

# MEDIA LITERACY MATTERS

## DEVELOPING A STUDENT-CENTERED CONFERENCE

### OVERVIEW

The past decade has seen extraordinary change in the information landscape, along with new challenges in mis- and disinformation. As students enter university and become even more engaged as citizens of the world, there is great potential to develop robust media literacy education. One large, public research university embraced this opportunity by creating a space for research, conversation, and collaboration with an on-campus media literacy conference. Media literacy education often revolves around simply teaching students how to interrogate and verify information. By making students active researchers on the impacts and reach of mis- and disinformation, this conference generated more meaningful media literacy education opportunities.

### BACKGROUND

The Critical Media Literacy Collaborative is a group of librarians, faculty, and students at UNC Charlotte that promotes education, events, and outreach on issues such as misinformation, online privacy, AI implementation, and media ownership. We have focused on amplifying student and faculty voices and bringing these individuals together to learn about each other's work in the field of media literacy.

### CONFERENCE GOALS

#### EMPOWER STUDENTS AS SCHOLARS

As many students have learned media literacy basics, we wanted to create opportunities for students to deepen their understanding of these topics through original research.

#### BRING TOGETHER MEDIA LITERACY SCHOLARS ACROSS CAMPUS

Media literacy research can be distributed and diffuse, with members of our own collaborative coming from varied disciplines. We wanted to de-silo this work and create opportunities for scholars working on similar topics to meet and hear from one another.

#### ENGAGE THE BROADER COMMUNITY

Media literacy is hugely relevant to the community at large. Our library strives to advance teaching, learning, research, and innovation for both UNC Charlotte and the greater Charlotte community. We wanted to hear community voices on these topics as well.

### CONFERENCE FORMAT



#### NETWORK

- Light breakfast and networking



#### LEARN

- Conversation with local independent media
- Student sessions consisting of poster presentations, lightning talks, and videos
- Panel discussion and Q&A with editorial board of campus student newspaper
- Faculty lightning talks



#### SHARE

- Option for students to deposit presentations in campus repository
- Some topics covered by students:
  - Media literacy in student journalism
  - Generative AI in photography
  - Impacts of mis- and disinformation on the LGBTQIA+ community

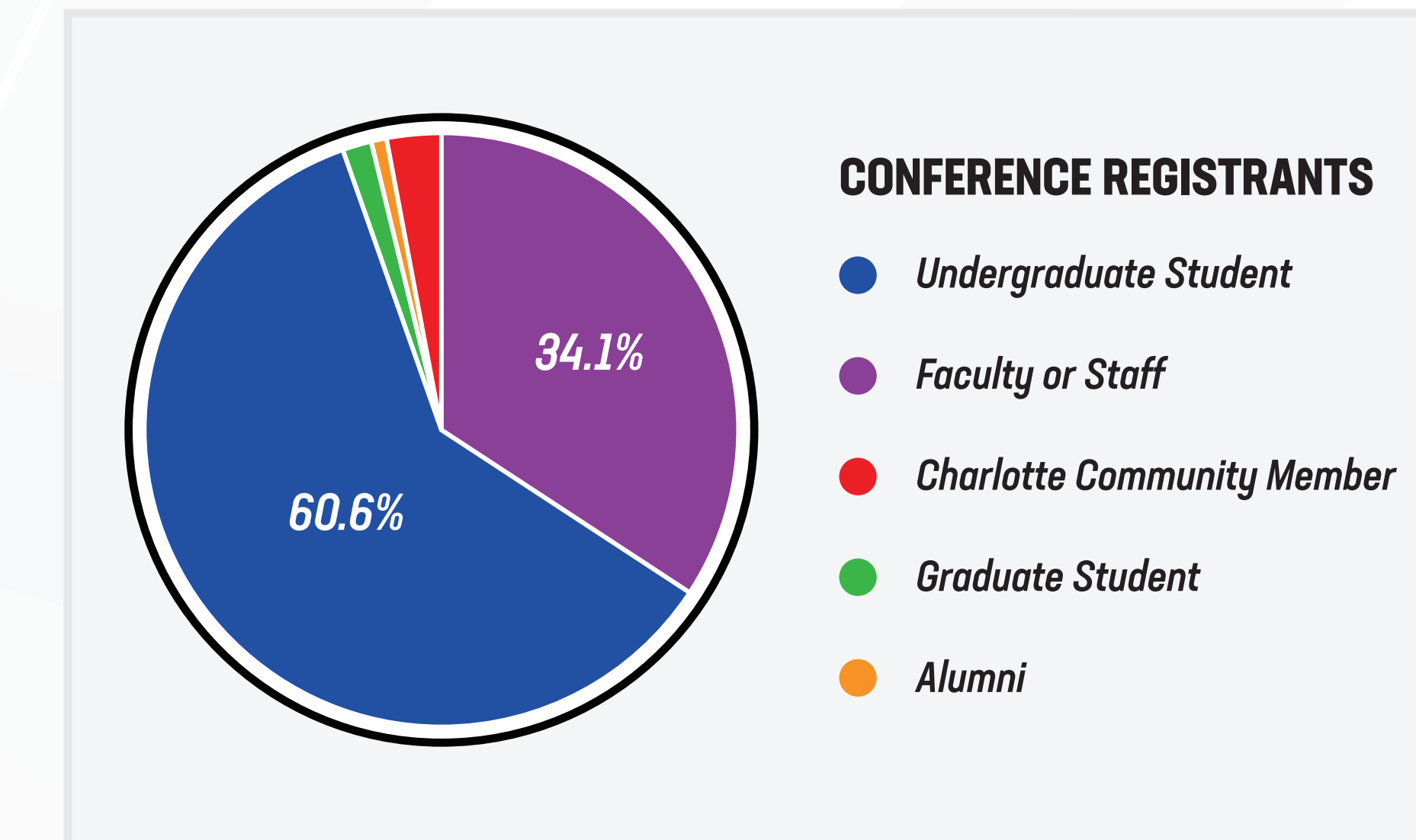
### OUTCOMES

#### Presentations

- 10 presentations by students
- 7 talks by faculty
- Panel presentation by members of the student newspaper
- Keynote by the editor-in-chief of a local newspaper

#### Attendance

- 132 people registered
- 208 people counted throughout the day



#### Programs Represented by Presenters

##### Humanities

- Department of Art & Art History
- Department of Theatre
- Department of Writing, Rhetoric & Digital Studies

##### Social Sciences

- American Studies Program
- Belk College of Business
- Department of Communication Studies
- Department of Educational Leadership
- Department of Political Science and Public Administration
- Liberal Studies

##### Sciences

- Department of Biological Sciences
- Department of Public Health Sciences
- School of Data Science

### CONFERENCE FEEDBACK

"This was a great conference. I really appreciated hearing from so many perspectives – a community member/alum, current students, and faculty."

"It was a great place to network and know the staff of the library."

"I'm teaching two courses next semester on relevant topics. I'd be interested in partnering with the Critical Media Literacy Collaborative."

### LESSONS LEARNED

- Include students and faculty in the planning stages of the conference to incorporate their ideas and viewpoints.
- Encourage faculty to bring students to the conference to promote engagement.
- Half-day conferences are easier to plan and organize while also more engaging for participants.
- Designate a moderator for the faculty lightning talks to ensure that faculty adhere to the schedule.
- Attendees enjoyed the opportunity to interact and learn about each other's work. Accordingly, the CMLC is hosting a series of interactive events this spring that brings faculty, staff, and students together.
  - **Who Controls What You See? A Panel on Media Ownership and Censorship**  
Panel featuring students, faculty, and community members
  - **Scrolling Smarter: Managing Your Digital Privacy**  
An interactive workshop where participants can update their digital privacy settings and learn about algorithms
  - **Coffee and Conversations: Navigating the New Media Landscape**  
An opportunity to network with others about media literacy

