

## MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
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### **Gazette Study Group reveals recommendations**

LONDON, ON: The ad hoc Gazette Study Group created in response to the concerns raised from last year's Spoof Issue of the University Students' Council student newspaper released its official recommendations this week.

The study group is comprised of USC President Tom Stevenson, current Editor-in-Chief of *The Gazette*, Allison Buchan-Terrell, a media professional, a member of the Faculty of Journalism, and three undergraduate students. Since September 2007, the group has met on a monthly basis to gather information from students through various survey methods and discuss the overall quality of *The Gazette*. It will present its final report with non-binding recommendations to the Editor-in-Chief of *The Gazette* and the USC President, whom will decide which recommendations will be carried forward.

The official recommendations outlined a greater focus on volunteer recruitment, transparency, community engagement, and diversity within special issues. This included:

- The creation of a "Community Feature" section to encourage non-solicited articles written by individuals involved or interested in an issue or campus group.
- A "Letter from the Editor" feature will give the Editor-in-Chief a space to explain how or why particular stories were covered a certain way, how or why certain *Letters to the Editor* were chosen, and to respond to *Letters to the Editor* in greater detail.
- A commitment to investigating the possibility of creating additional special issues, which may include: a Queer Issue, a Black Student Awareness Issue, a Women's Issue or other feature issues focusing on campus or minority groups.
- A commitment to increasing the representation of world news through the creation of a "Top Five World News Stories" section.
- Assigning a Senior Editor as "Volunteer Expert" to ensure an open-door policy to address volunteer concerns, to ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment for new volunteers, organize an Open House for interested students, and oversee *Gazette* presence during USC Clubs Week.

"We extensively used five different methods for surveying students and gathering information this year — a web-based census, a pick-up point survey, a focus group, a pick-up count, and professional and student newspaper best-practices research," explained Editor-in-Chief, Alison Buchan-Terrell. "I am confident that through these channels, we have gained a greater understanding of students' needs, and their perspectives will help us in improving *The Gazette*."

Buchan-Terrell went on further to say, "In the wake of the Spoof Issue, many members of the Western community called for *The Gazette* to examine the newspaper's mandate and operations and to consider whether we need to change."

“We embraced the opportunity to listen to what our readership likes, dislikes, or wants to change about *The Gazette* — in fact, a comprehensive readership survey was part of *The Gazette’s* long-term plan — and we plan to study the feasibility of implementing each recommendation.”

Editor-In-Chief for the 2008-09 publishing year, Ravi Amarnath, will provide his response to the Study Group’s recommendations prior to start of the publishing year.

In addition, the Study Group’s full report, as well as an outline of initiatives *The Gazette* has completed this year in response to the Spoof Issue, will be posted on *The Gazette’s* ([www.gazette.uwo.ca](http://www.gazette.uwo.ca)) and the USC’s website ([www.usc.uwo.ca](http://www.usc.uwo.ca)).

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