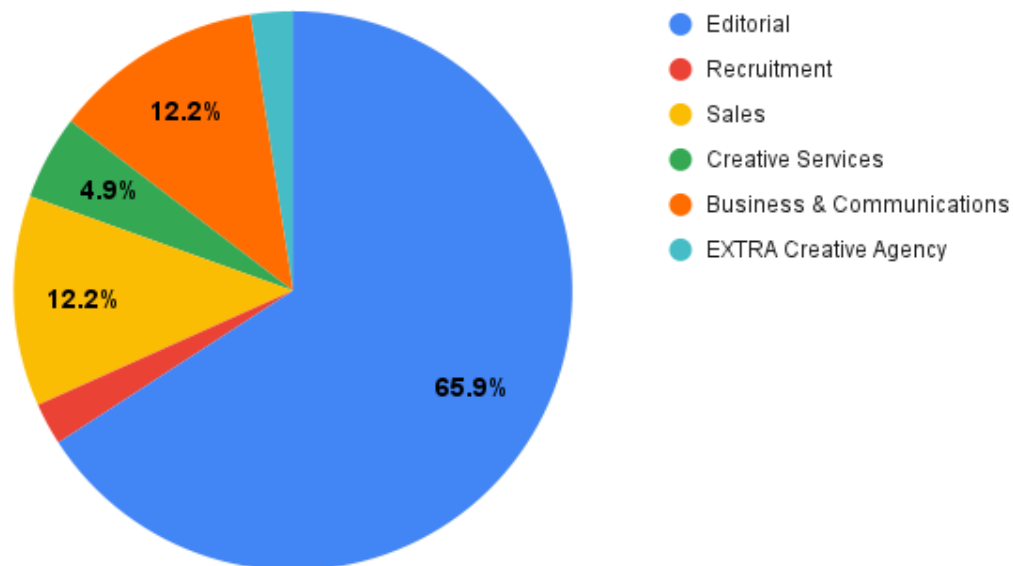
College(s)



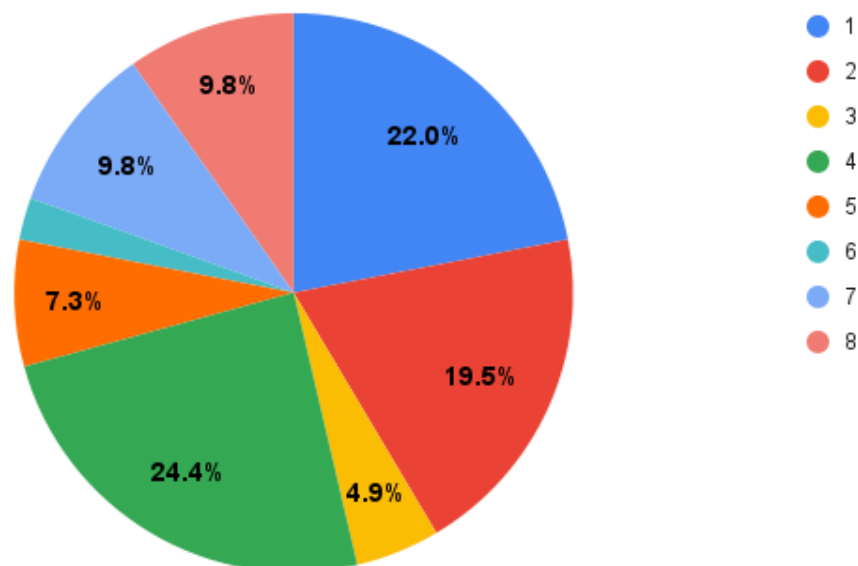
SPRING 2024

STUDENT STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

Department



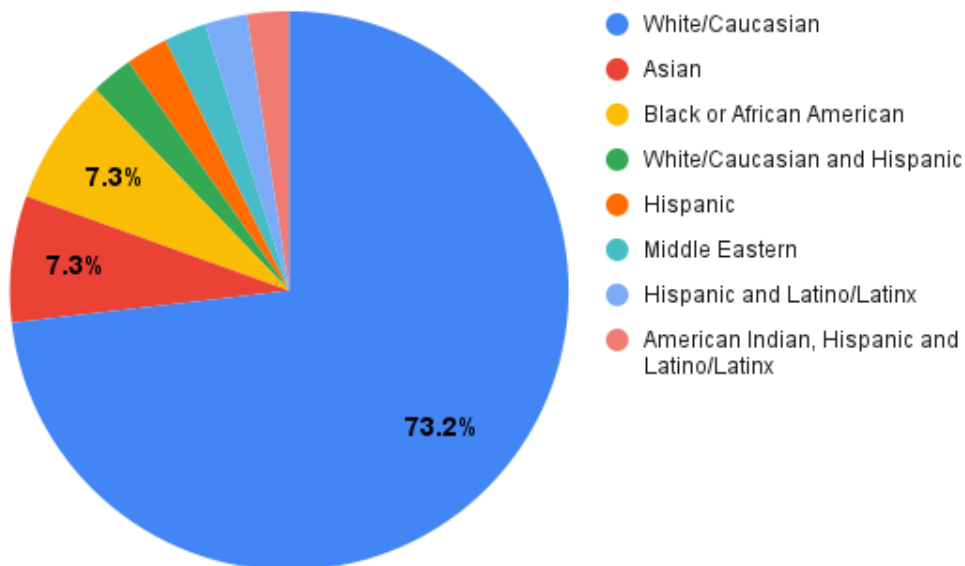
Semesters active



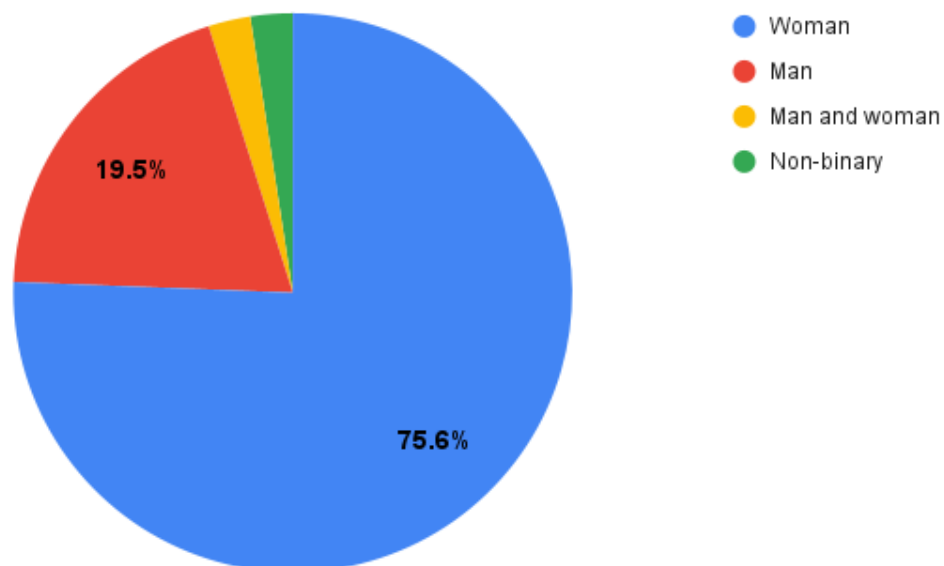
SPRING 2024

STUDENT STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

Race/Ethnicity



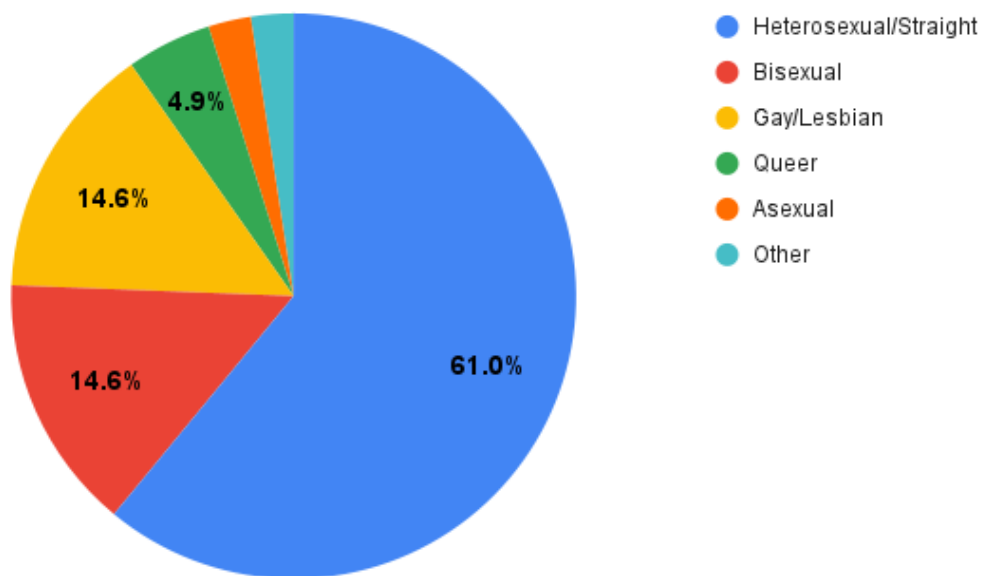
Gender Identity



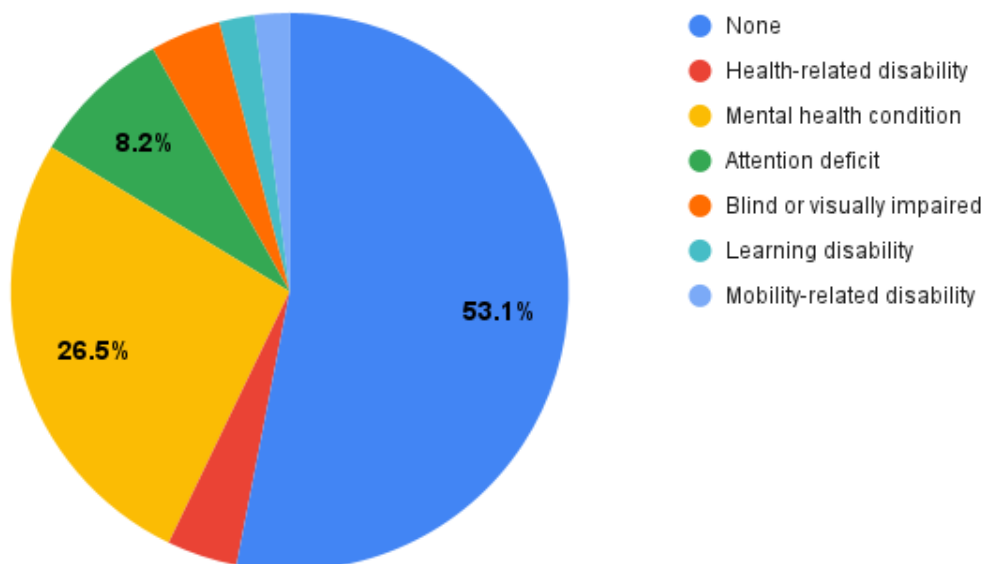
SPRING 2024

STUDENT STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

Sexual Orientation



Disability/Chronic Condition

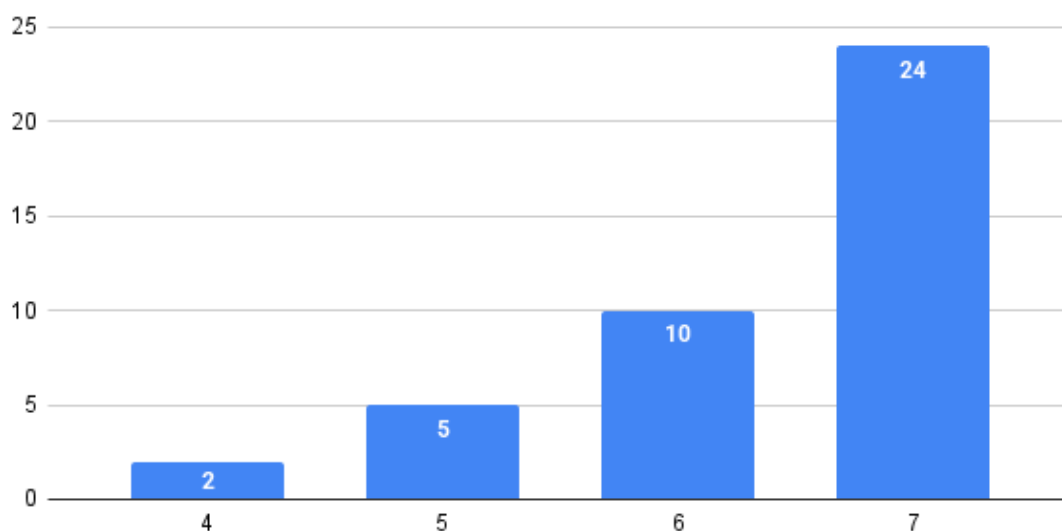


SPRING 2024

STUDENT STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

How would you rate your overall experience at the R&B?

With 1 being the worst, 7 being the best.



Areas Improved and Future Priorities

Student staff identified the top three areas The Red & Black improved in during the spring 2024 semester. The top area of improvement was connecting with the Athens community, followed by checking in more frequently and DEI coverage.

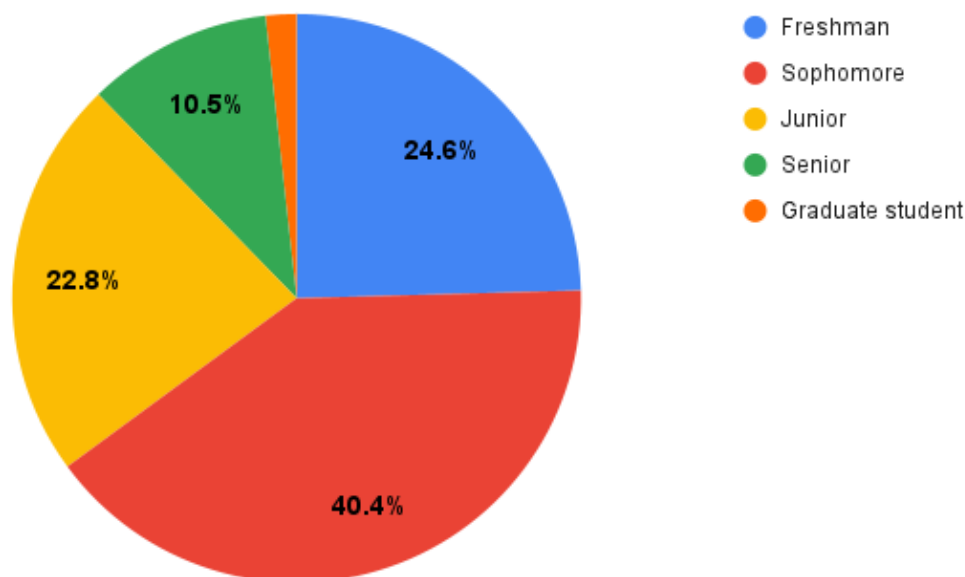
The top three priorities for the future were also identified. The top priority was connecting across the organization, followed by connecting with the Athens community and mental health.

SPRING 2024

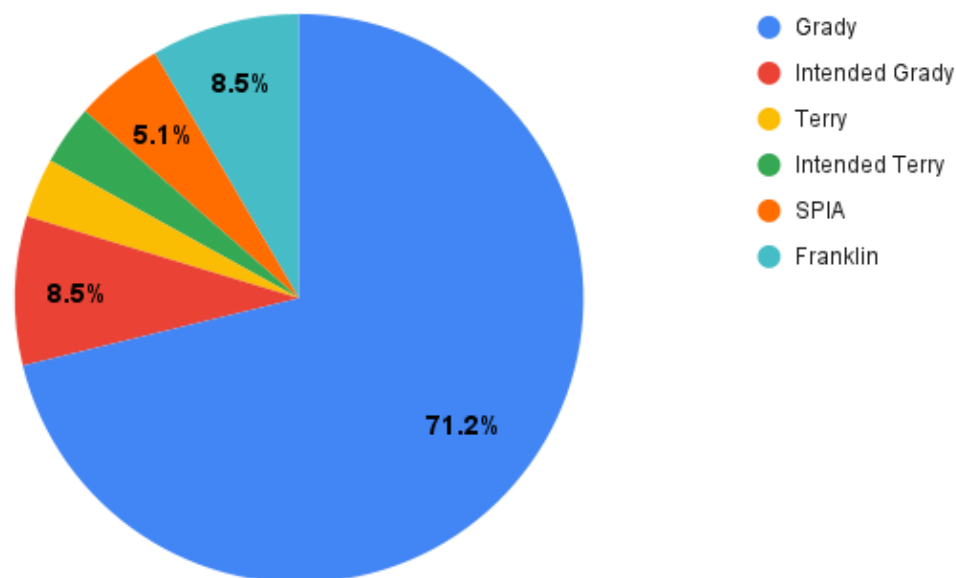
CONTRIBUTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

Note: Staff positions are paid, contributors are not. Contributors can apply to be on staff each semester. There were 57 contributor respondents.

Year



College(s)

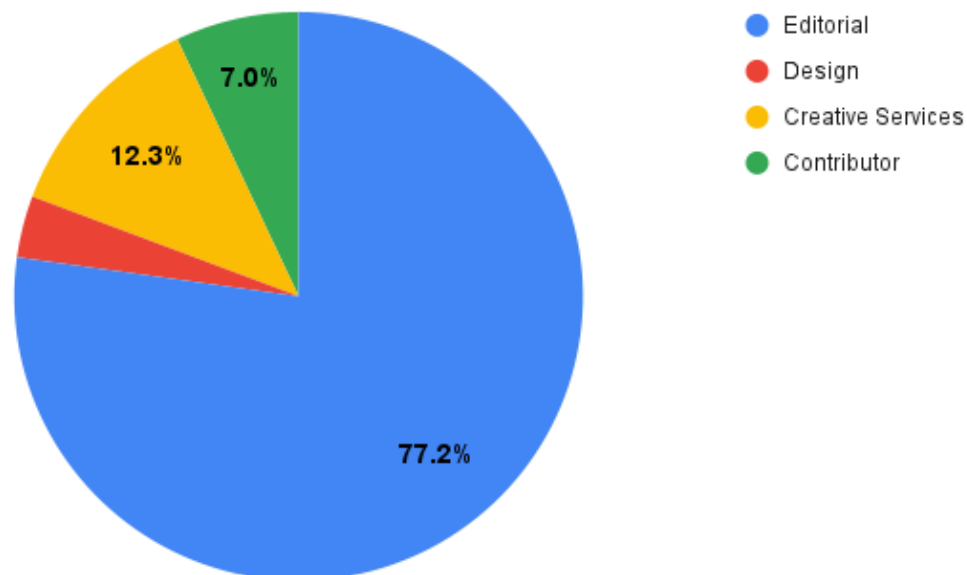


SPRING 2024

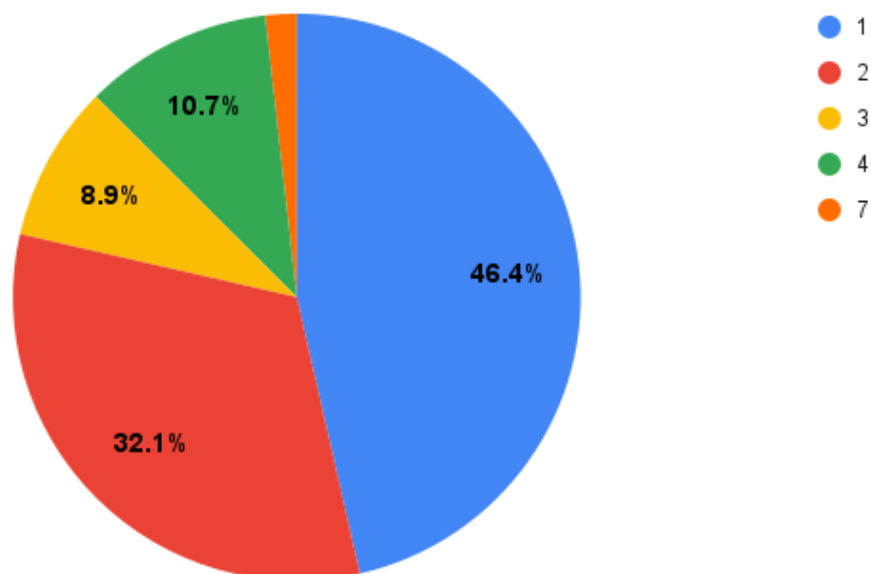
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Department



Semesters active

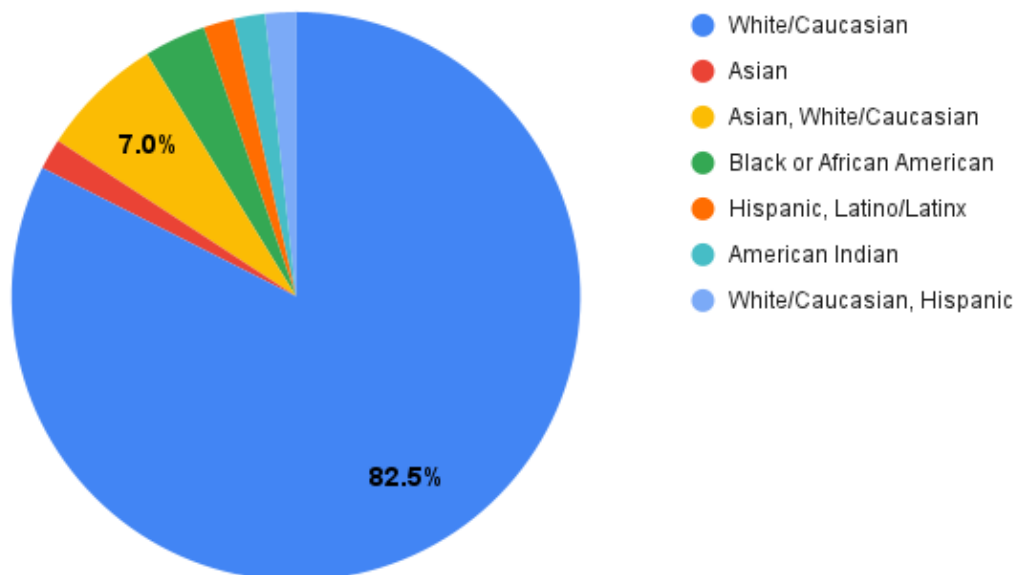


SPRING 2024

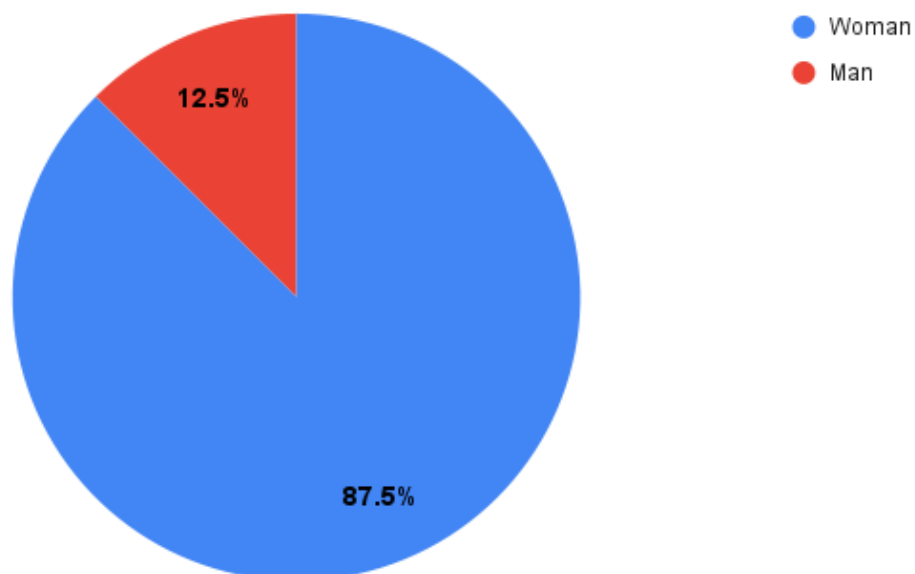
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Race/Ethnicity



Gender Identity

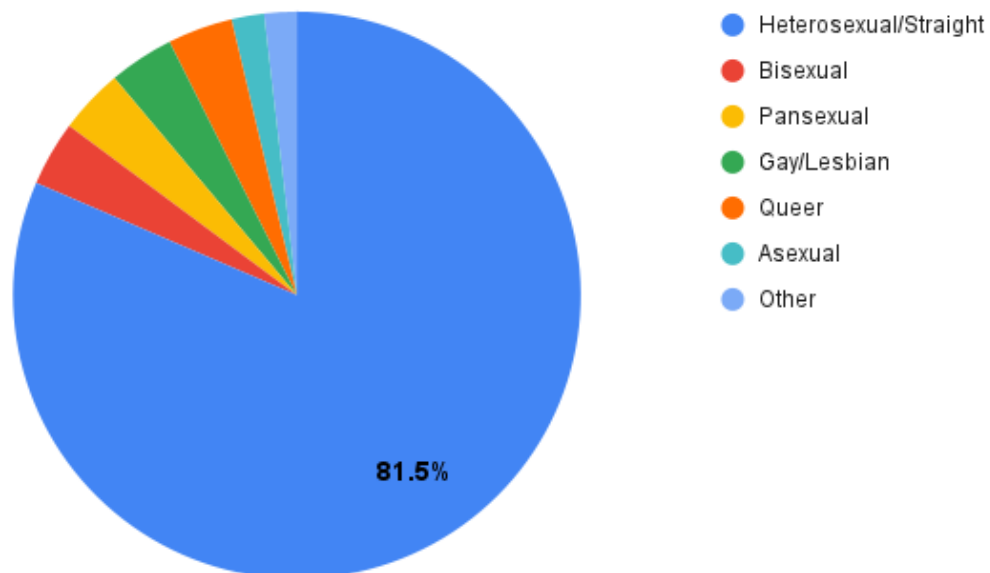


SPRING 2024

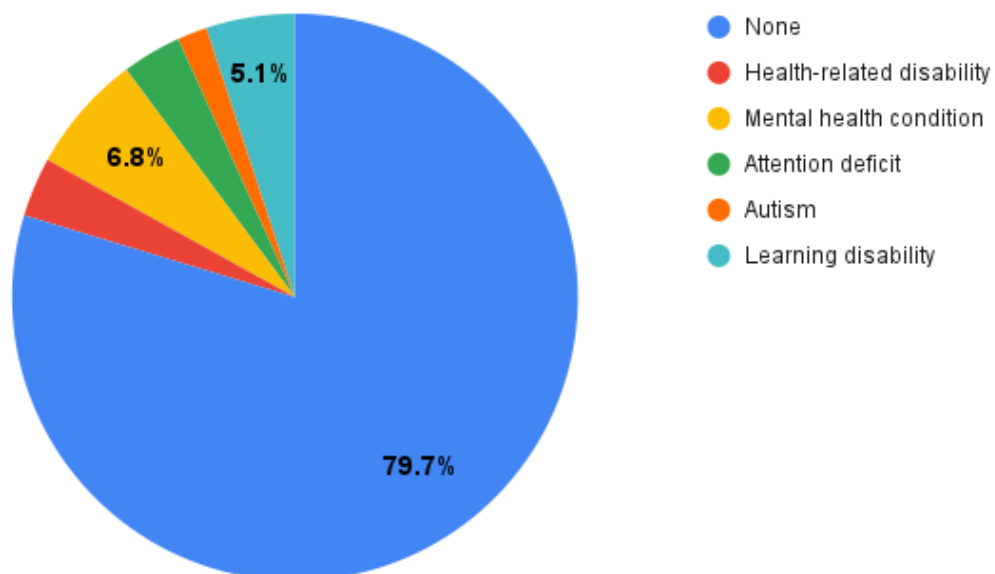
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Sexual Orientation



Disability/Chronic Condition



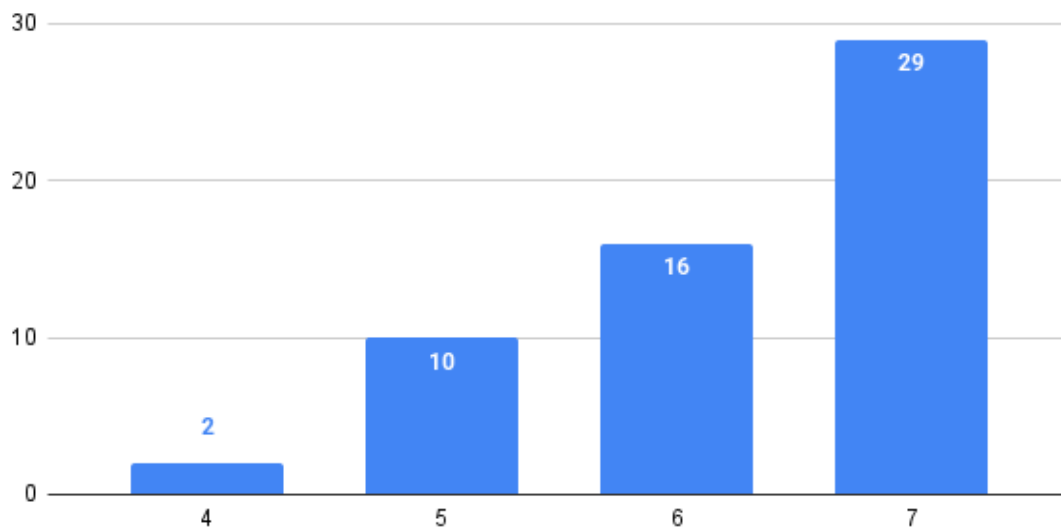
SPRING 2024

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How would you rate your overall experience at the R&B?

With 1 being the worst, 7 being the best.



Areas Improved and Future Priorities

Contributors identified the top three areas The Red & Black improved in during the spring 2024 semester. The top area of improvement was connecting with the UGA community, followed by connecting with the Athens community and checking in more frequently.

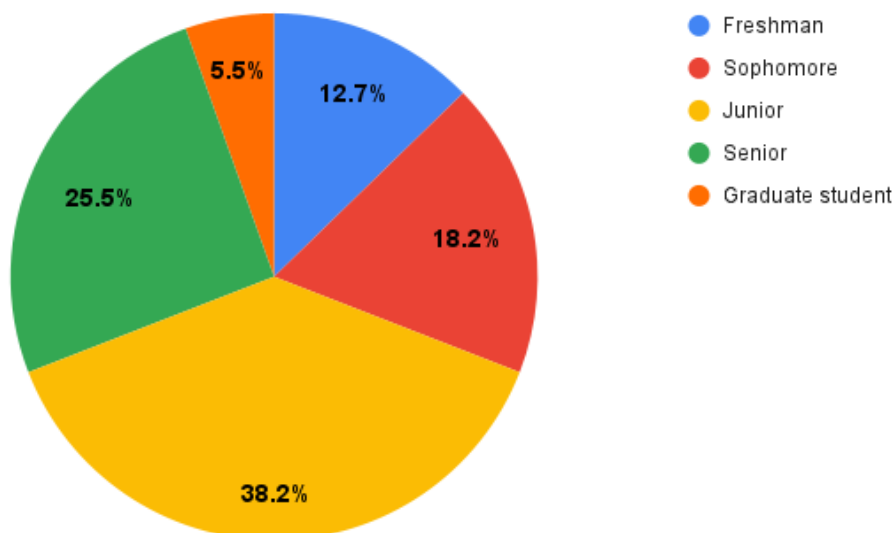
The top three priorities for the future were also identified. The top priority was connecting with the Athens community, followed by R&B social events and connecting across the newsroom, which tied for second place.

FALL 2024

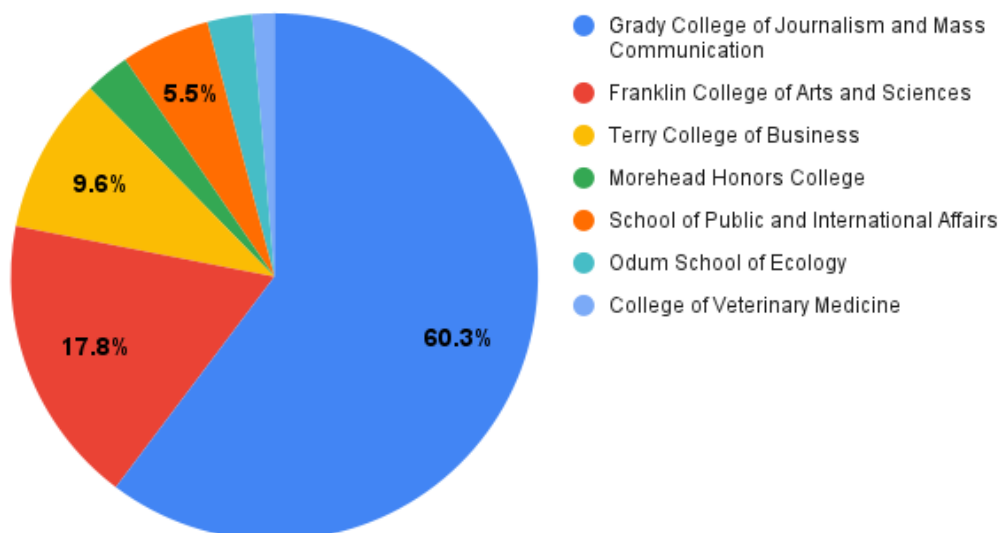
STAFF & CONTRIBUTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

Note: For the fall 2024 semester, both staff and contributors were categorized into one group for a DEI survey. Surveys for professional staff and the board of directors were also issued. Staff positions are paid, contributors are not. Contributors can apply to be on staff each semester. We had 61 survey responses from staff and contributors.

Year



College(s)

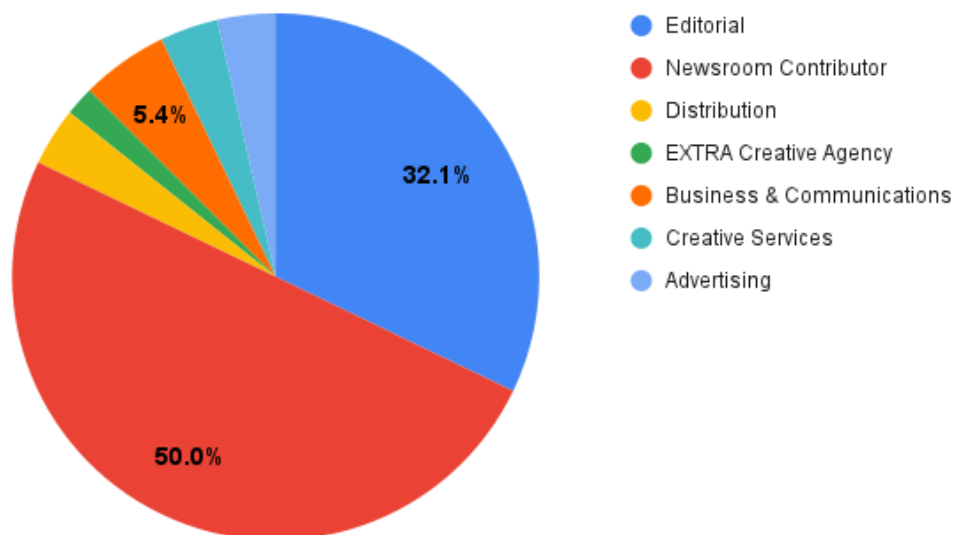


FALL 2024

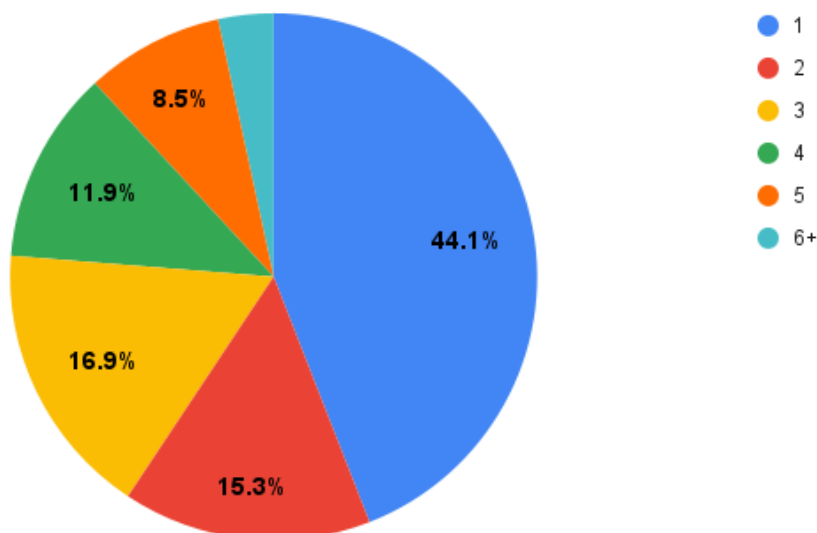
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Department



Semesters active

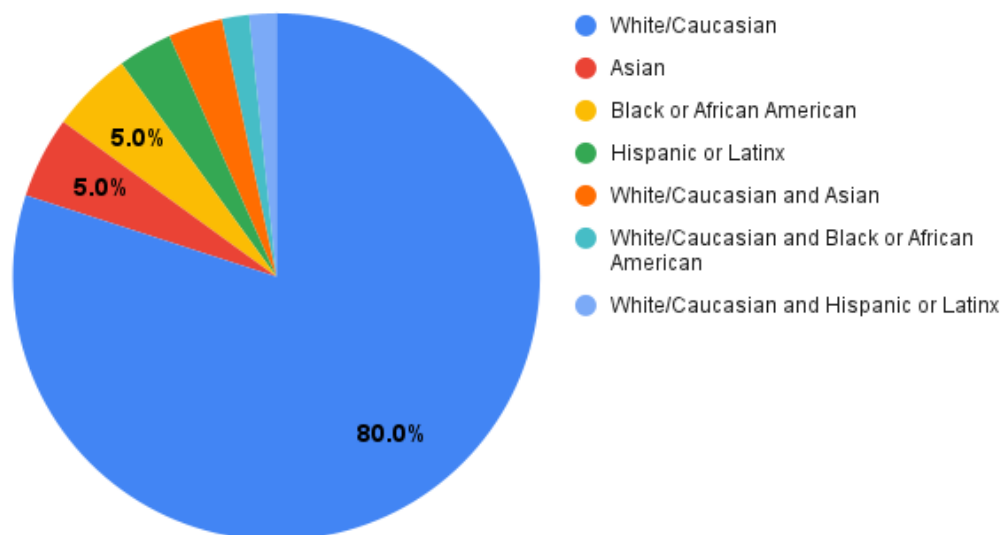


FALL 2024

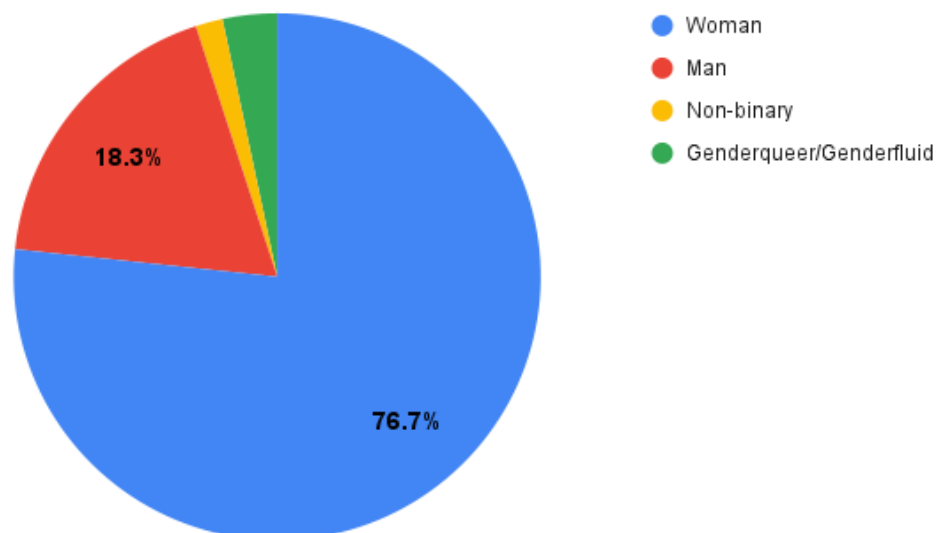
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Race/Ethnicity



Gender Identity

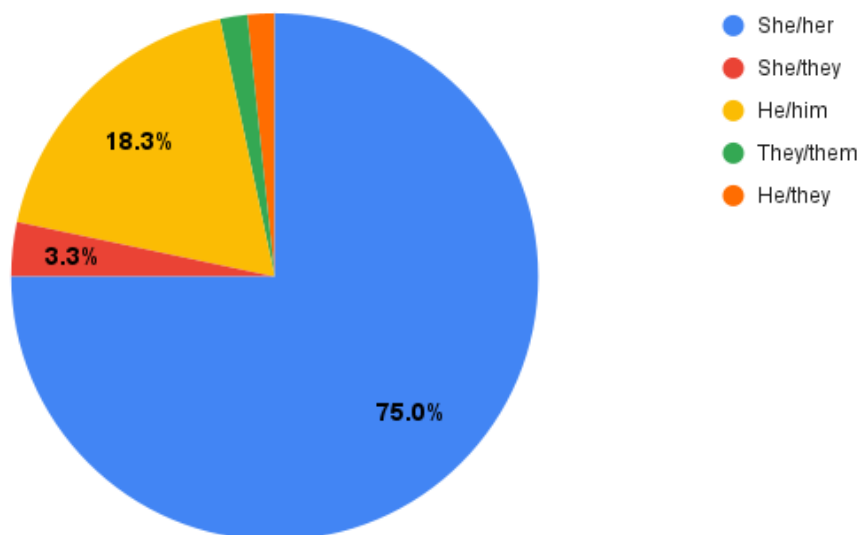


FALL 2024

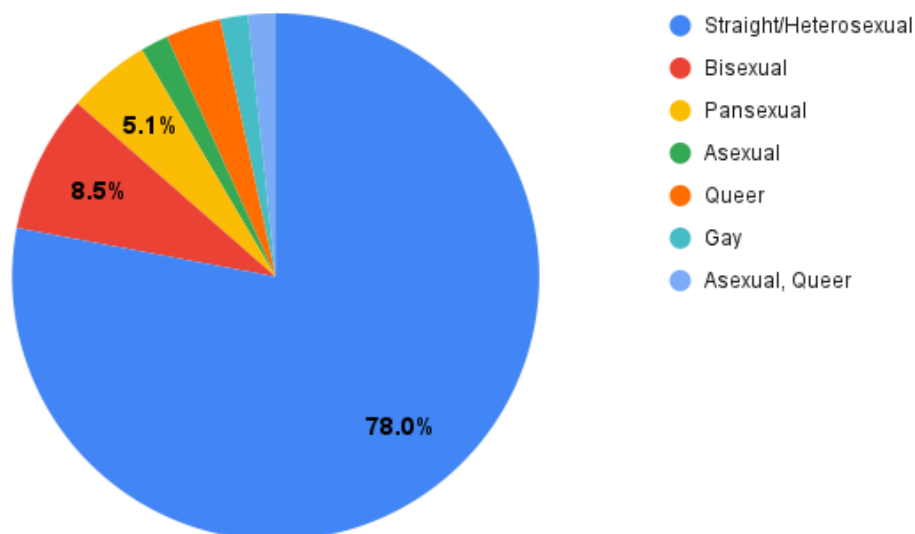
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Pronouns



Sexual Orientation

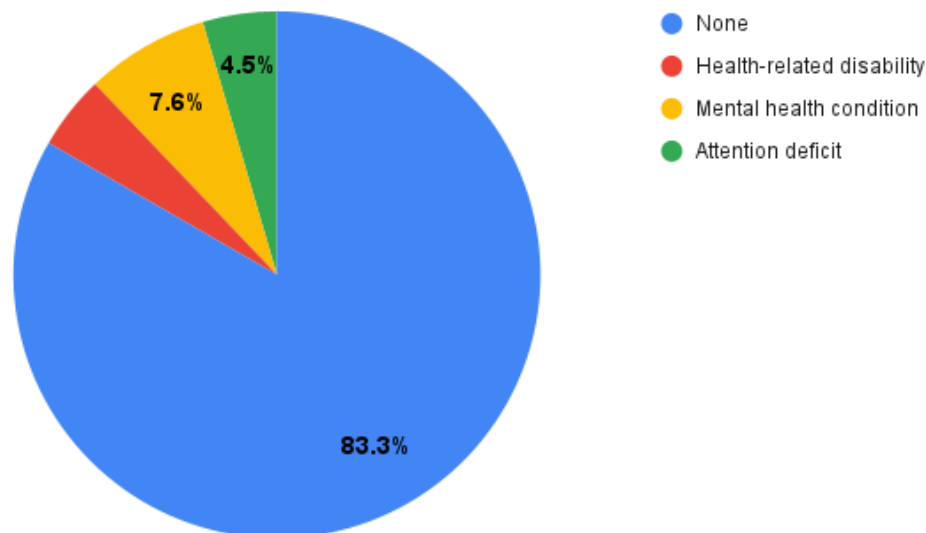


FALL 2024

STAFF & CONTRIBUTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

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Disability/Chronic Condition



Areas Improved and Future Priorities

Staff and contributors identified the top three areas The Red & Black improved in during the fall 2024 semester. The top area of improvement was connecting with the UGA community, followed by connecting with the Athens community and checking in more frequently.

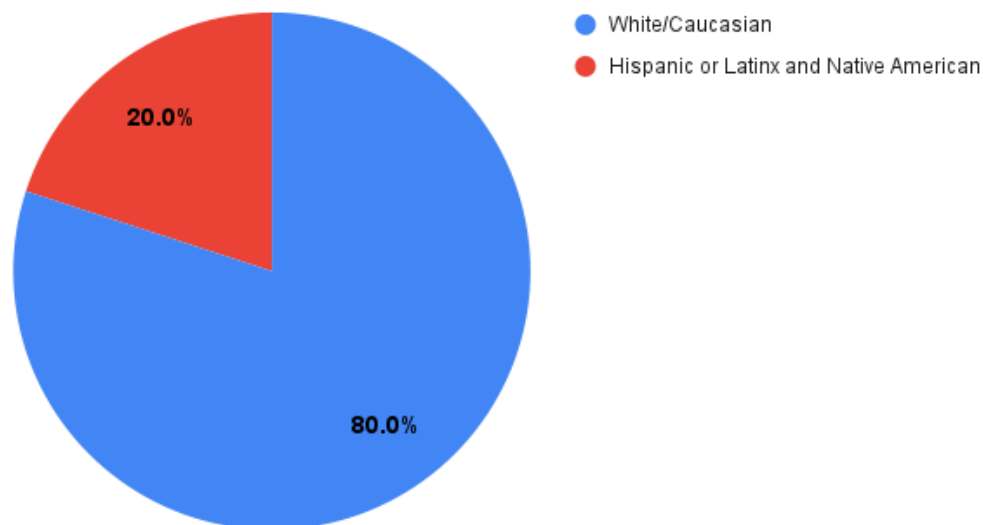
The top three priorities for the future were also identified. The top priority was connecting across the organization, followed by connecting with the Athens community and mental health.

FALL 2024

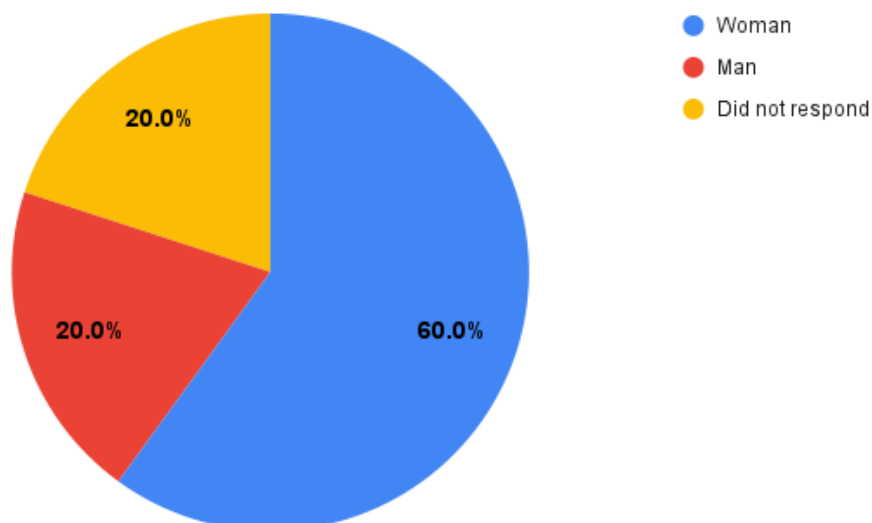
PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

Note: For the fall 2024 semester, both staff and contributors were categorized into one group for a DEI survey. Surveys for professional staff and the board of directors were also issued. Professional staff support the organization by providing training and administrative services. The Red & Black has 6 professional staff members, 5 of whom completed the survey.

Race/Ethnicity



Gender Identity

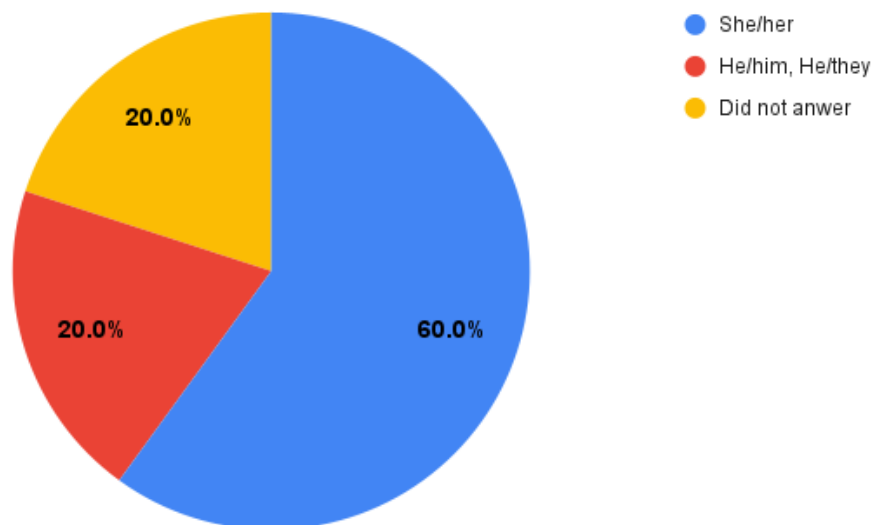


FALL 2024

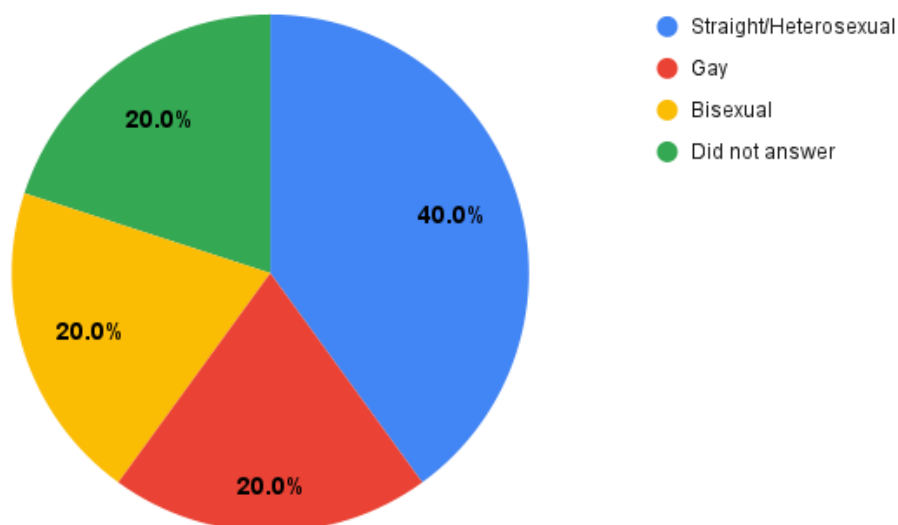
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Pronouns



Sexual Orientation

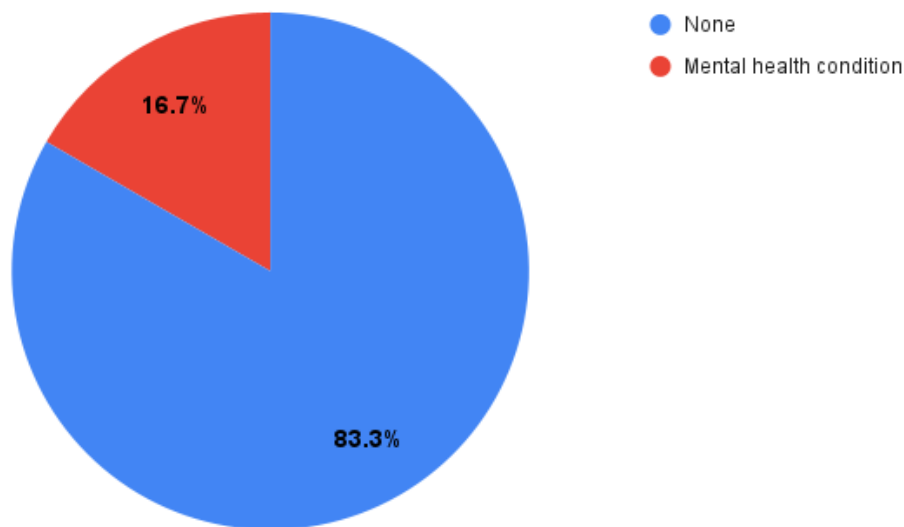


FALL 2024

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Disability/Chronic Condition



Areas Improved and Future Priorities

Professional staff identified the top three areas The Red & Black improved in during the fall 2024 semester. The top area of improvement was Spanish coverage, followed by R&B social and service events and checking in more frequently.

The top three priorities for the future were also identified. Diverse recruitment efforts and connecting across the organization tied for first place, followed by connecting with the Athens community.

FALL 2024

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.

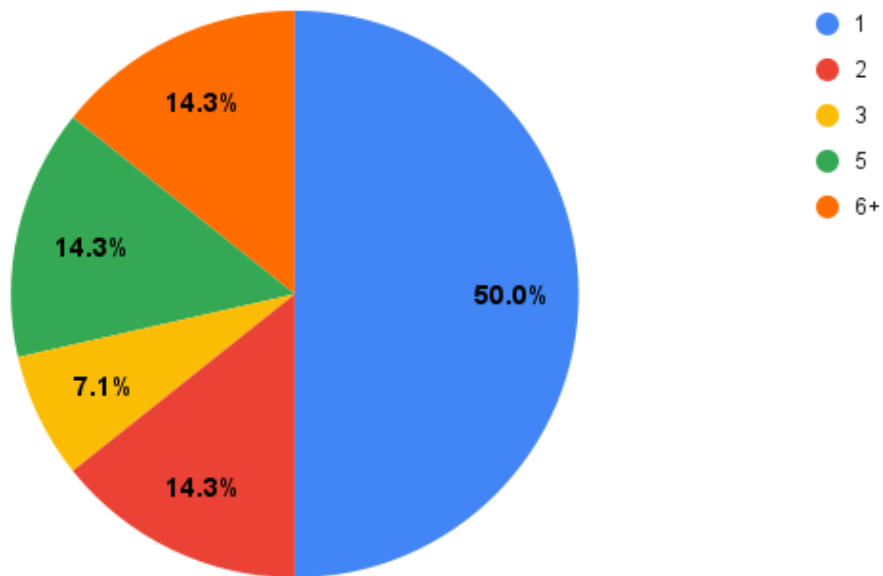
Starting in 2022, board members opted to track and report their demographics, following the guidelines set out by Candid, the nonprofit industry standard. Following are the results for the 2024 report. At the end of 2024, The Red & Black welcomed five new board members to begin their three-year terms.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



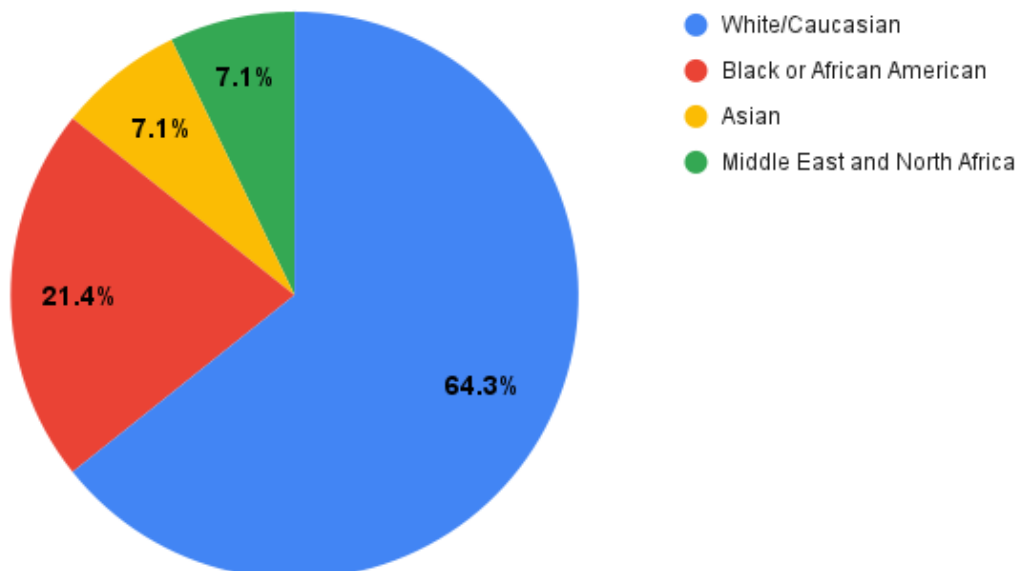
FALL 2024

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DEMOGRAPHICS

Years Active



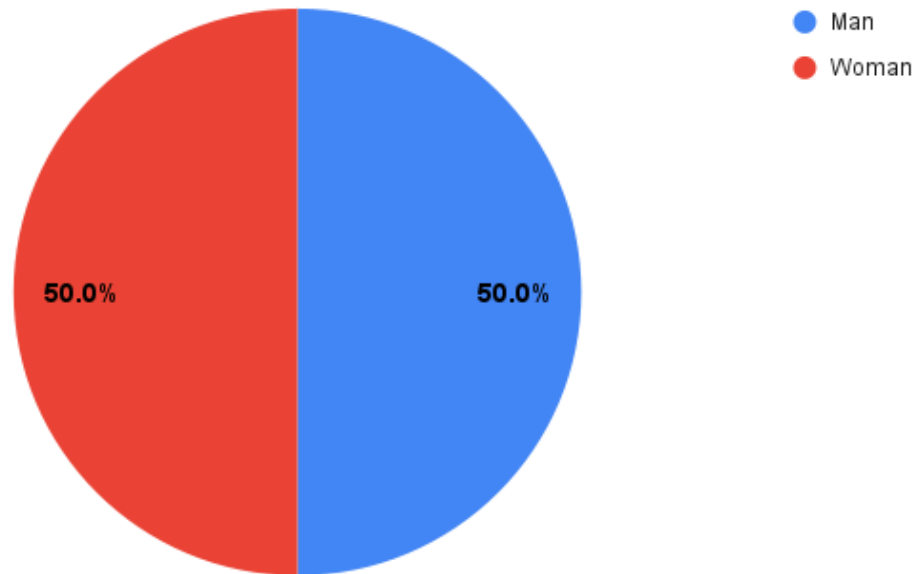
Race/Ethnicity



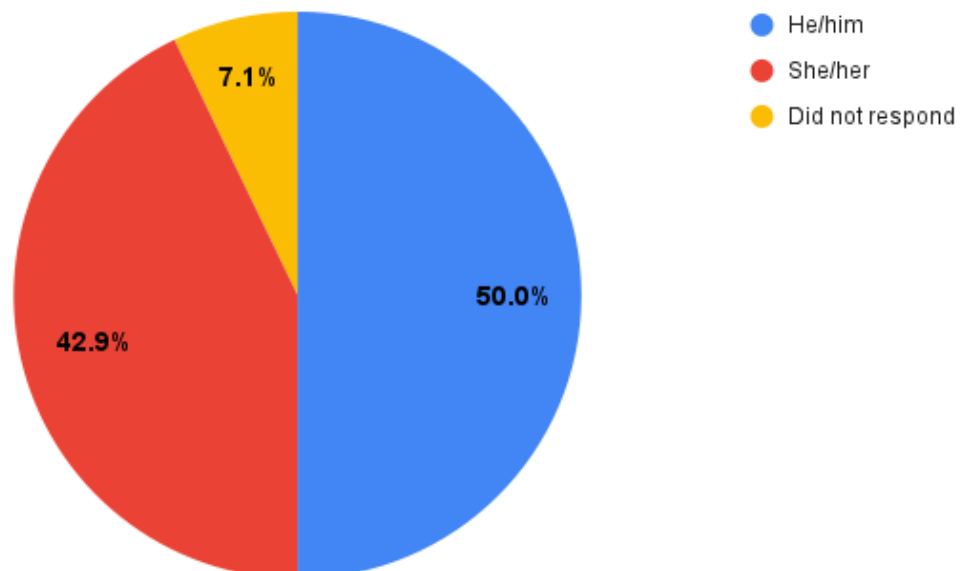
FALL 2024

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender Identity



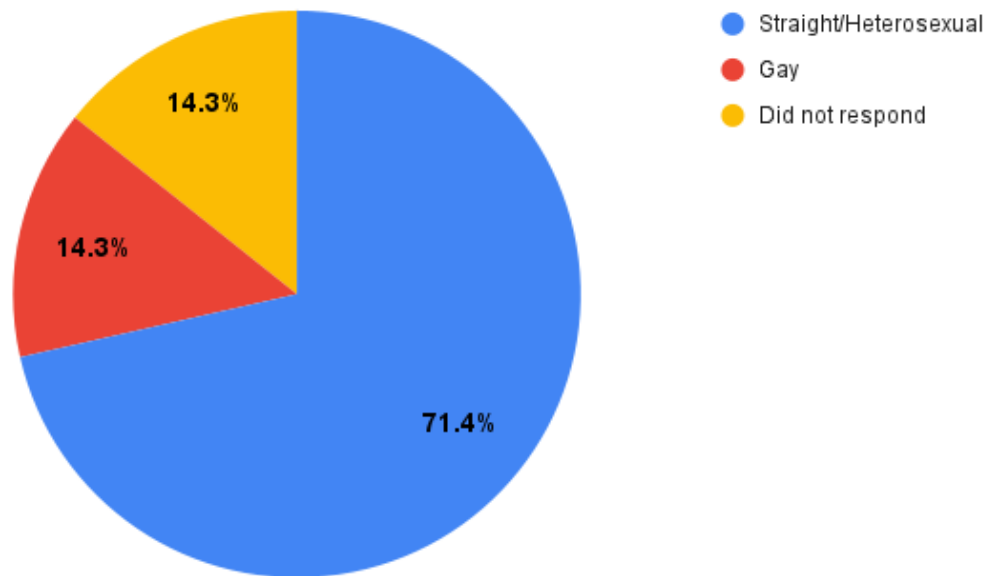
Pronouns



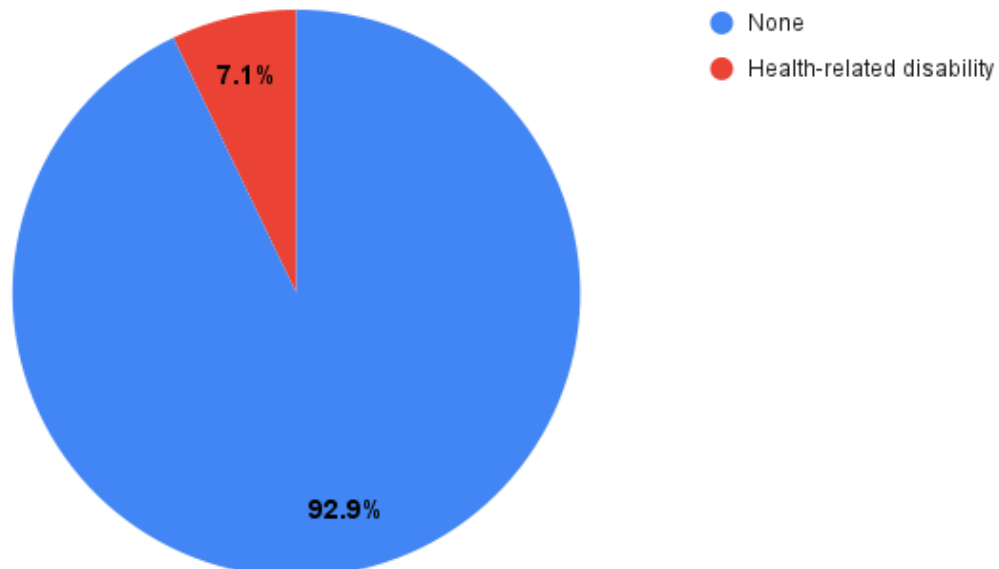
FALL 2024

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DEMOGRAPHICS

Sexual Orientation



Disability/Chronic Condition



FALL 2024

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DEMOGRAPHICS

Areas Improved and Future Priorities

The board of directors identified the top three areas The Red & Black improved in during the fall 2024 semester. The top area of improvement was connecting with the UGA community. Connecting with the Athens community, checking in more frequently and R&B social and service events were all tied for second place.

The top three priorities for the future were also identified. The top priority was connecting with the Athens community, followed by R&B social and service events. Diverse recruitment efforts and connecting with the UGA community were tied for third place.



PROGRESS UPDATES

From Martina Essert Spring 2024 Deputy Editor, Kayla Renie Newsroom Adviser

As the first Deputy Editor of Standards and Practices, Martina Essert worked with Newsroom Adviser Kayla Renie to establish goals, procedures and priorities for this new role that could be built upon for future deputy editors, with some trial and error.

One initiative was to establish methods for greater connection and involvement internally amongst Red & Black students, and externally with our readers and the Athens and UGA community. This was achieved through establishing a more regular check-in model, on a personal level and journalistic development level related to their role in the newsroom, social events, and a community engagement discussion with Athenians.

A goal of Essert's was to build up stronger connections between contributors and student staff members, and between student staff members across the whole organization, not just within the newsroom. Additionally, she prioritized an effort to increase participation for surveys in order to build off of feedback and do better. Essert made herself available as a resource to her peers and acted as additional oversight to incorporating thoughtful and productive feedback, training and workshops related to DEI.



PROGRESS UPDATES, CONTINUED

From Ellis Goud, Fall 2024 Deputy Editor of Standards and Practices

With the deputy editor role still fairly new at The Red & Black, I wanted to build a solid foundation for the position to ensure its success for future semesters. It was important for me to take the responsibilities outlined for the role and apply them to the newsroom in an innovative way.

As part of an initiative to foster a communication-forward environment in the newsroom, I met with every person on staff in person to discuss their personal and desk-wide goals for their coverage. These meetings also offered a safe space to receive and give feedback, thoughts and concerns throughout the semester.

To evaluate the diversity of our coverage, I created an internal DEI assessment system to monitor the top stories from each desk every week. In a spreadsheet, the deputy editor can apply letter grades (A-D) and specific feedback for articles and photo galleries in four areas: use of sources, visuals, language and fact-checking. I provided an assessment based off of these measurements for each desk every six weeks, explaining the process, results and recommendations. I also included notable diverse stories of the week in my own feedback section in weekly analytics emails sent to the entire organization.

The most impactful initiative was the implementation of weekly diversity workshops and training at digital productions, with the help of Libby Hobbs, the Editor-in-Chief. We hosted 10 diversity workshops throughout the semester. Notable workshops included a self-led diverse sourcing information session and a hosted Q&A session about covering communities of color with guest speaker Donnell Suggs, Editor-in-Chief of the Atlanta Voice. Lastly, planning and running staff and service events became a responsibility for the Deputy Editor role. We hosted two organization-wide social events, two staff-focused information events, one Red & Black service event and one community engagement event.

Additionally, I led book club meetings once a month, where we selected readings with diverse authors and topics in mind, in an effort to socialize and build friendships across departments and have a means to connect over a shared hobby not relating to work responsibilities. These events, on top of national observances related to DEI, were included in a DEI and events calendar for the newsroom.

We made a lot of strides in developing the Deputy Editor role this semester, but there is always more work to be done.

GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Connect across departments at The Red & Black

What connects all paid staff members and contributors at The Red & Black is that we are all students. Despite being in different majors, years and departments, we all have the same goal – to help produce quality news and information for our community. I believe this goal brings us together, but sometimes it is hard to feel connected when we aren't all in the newsroom at once. Balancing lives as students means we can't all be together at the same time, one thing that has been mentioned time and time again. In our survey, one of the top priorities for the future indicated by student staff, professional staff and contributors was connecting across the organization.

"I don't get to see other people who work at the R&B much," one fall 2024 staff and contributor survey respondent said. "If there were more opportunities to connect within the organization, I feel like there would be more motivation within the newsroom."

I recommend establishing a healthy relationship across departments by being intentional with our interactions in the office as well as with our planning, outreach and running of our social events, which extend to the entire organization. Connection within the newsroom starts with talking to others!

GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Prioritize mental health of staff members and contributors

Staff members and contributors at The Red & Black are balancing lives as journalists, students and people. Mental health is an incredibly important part in evaluating the health of our newsroom. Several survey respondents indicated that the Deputy Editor should be utilized more for mental health initiatives. One respondent suggested sending out a Google Form to assess how staff members are feeling and how they are managing work-life balance.

“I think it would be beneficial to have more less-formal check-ins with students,” one professional staff survey respondent said. “More informal ones could further support each student, even if it's just ‘How are you doing today?’”

More frequent and small check-ins throughout the semester show R&B members that we care, and taking the time out of our day to ask how they are can make a big difference.

GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Diversify recruitment efforts

It is important to recognize that, historically, The Red & Black staff and contributors have been predominantly white. The demographics of UGA, a predominately white institution, also reflect this. While it is an unavoidable truth that people who are white make up the majority of our recruitment pool – and thus our staff and contributors – it is vital for us to make efforts to expand our recruitment efforts towards minority groups.

“Recruitment is one area that has been lacking for a while,” one staff and contributor survey respondent said. “I’d really like them to work with you and nail down some initiatives on how we can get more POC.”

One area The Red & Black should prioritize is interacting with student organizations at UGA. By speaking at their meetings and inviting student leaders to collaborate on guest-led workshops, we can ensure that students not only feel welcome but also feel that they are an important piece in connecting our reporters with community members – which they are.

FINAL THOUGHTS

In conclusion, we want to acknowledge the progress that has been made within our organization after just a few years of dedication and attention to being diverse, equitable and inclusive. Our contributors, staffers and board of directors play an important role in helping us to identify where our needs are so we can improve our newsroom every semester.

Restructuring the DEI committee and adding the deputy editor role this year has helped us begin to shift the responsibility of being diverse, equitable and inclusive across the organization. We hope to keep building this foundation so that we can continue to uphold these values.

Through our recommendations of giving each desk specialized attention in the form of guides, and implementing monthly individual check-ins from the deputy editor of standards & practices, we hope to improve morale and a feeling of inclusivity and care in our newsroom. Planning more events like our family dinners, game and movie nights to which the entire organization is invited will help build camaraderie across desks and departments.

There are decades of norms and systems that do not uphold our current standards and practices of diversity, equity and inclusion that we have yet to unlearn and dismantle. It is a slow process, but one that is increasingly necessary to keep our newsroom thriving. The continuation of this report should not only serve as a testament to the work that has been done, but a means to hold the future generations accountable for the work that is yet to come.

We hope that the consideration of our goals and recommendations for the future will make The Red & Black a space that even more people will want to be a part of in the future.

Martina Essert

Deputy Editor of Standards & Practices | Spring 2024

Ellis Goud

Deputy Editor of Standards & Practices | Fall 2024