The Gateway:
DFU Plebiscite 2020-21

Presentation Overview

1. Context
2. Consultation/Outreach
3. Feedback Heard to Date
4. Questions/Discussion

Who is *The Gateway* and how did we get here?

- Founded in 1910, *The Gateway* publishes approximately 1,000 articles online and eight monthly print magazines during the Fall and Winter semesters (September to April).

- *The Gateway* covers stories and issues while providing an open forum for the exchange of ideas related to the student interest and campus experience at the University of Alberta. This means exploring events and issues mainstream media does not typically cover.

- We are a **volunteer-driven community centric organization**

- Last year, *The Gateway* unsuccessfully ran a plebiscite to increase our fee and provide an opt-out option.

- This year we are requiring to run a plebiscite in order to renew our dedicated funding unit.

Preamble

The Gateway, founded in 1910, is the student-run campus newspaper and the only student-run media organization at the University of Alberta. Publishing over 1000 articles each year, written by volunteers and staff from faculties across the U of A, The Gateway covers events on campus, U of A and Students' Union governance, the achievements of students and academics, SU elections, and gives students a platform to make their voices heard on important issues.

The Gateway is an award-winning student publication, recognized by the Canadian University Press and Alberta Magazine Publishers Association. The Gateway has also broken many stories that then become syndicated nationally by other news media outlets.

The Gateway is a not-for-profit, funded by a Dedicated Fee Unit (DFU) and advertising revenue. The DFU, paid by all undergraduate students except those at Augustana Campus, is $3.54 per Fall/Winter semester and $0.54 per Spring/Summer, increasing with inflation, and is renewed every five years by a plebiscite. The funding helps give students paid opportunities to work in journalism, empower non-paid volunteer contributors, and enable community projects and collaborations in the field of student journalism.

For more information, check out www.votegateway.ca or see the work The Gateway does at www.thegatewayonline.ca

Question

Do you support the continuation of The Gateway's 110 year legacy of student journalism on campus through a $3.54 dedicated-funding unit to fund the operation of the University of Alberta's only student-run media organization?
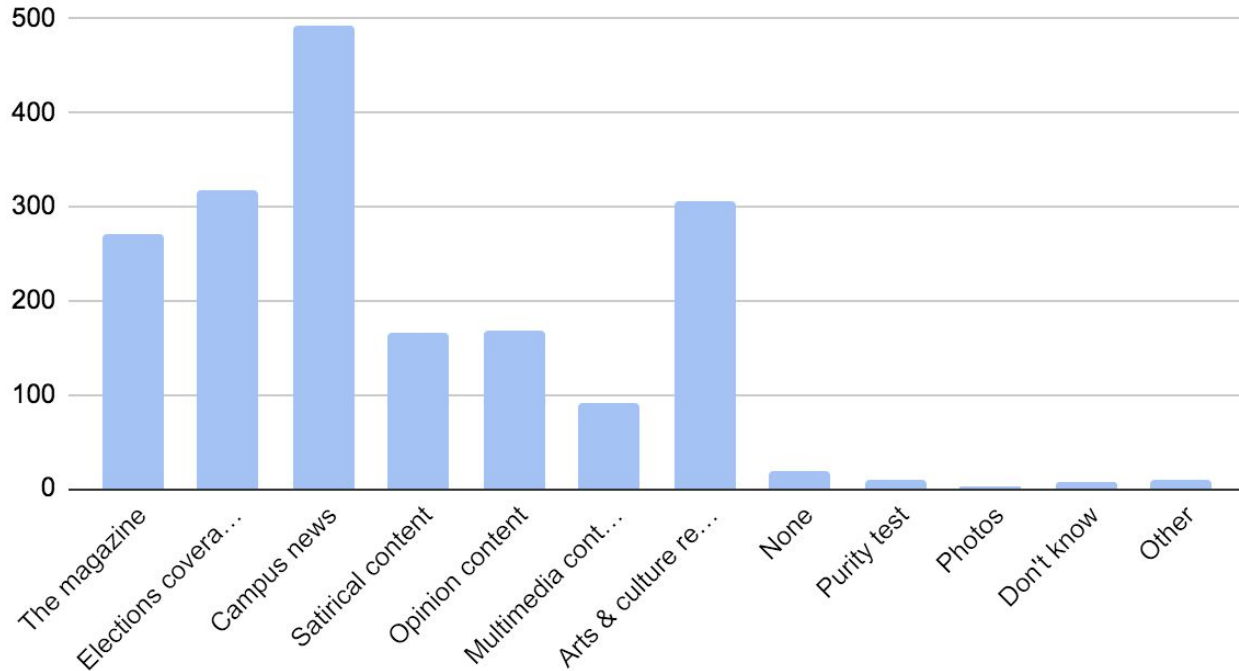
This is not last year's campaign

- Recommendations document from our DFU Team from last year
- Consultation
    - Two readership surveys
    - Fall and winter student outreach
    - Focus Groups
    - Meetings with Faculty Associations and Departmental Associations
    - Purpose Document Development
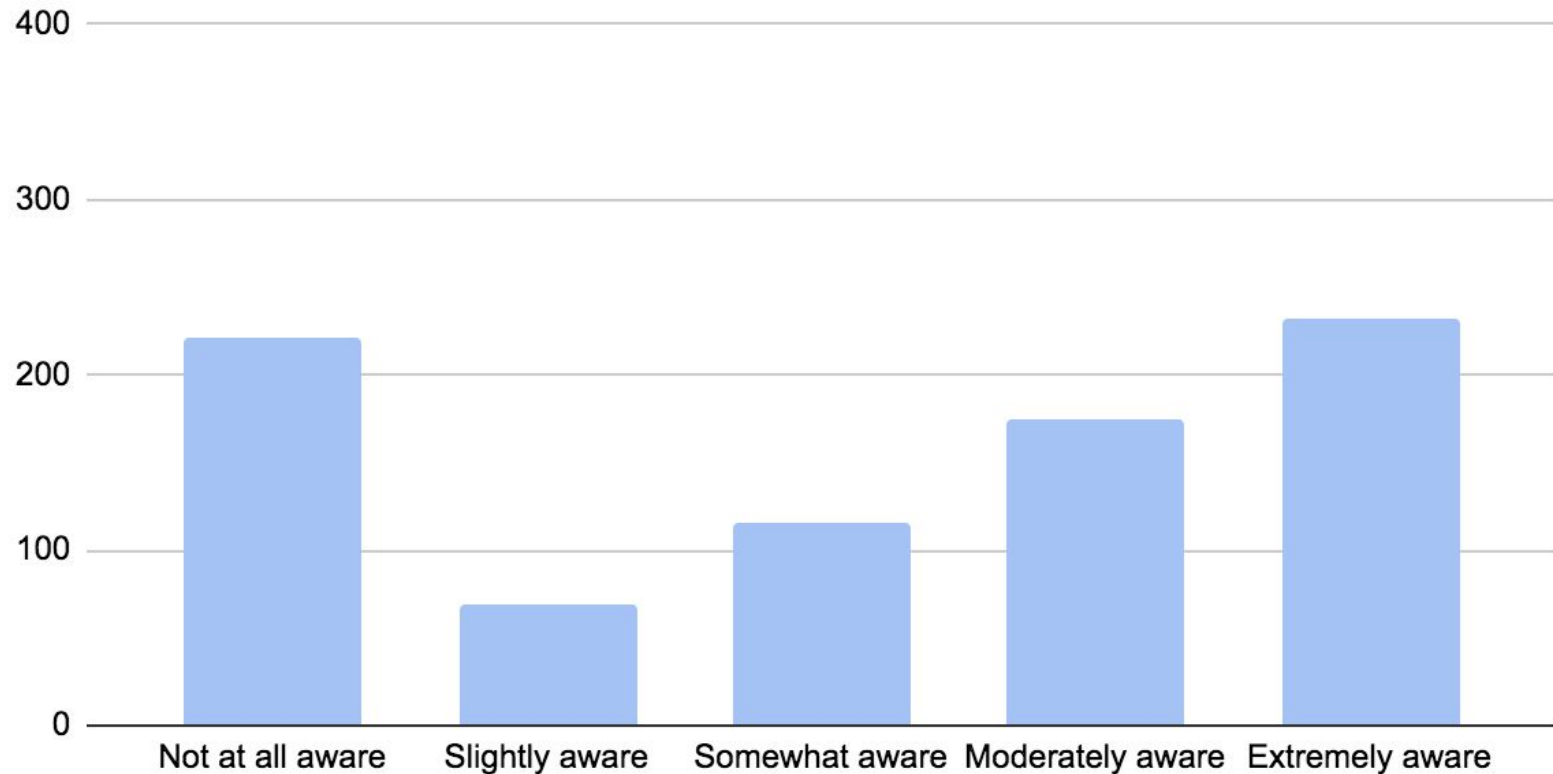
813

total respondents

Average respondent was a woman of European origins in her second or third year of undergrad, studying sciences

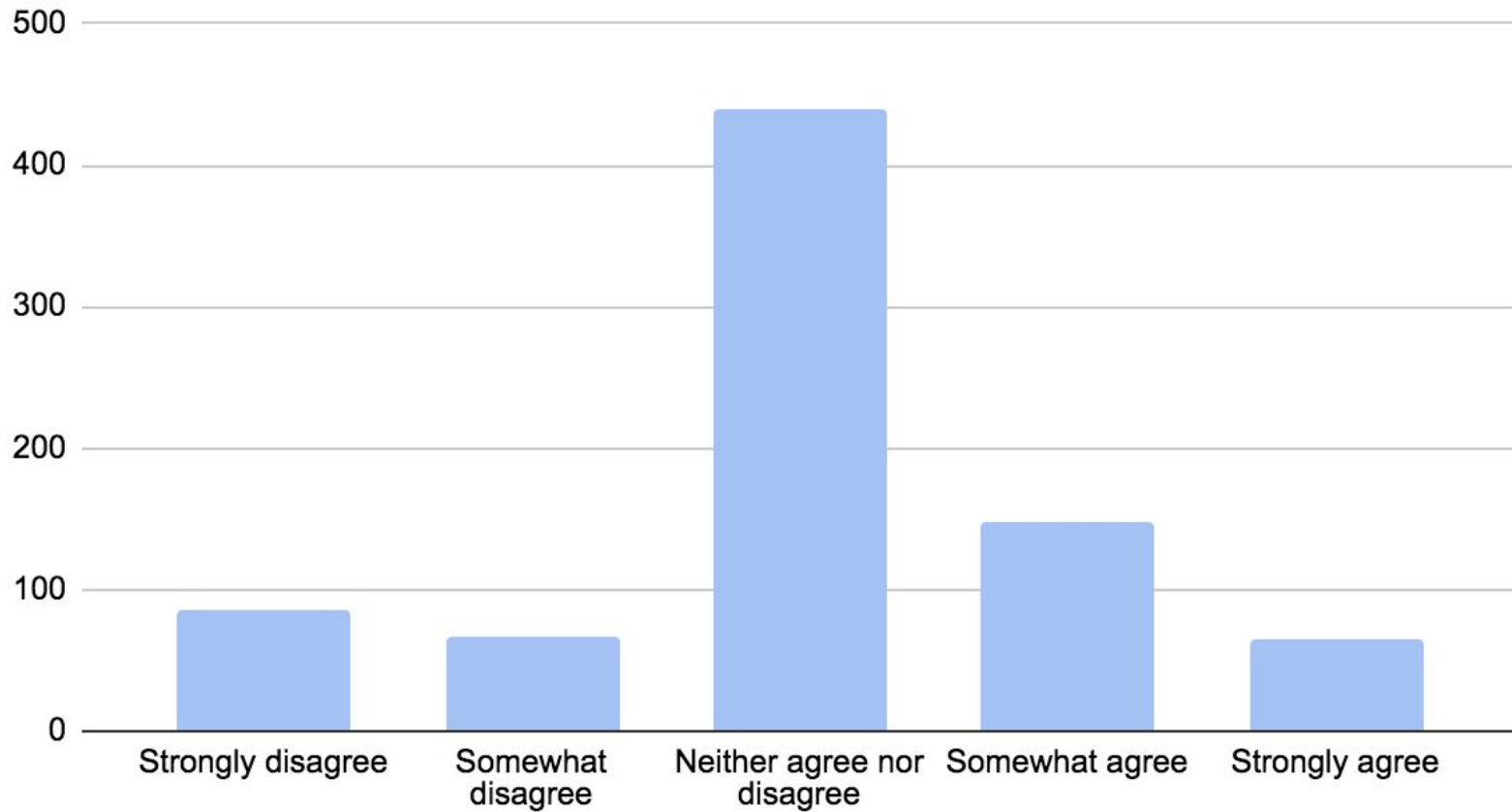What content do you find most valuable?

Top 3:
Campus news
Student elections coverage
Arts & Culture reviews

The Gateway collects a $3.54 fee from every undergraduate student each semester
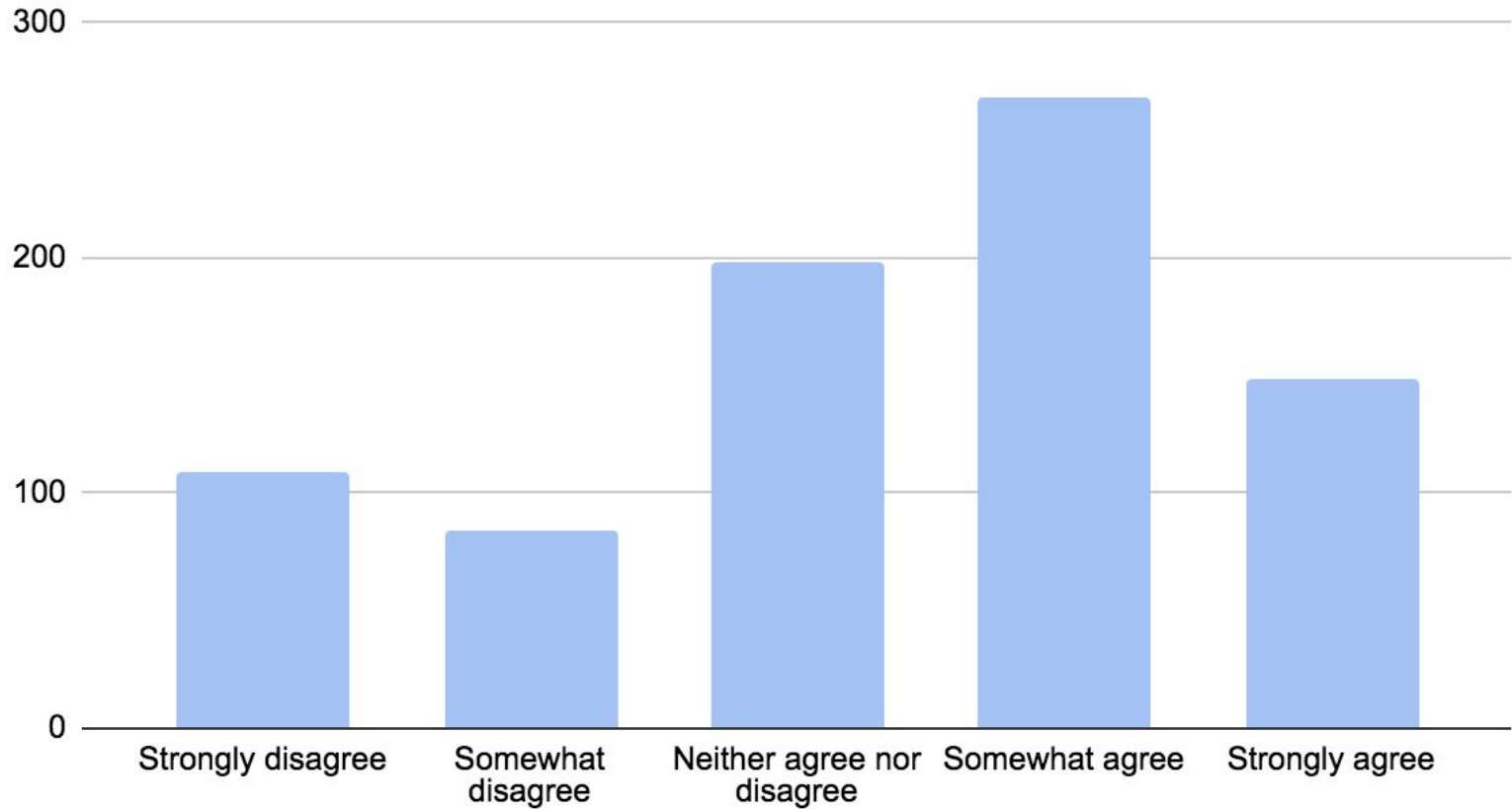
The Gateway is fiscally responsible

Top 5: Informative, news, opinionated, students, interesting

Overall, I have a generally positive opinion of The Gateway

Broad Takeaways

- Students generally recognize the value of having a campus news source, but they don't always find that The Gateway lives up to the standard that they expect
- The Gateway needs to put effort into raising awareness and gaining the trust of students this year

What are we doing differently

- New purpose document to be released in the next month to students
- Better outreach and marketing
- Staff training and professional development throughout the year
- New content test that every article must go through prior to publication
- Fact-checking policy for all sections
- Code of conduct specifically for election coverage for both volunteers and staff
- Development of in-depth elections coverage training for Opinion and News Section volunteers

Value we offer to students

- An average of 1,000 articles per academic year
- Coverage of stories that often are left behind by mainstream media
- Writing and journalistic skills for any U of A student that they can build
  - From art & design, editing, multimedia, photography, videography, to writing and everything in between
  - Directly transferable skills to both the Canadian media landscape and the magazine publishing industry in Canada
  - Chances to meet and interact with professional journalists to further learn and grow
- Social opportunities
  - A chance to meet and work with diverse volunteers and staff from different faculties and interest backgrounds

Questions/Discussion