TALISMAN

Staff Satisfaction Survey • Spring 2020
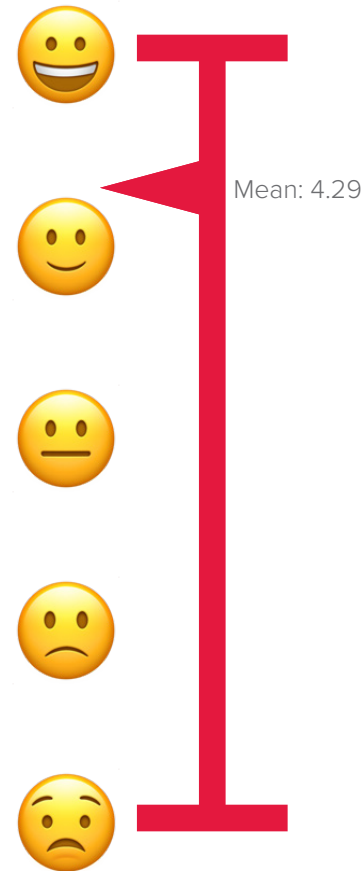
Do you enjoy being on the Talisman staff?
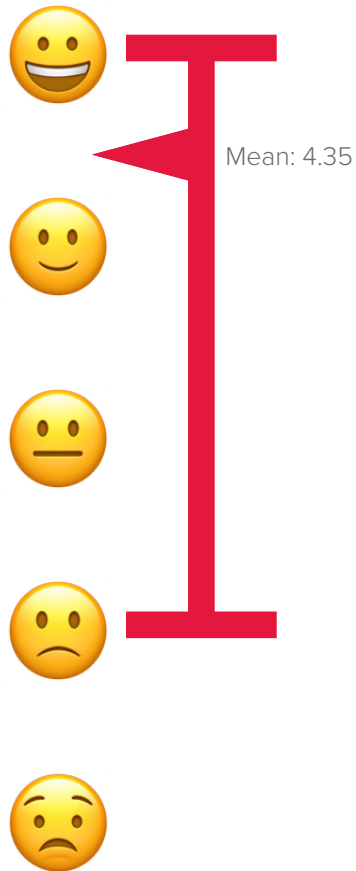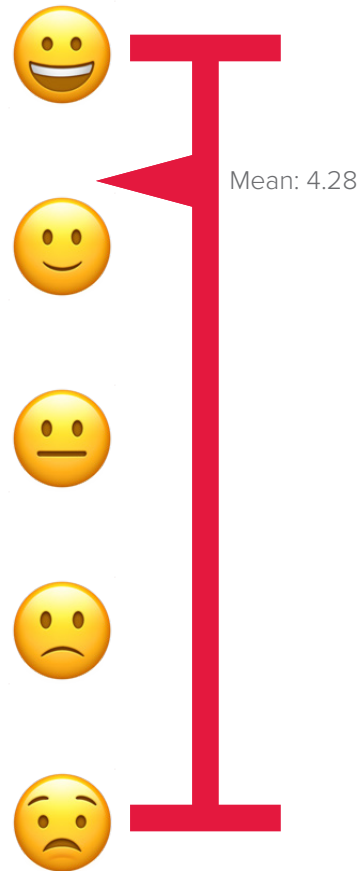
Mean: 4.35

Overall, how is your editor doing?

Mean: 4.28

Overall, how is Olivia doing as editor-in-chief?

Mean: 4.29

Overall, how is Sam doing as an adviser?

Mean: 4.78

The top and bottom of each red line indicates the overall range of responses on a scale of one to five.

Survey Design & Report

CNS 610

Assessment and Accountability in

Student Affairs and Higher Education

Sam Oldenburg

March 27, 2020

A. INTRODUCTION

I surveyed Talisman staff members about their experiences on staff this year and to evaluate what has gone well and what could be improved in the future. The Talisman, WKU's student-produced life and culture magazine and website, is one of two groups I advise within WKU Student Publications. The survey results will be relevant for myself, this year's editorial board, and next year's editorial board to assess strengths and weaknesses of the Talisman experience for students on staff and consider changes to how Talisman operates.

I often say that a student publication serves two different groups. One group is the audience of readers consuming the content created by the publication. The other group is the student staff getting experience by working on the publication. As an adviser, that second group — the student staffer members — is the one I prioritize. I want to be sure they are having a hands-on educational experience that will help them progress toward their future career aspirations, while also feeling a sense of community and belonging that contribute to high graduation and retention rates. For the student editorial board — which, for the Talisman, is currently made up of 10 editors — the audience takes top priority. Nonetheless, I strongly encourage them to also pay attention to the needs of the rest of the student staff and be patient in helping their staffs of writers, photographers, designers, web producers and marketing assistants to learn through their experience. That's why I'll be sharing the results of this survey with the editorial board so that they can see what is working and what needs more attention in the future.

My literature review included information about student media at large as well as information specific to the Talisman.

I began by reviewing professional guidelines including a code of ethics for advisers and a list of what the responsibilities of an adviser from the College Media Association (CMA) and the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) contextual statement on student media programs. The CAS standards speak to the dual role of student media I mentioned earlier with an emphasis on the development of students. The standards also discuss the role of students as the

primary decision makers in the student media operation. The resources published by CMA establish the role of an adviser as someone who gives advice, teaches and ensures a level of continuity year after year.

I also reviewed previous mid-year surveys conducted by Talisman editors to evaluate staff experience. It had been about two years since a Talisman editor-in-chief had last endeavored to survey the staff. I found that some of the previous questions portrayed some bias in the way they were phrased, so I used many similar questions but tried to remove the bias from the phrasing.

Another piece of literature that weighed heavily in the development of this survey was a list of goals established by the editorial board for the current academic year. During a retreat at the beginning of the year, I facilitated a discussion among the editors that resulted in a list of goals they decided upon. They then shared those goals with the rest of the staff and placed them prominently in the office. A picture of the goals, as they have been displayed in the office, is included below.
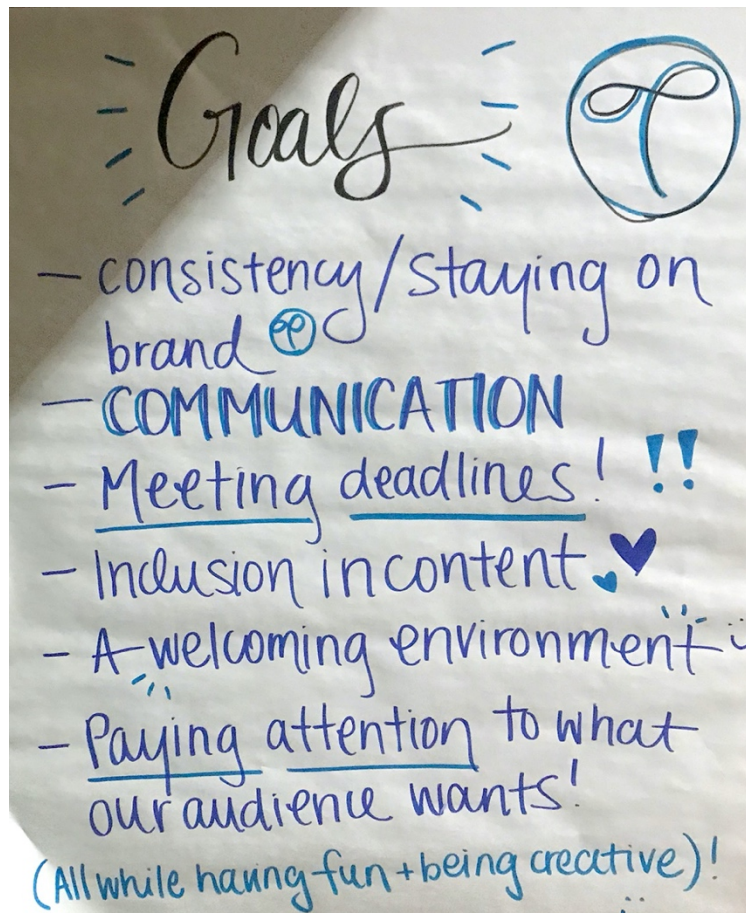
B. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population for this survey was the full Talisman staff, which has consisted of 56 undergraduate students during the spring 2020 semester. Through self-selection, 18 of those 56 students completed the survey.

Of the 18 respondents, 61% marked their gender as female, 33% as male and 6% as other. For comparison, approximately 79% of the full staff is female and 21% male.

The respondents represented 11 different academic majors, in comparison to 15 academic majors represented on the staff overall.

The full Talisman staff is divided into seven staffs: magazine writing, magazine photo, web writing, web visuals, web production, design and marketing. Some individuals are part of more than one staff. All seven staffs had at least one survey respondent. The largest number of responses came from web visuals (8) and magazine writing (6).

Respondents have been on staff for between one and six semesters, including the current semester. The breakdown of respondents is:

- One semester: 33%
- Two semesters: 28%
- Four semesters: 11%
- Five semesters: 17%
- Six semesters: 11%

C. METHOD OF CONTACT

Talisman staff members were invited to participate in the Survey via Slack, an instant messaging platform used for communication among the staff. The invitation was sent four times in the Team Talisman Slack channel, which includes all staff members, and one time in each individual staff Slack channel. Invitations were sent between March 2 and March 20. I originally hoped to have all responses in by March 8. When I hadn't received the required 15 responses by that date, I planned to follow up with in-person requests during staff meetings in the week after spring

break. However, the COVID-19 pandemic kept me from following up in person, so I sent additional reminders through Slack instead.

D. DATA ANALYSIS

The survey results include both quantitative and qualitative data.

Survey Questions and Responses

1. Do you enjoy being on the Talisman staff?

- Emoji scale: 😠 (1) to 😁 (5)
- Mean 4.35, standard deviation 0.84
- Lowest response: 2 (🙁), count 1
- Highest response: 5(😄), count 9

2. What's your favorite part of being on Talisman staff?

- Ten respondents mentioned being part of a collaborative community.
- Seven respondents mentioned building skills through professional experiences.
- Six respondents mentioned having creative freedom with their work.
- Five respondents mentioned getting acquainted with the wider community through finding and working on stories.

3. What's your least favorite part of being on Talisman staff?

- Six respondents mentioned disorganized meetings.
- Four respondents mentioned unclear communication from their editors.
- Four respondents mentioned the challenge of managing their time.
- Two respondents mentioned other staff members not taking the work seriously.
- One respondent mentioned a lack of diversity.
- One respondent mentioned impersonal relationships among staffers.

4. Do you consider the Talisman office to be a welcoming environment?

- Scale: "definitely yes" (1) to "definitely not" (5)

- Mean 1.67, standard deviation 0.75

- Lowest response 1 ("definitely yes"), count 9

- Highest response 3 ("might or might not"), count 3

- No respondents answered "mostly no" or "definitely not."

5. Do you feel like what you say during meetings is listened to and taken into consideration?

- Scale: "definitely yes" (1) to "definitely not" (5)

- Mean 1.78, standard deviation 1.06

- Lowest response 1 ("definitely yes"), count 10

- Highest response 4 ("probably not"), count 2

- No respondents answered "definitely not."

6. Do you believe the Talisman's content is inclusive of the full diversity of our WKU audience?

- Scale: "definitely yes" (1) to "definitely not" (5)

- Mean 2.17, standard deviation 1.07

- Lowest response 1 ("definitely yes"), count 6

- Highest response 5 ("definitely not"), count 1

7. How has communication been with your editor?

- Emoji scale: 😠 (1) to 😄 (5)

- Mean 4.33, standard deviation 0.94

- Lowest response 2 (🙁), count 2

- Highest response 5 (😄), count 5

8. How has communication been with other staff members?

- Emoji scale: 😠 (1) to 😄 (5)

- Mean 3.92, standard deviation 0.73

- Lowest response 2 (🙁), count 1
- Highest response 5 (😄), count 2

9. How could communication be improved?

- Eight respondents mentioned paying more attention to Slack and responding in a timely manner.
- Three respondents mentioned more communication from and between editors.
- Three respondents mentioned more communication between different staffs.
- One respondent mentioned more consistent office hours for editors.
- One respondent mentioned enforcing mandatory meetings.
- One respondent mentioned further explaining the editing process to make clear why communication is important.

10. Do you feel like you've received enough training to carry out your job on staff?

- Scale: "definitely yes" (1) to "definitely not" (5)
- Mean 1.83, standard deviation 0.76
- Lowest response 1 ("definitely yes"), count 6
- Highest response 4 ("probably not"), count 1

11. What areas do you feel you could use more training on?

- Four respondents mentioned how the Talisman works and what is expected of them.
- Three respondents mentioned AP Style.
- Three respondents mentioned writing.
- Three respondents mentioned expanding skills outside their primary area on staff.
- One respondent mentioned lighting.

12. Overall, how is your editor doing?

- Emoji scale: 😠 (1) to 😄 (5)
- Mean 4.28, standard deviation 1.24

- Lowest response 1 (😠), count 2
- Highest response 5 (😄), count 11

13. Please explain. Is there anything you wish your editor would do differently? In what ways do you think your editor could be more effective?

- Seven respondents expressed positive sentiments toward their editors.
- Three respondents indicated a desire to receive more clear direction.
- One respondent indicated a desire for a quicker response time to questions sent to editors.
- One respondent indicated a desire for editors to be open to a broader range of content.
- One respondent indicated a desire for editors to have more confidence.

14. Overall, how is Olivia doing as editor-in-chief?

- Emoji scale: 😠 (1) to 😄 (5)
- Mean 4.29, standard deviation 1.27
- Lowest response 1 (😠), count 2
- Highest response 5 (😄), count 11

15. Please explain. Is there anything you wish Olivia would do differently? In what ways do you think she could be more effective?

- Six respondents expressed positive sentiments toward Olivia.
- Four respondents indicated they were uncertain of the editor-in-chief's role on staff.
- One respondent indicated a desire for Olivia to set expectations.

16. Overall, how is Sam doing as an adviser?

- Emoji scale: 😠 (1) to 😄 (5)
- Mean 4.78, standard deviation 0.42
- Lowest response 4 (🙂), count 4
- Highest response 5 (😄), count 14

17. Please explain. Is there anything you wish Sam would do differently? In what ways do you think he could be more effective?

- Ten respondents expressed positive sentiments toward Sam, including four who mentioned that he is open and welcoming and two that mentioned an appreciation for help with searching for internships and jobs.
- One respondent suggested Sam could check in a bit more to see how staff members are feeling about Talisman.

18. Given your experience with the Talisman, would you want to be on staff again in the future?

- Respondents were given the options of yes, unsure or no.
- 76% (count 13) answered "yes"
- 24% (count 4) answered "unsure"
- No individuals answered "no."

19. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience on the Talisman staff?

- One respondent mentioned having little faith in editors and the editing process because of poor communication.
- One respondent mentioned the website being hard to navigate.
- One respondent mentioned discovering they were more interested in creative writing than journalistic writing and becoming less enthusiastic about being on staff because of that.

Default Report

Talisman Evaluation Spring 2020

March 22, 2020 1:50 PM MDT

Q20 - What's your least favorite part of being on Talisman staff?

What's your least favorite part of being on Talisman staff?

Crappy stories, disorganized, lengthy unfocused meetings, assigning proposed stories to people other than who pitched it without input

It used to be going to meetings as a web visual designer and not have anything to pitch/missing time in the studio.

My least favorite would be the difficulty to get started, but once I found a groove, it was no issue!

When staffers don't take their jobs seriously or care about improving the publication or shirk their responsibilities — that's always frustrating. Of course you can't make people care, but maybe there's some room for improvement in how we communicate expectations and set standards.

I can't think of one.

It can be stressful sometimes if I don't have the info I need or trying to come up with ideas for pieces and having to trust my own creative judgement

Always being busy, but that's kind of a good thing.

The meetings - while I feel they're productive and good for collaboration, they're long and sometimes not super collaborative.

The editors. They don't really inspire people to do their best and they always seem to be pushing back or cancelling office hours. They are hypocritical at times about what types of stories we can do. I don't think the role of editors is right for them

It's a little impersonal between members that aren't editors.

I don't like when people seem to not put forth their best effort when everyone is trying to learn and help each other whenever possible.

the meetings dont always feel like a open space, sometimes judgmental.

Weekly meetings are hard to fit into my schedule, but it's worth it

The meetings

Classic deadline struggles

The lack of diversity on staff.

Tons of pointless meetings.

End of Report

Default Report

Talisman Evaluation Spring 2020
March 22, 2020 1:51 PM MDT

Q5 - How could communication be improved?

How could communication be improved?

Informing me what does and does not work in illustrations, the parameters, how to format, understanding why we were assigned to a piece and/or having access to a story when there is more written to go off of instead of playing a guessing game on what illustrations might fit

More attention paid to slack for some people who may never respond at all.

More interaction between staffs because sometimes it's hard to get a sense of cohesiveness.

More open and on top of assignments that you share with others.

I think communication between not only staffers but also editors is really important! I've had a lot of luck communicating with my editors but sometimes there's not as much communication between them as there could/should be, especially on the magazine side. As for staffers, I think the web editors have made a great effort to communicate with them but sometimes those efforts aren't returned — I think maybe making the steps of the editing process clear to them and communicating why it's so important to meet deadline and communicate with editors and with other staffers would help.

People just need to consistently check their Slack messages because that's our primary means of communication.

Honestly the app is kind of weird, sometimes it won't notify me that someone has responded to me or messaged me until hours afterwards. I understand that people are busy but sometimes staff members have taken days to get back to me.

I'm just slow to reach out sometimes, I have no complaints of anyone else's actions or methods

Even I need to better at reaching out to people and getting back as soon as I can.

The editors should have more stable officer hours. They should also just communicate more with their specific subsection.

More conversations between other staff members.

Requiring Slack responses within a set period of time and enforcing that rule, as well as enforcing the mandatory meeting rule.

Reaching out to photographers through Slack is sometimes hard because Slack is not a priority, but I think it's the best we've got

N/A

Unsure at this moment. Slack is great.

End of Report

Default Report

Q27 - What areas do you feel you could use more training on?

What areas do you feel you could use more training on?

Formatting, what works/what is expected, goals

I feel competent in all my design related work.

I don't do much with sponsors so I wouldn't mind more training with that. I don't normally handle sponsored stuff but I would like to know more of the process going into it.

I think it would be helpful to understand the desired process a little better and to know what exactly I am designing for because it never is made clear to me.

Working with sponsors, social media, print and web design

I feel like sometimes I'm still not super familiar with the process of how things work or how to see the article that the writer is working on.

Writing, I'm just a freshman, so I still have a lot to learn.

Lighting techniques

Journalistic and Talisman writing styles.

I wish I had been encouraged to pursue assignments or projects outside of my own field.

I think I could always improve my AP Style writing

AP style

Getting started I felt like I could have used more training on how the web staff operates, but got the hang of it after a couple of weeks and my first story

Current AP style

End of Report

Default Report

Q13 - Please explain. Is there anything you wish your editor would do differently? In what ways do you think your editor could be more effective?

Please explain. Is there anything you wish your editor would do differently...

Understanding what she's talking about (I.e. how illustration works) and understanding what works and what is expected and communicating this clearly with her staff. Being more open to a broader range of content

I think my editor does great, their approach is very laid-back, however the magazine is always put together really well.

Make sure to keep staff in the loop of things discussed in ed board meeting or changes of plans just so things aren't sprung upon them. It doesn't happen often but occasionally things get left out.

n/a

I feel like I'm doing pretty well! I like to think I'm organized and on top of things most of the time. To be more effective I think I just need a bit more confidence and ask for help more often and not let the things that might discourage me a bit get to me but instead see them as opportunities for growth.

I think my editor is on top of things. I don't really have any complaints.

She's all good, she answers all my questions I just wish I didn't have to ask so many

N/A

I've reached out to my editor and waited a while for them to get back to me.

Hammer down more on illustrations because there are quite a few bad illustrations that have gone up. Be a more authoritative and stable leader.

I like that my editor (Phi) messages me frequently about updates and is friendly in conversation and seems to care what I say. Max is also very friendly and approachable even though he isn't my primary editor.

I think my editor is amazing! She's very good with feedback and timeliness, and she's always open to my ideas and considerate of my time

N/A

My editor is extremely effective and I enjoy working with her a lot

End of Report

Default Report

Q15 - Please explain. Is there anything you wish Olivia would do differently? In what ways do you think she could be more effective?

Please explain. Is there anything you wish Olivia would do differently? In...

I have no idea what she does and she is not the most interesting and doesn't seem to enjoy a wide range of content. She could contribute more by explaining what they're looking for and giving expectations

I believe she is doing well, I can't think of areas for her to improve in.

n/a

^^^see above

I think Olivia is doing great. She's always got things under control and communicates well. I don't really have any complaints about her!

Nothing that I can think of

N/A

She seems to be doing a great job!

I literally have no idea what she does. She just kind of sits at the meetings and just vibes. She never really seems to speak to us all that much

There isn't much exposure to the exact inner workings of her job and how it impacts me, so I would say she's doing fine because there hasn't been many difficulties.

she should show more of her personality in meetings. shes the head honcho, but we barely know her

I think Olivia is doing well! I haven't spent a lot of time with her, but Talisman seems to be operating well, so I think she's doing well.

N/A

Olivia is pleasant to work with and be around, I think she's doing wonderful

End of Report

Default Report

Talisman Evaluation Spring 2020

March 22, 2020 1:54 PM MDT

Q17 - Please explain. Is there anything you wish Sam would do differently? In what ways do you think he could be more effective?

Please explain. Is there anything you wish Sam would do differently? In wh...

Sam is always open and helpful and is a delight to talk to and work with

Sam is very helpful and is a good source of knowledge. I'd say he's the most effective working member at the Talisman.

n/a

Sam goes above and beyond! I appreciate how he not only is always willing to offer advice and help with Tali but also with resumes, cover letters and job searching even though that's not necessarily in his job description. I appreciate that he always wants us to grow and learn and push ourselves to do better. In terms of things I think he could do differently, I can't think of a lot, but maybe to check in on us a bit more/see how we are feeling about Tali periodically

Sam is the best advisor. No complaints here, once again.

Can't think of anything, love the get work channel

Sam is awesome

He's doing a great job!

Sam is doing wonderfully :D

Sam is always available to us! He is always at the meetings and very receptive to our ideas.

N/A

Sam is welcoming and effective at his job. I enjoy working with him as well.

End of Report

Default Report

Talisman Evaluation Spring 2020

March 22, 2020 1:55 PM MDT

Q25 - Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience on the Talisman staff?

Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience on the Tal...

There was one piece I was really excited to work on, but the assignment was so disorganized and confused that I was not able to make enough illustrations for it and the pictures fell through, so the piece suffered. There was both an illustrator and photographer assigned and the writer had the same due date as both. I was never told it did not work out with the photographer and heard nothing about the piece after I submitted the photos and didn't know there were no other visuals until I saw it posted on the website. I was very hurt and disappointed. Ever since this experience, I have had very little enthusiasm for Talisman web because I have little faith in the process and editors

No that I can think of.

n/a

If I weren't graduating, heck yes I'd do it again!

I love it!!

Glad I got the opportunity to be on staff, I have already learned so much.

The website is hard to navigate. I get better results googling talisman stuff than I do navigating the website itself. The meetings are hard to sit through because they will just let people talk about nothing for a long time. And this is not just a one-man rant. Multiple people on staff feel this way too

I think it was a great experience and a great opportunity for journalistic writing as a student, but I personally have learned I am more inclined to creative writing so I wasn't as enthusiastic as a journalism major would be.

Nope

End of Report

Default Report

Talisman Evaluation Spring 2020

March 22, 2020 1:47 PM MDT

Q19 - What's your favorite part of being on Talisman staff?

What's your favorite part of being on Talisman staff?

Being free to illustrate how I want

Working with other people and seeing how we can align our interests.

Working with tons of creative people!

I really enjoy the variation of assignments that i'm given.

Being able to work with such talented people! I love that we can bounce ideas off each other and that people are always thinking of ways to improve. It's such a positive environment in that way and a good place to grow.

The great collaborative work environment and the experience that I get!

The opportunity to be creative and work collaboratively with other people.

Having the opportunity to report on real events, issues and people, and to work with such a great group of hardworking, driven individuals.

The atmosphere is really creative and welcoming and I've been able to cover interesting parts of the community by working here.

Being able to meet new people and see new things while building my portfolio

Meeting new people.

The companionship I have formed while also crafting professional skills is unparalleled to any other experience I have had on campus, and I find the experience to be one of the most fulfilling in my life.

getting to see ideas turn into articles

The freedom to write and create the stories that I find interesting.

Being able to be creative

Getting to find and write cool stories

Getting to shoot events and getting real world experience working stories.

Writing good articles

End of Report