



**BUDGET
REPORT 2018/19**

 **theGazette**

Note: This budget document was revised in March 2018 to reflect the freeze to the Gazette's Front Office salaries, which happened late in the budget process.

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Overview of the Gazette








The Gazette is a student-run media outlet that serves undergraduate students at Western by reporting the news, entertaining readers and promoting debate on issues affecting students. We push for transparency on campus and hold the Western administration to account. We are a training ground for future journalists and other professionals, accepting any student who wants to contribute and training them in journalism standards, practices and more. Many students use the skills they learn at the Gazette in fields beyond journalism, such as professional communications, law, medicine and business.

We are published by the University Students' Council through its Board of Directors but are editorially independent, which means the day-to-day management and editorial decisions are up to students and are separate from the USC. We have implemented stronger oversight and reporting in tandem with the USC's transition to an independent Board of Directors. We now report to the Board of Directors' Publications Committee, whose members include professional journalists and students. This year, we also expanded consultations with councillors about the budget throughout the fall semester. All together, we have made our operation one of the most open in the USC.

We have a full-time staff of about 20 student editors who receive a weekly stipend for their contributions. Editors work around 30 hours every week — they are expected to be in the office from 9:30 to 5:30 from Monday to Friday while not in class. Editors also often work evenings and weekends covering events, sports and breaking news. In addition, the Gazette relies on a small army of volunteers. In January, the Gazette received 74 internship applications and we accepted about 40 interns. This is on top of regular contributors — overall, over 200 unique students have walked into the office to volunteer since September.

Student engagement with the Gazette has increased substantially as we've moved to more digital platforms. We have seen a sharp rise in our audience online, more than we expected when we started three years ago. For example, since we started our digital transformation, we've become the third most liked Canadian student newspaper on Facebook. While we can't expect to continue this growth rate given a finite readership audience and changes to social media algorithms that de-emphasize publishers, we view our engagement as a positive sign that we are producing relevant content and reaching students on the platforms they already use.

While the Gazette's priority will always be Western students, we've also received some recognition beyond campus. This year, the Gazette won two national awards. In January, we won the Canadian University Press awards for Best News Writing and Video of the Year. We were also named Canada's outstanding campus newspaper at the Canadian Community Newspaper Awards last year.

Page	Total Page Likes	From Last Week	Posts This Week	Engagement This Week
1  The Ubyyssey	12K 	0%	33	387 
2  CBC London	8K 	▲ 9.8%	73	2.3K 
3  The Varsity	7.9K 	▲ 0.4%	51	1.1K 
YOU 4  The Western Gazette	6.7K 	▲ 0.7%	48	1.5K 
Keep up with the Pages you watch. Get More Likes				
5  Impact Campus	6.5K 	0%	29	86 
6  The McGill Daily	6.3K 	▲ 0.2%	16	147 

A screenshot of the Gazette's Facebook insights on Feb. 6, 2018: Since our digital transformation, our Facebook likes tend to grow at a higher rate than most other student newspapers, and our posts tend to generate higher engagement.

Budget Overview

The Gazette's editorial budget has undergone immense change in recent years, and F2019 will make further adjustments. These adjustments are tied to the Gazette's ongoing digital-first transformation — a process that began in 2014 — as well as coming into adherence with the USC's corporate policies and recommendations.

To recap, in February 2014, the University Students' Council approved a three-year increase to the Gazette budget to fund the outlet's digital transformation and its shift away from being Canada's only daily-print student newspaper. The proposal was as follows: the Gazette would cease to publish daily in print, and instead invest heavily in becoming a daily, online-first news outlet. The plan was for the Gazette budget to be continually assessed and reduced based on need as our costs evolved from mainly print to mainly digital.

In short, the Gazette achieved this. We invested in staff training, equipment, a new content management system and more, and became a leader among Canadian student media outlets in terms of content output and quality. While there are certainly still challenges, we publish more now than ever before and reader engagement on social media is high. Content posted to the Gazette's Facebook page outperforms most other student papers when it comes to direct engagement (post clicks, reactions, shares).

It's also important to note the Gazette now also manages Western TV, which is a distinct unit of our editorial operations that we took over from the USC's corporate side. This move helped realize efficiency savings for the overall USC budget because we are no longer duplicating services.

Last year, the Gazette and the USC created a working group made up of members of the Gazette, councillors and the Board of Directors to evaluate the digital transformation and our budget. In collaboration with the USC, we reduced our overall budget by over \$94,000. This year, we've reduced the editorial budget by an additional \$26,000.

We are now at a level that meets our staffing and operational needs to fulfil our mission of giving students as much value possible — whether they walk into the office to volunteer or read, watch and share our content. We're continuing to adjust every year and work with the USC to ensure we're meeting our goals.

Council and the Board of Directors has been informed and involved in the process of our digital transformation and in addressing our resource needs from the beginning in 2014, and I would like to thank council for working with us to provide a better experience for our readers and volunteers. I know my experience would not be the same without the support we receive from the USC.

Ultimately, the Gazette takes its funding from the USC very seriously, and we balance adhering to USC policy while maintaining cost effectiveness. Even with adjustments to meet USC policies and

recommendations, we continue to be one of the leaner departments of the USC. I predict F2019 will stabilize the editorial budget and allow the Gazette to continue its operations as one of the USC's most student-facing services.

Fee split

The Gazette's budget is administered under the general USC corporate budget and the Gazette fee represents the amount the USC's plans to spend on the Gazette in the next fiscal year. An important distinction to understand about the fee is that it contributes to two different departments: Gazette Editorial and Gazette Advertising/Composing.

Gazette Editorial is the student-facing side of the Gazette. This money funds three elected student editors called "Front Office," around 20 student editors and over 200 volunteers who interact directly with the Gazette throughout the year.

As the Editor-in-Chief of the Gazette, I oversee and manage the editorial budget. I report directly to the Board of Directors' Publications Committee, as well as the USC's full-time management.

The Advertising and Composing side of the Gazette consists of three full-time USC employees and an advertising representative who jointly manages Gazette advertising sales as well as USC advertising and promotions, such as selling vendor space in the University Community Centre. The composing department also oversees nearly all IT work for the Gazette. This division is led by a full-time manager who has been with the Gazette for over 30 years. While the editorial team works with advertising/composing, they are their own department within the USC.

As a whole, the advertising/composing department falls under USC senior management. As full-time USC employees, members of the department are unionized. Union obligations under the USC's collective agreement play a big part in fee changes and in our daily operations.

Budget	F2018	F2019	Difference
Editorial	\$360,032	\$333,779	(\$26,253)
Advertising/Composing	\$191,209	\$208,961	\$17,752
Total	\$551,241	\$542,740	(\$8,501)

Fee	F2018	F2019*	Difference
Editorial	\$12.15	\$11.29	(\$0.86)
Advertising/Composing	\$6.36	\$7.07	\$0.71
Total	\$18.51	\$18.36**	(\$0.15)

*Calculated based on 29,570 undergraduates (as per USC)

** This number may differ from the one stated in the USC's overall F2019 budget. FO salaries were frozen late in the budget process, which lowered our fee a further 7 cents.

Gazette Editorial Budget F2018 and F2019

Line	Budget F2018 (\$)	Budget F2019 (\$)	Comments
Salaries	121,918	121,918	Frozen
Honoraria	87,545	87,545	Status quo
Staff benefits	24,000	24,000	Status quo
Travel	6,000	6,000	Status quo
Meetings	500	500	Status quo
Advertising	1,500	1,500	Status quo
Telephone	8,469	8,460	Status quo
Copy/Print	600	600	Status quo
Office supplies	1,000	1,000	Status quo
Miscellaneous	3,000	3,000	Status quo
Deliveries	20,000	10,800	Reduced to reflect need
Photo equipment	1,500	1,500	Status quo
Printing	50,400	40,556	Reduced to reflect need
Website	15,000	7,800	Reduced to reflect need
Training/education	8,000	8,000	Status quo
Publications board	600	600	Status quo
Volunteer appreciation	10,000	10,000	Status quo
Total	360,032	333,779	
Savings		26,253	

Major elements of editorial budget reduction

Printing expenses

The Gazette's printing schedule has radically changed since 2014. While we used to publish four times a week, we moved to a twice-a-week schedule in 2015. Last January, we decreased our print schedule further by becoming weekly — our print product hits stands each Tuesday. Going into F2019, we've reduced our printing costs further. While we budgeted for 16-page issues this year, we've committed to 12-page issues going forward. This resulted in savings of \$9,844.

This year, we predict our print advertising revenue will surpass our print costs for the first time since the '90s.

Delivery expenses

Based on our F2018 actuals, we were also able to budget less for delivery costs next year. This resulted in savings of \$9,200.

Website expenses

Lastly, after reviewing our website expenses we were able to cut \$7,200 from this line. While the cost of this service fluctuates with the U.S. dollar, we've left a buffer to account for currency variation.

Overall, the F2019 draft presents a leaner editorial budget for the Gazette going forward.

Contributions

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