

VOICE Grant Report: Triton's VOICE

June 2021

Project's Objectives:

When we applied for the VOICE grant, we originally aimed to host dialogue events on our UC San Diego campus titled "Triton Talks". When the pandemic occurred, we pivoted our project to hosting these conversations on an online streaming platform. With this, we created "Activist-in-Progress: A Podcast for the Civically Challenged". Both of the objectives we initially cited for our Triton Talks transitioned into our podcast.

Our first objective was to make activism an accessible pursuit to students who are not in student government. Our podcast title "Activist-in-Progress" did just this. We recognized that there was no "perfect" activist, there is just the pursuit of learning and committing ourselves to understanding issues and fighting for justice. Throughout our lives, depending on the stage of life we are in—college students, with a family, in school, working—we may have varying times and energy we can dedicate ourselves to fighting for this justice. So, being an activist-in-progress is a useful ideology as it helps us integrate philosophies of activism into our daily lives and forego the pursuit of being the perfect activist. In terms of content we produced, we interviewed a variety of experts—from study body presidents to attorneys—and marketed our projects through different school social media platforms to spread the word.

Our second objective was to present social issues in an entertaining format so students can engage in dialogue in a safe and accessible way. The podcast was a new platform for our group, and was certainly "entertaining". We produced original music for the podcast and created social media content—which targeted numerous audiences. We created sections of our podcast,

like lightning rounds with our guests, to lighten the conversation as social issues can be difficult to digest.

Overall, we are very happy with the results of our podcast, which can be found [here](#).

Demographics:

First, we will discuss demographics of our team and then of our audience. Our team was made up of four UC San Diego student activists. Our guest speakers included two ACLU attorneys, one museum expert/archivist, and one study body president. For our project, our podcast streamed over 200 times, with an audience made up of demographics listed below.

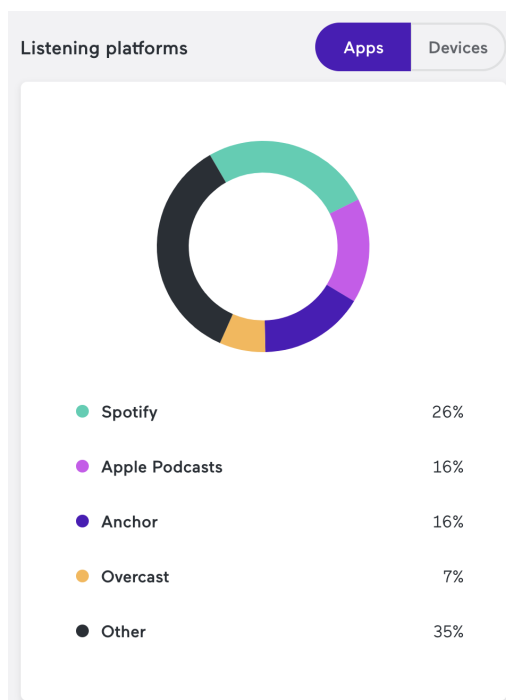


Image 1: Many of our listeners streamed our podcast on Spotify.

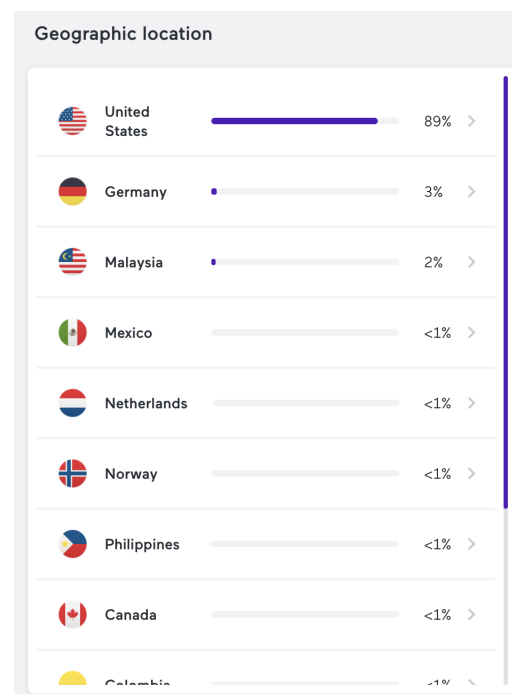


Image 2: A majority of our audience resides in the United States.

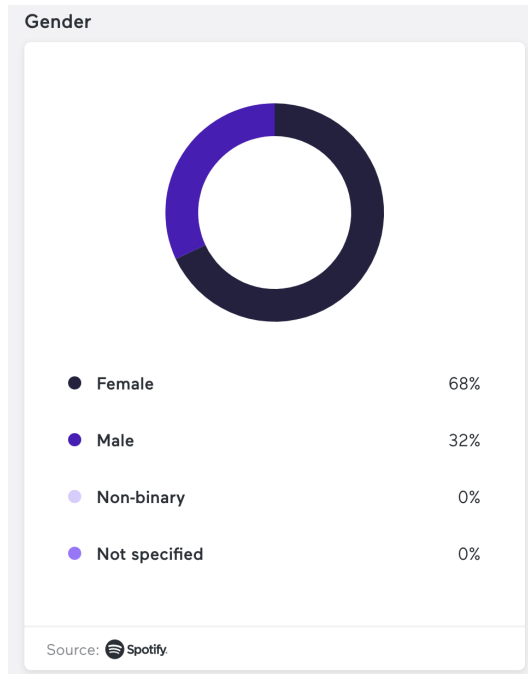


Image 3: Over half of our listeners were female.

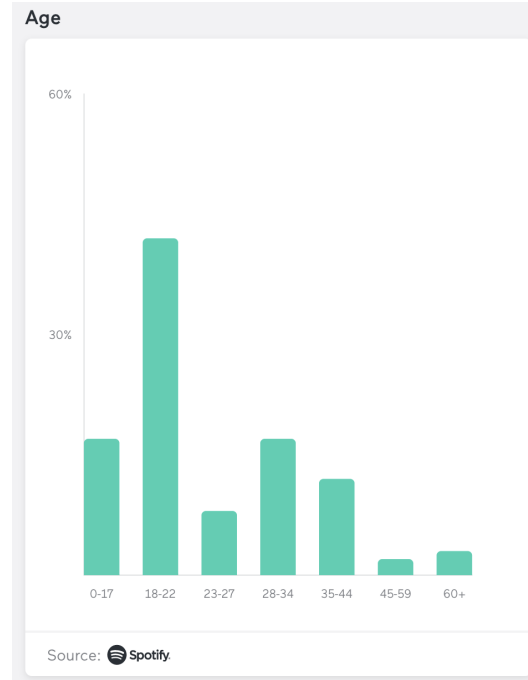


Image 4: Most of our listeners were ages 18-22, however multiple age brackets tuned in.

Challenges:

There were quite a few challenges that we encountered while executing our project. First, of course, was pivoting our project when lockdowns began. Our student organization was ecstatic to host dialogue events, and when the pandemic started, we felt disappointed to not be able to see this through, especially with many of us graduating in 2021. So, our first challenge was *energy*. We felt dejected. But, when our organization met for a brainstorming session, and someone introduced the idea of a podcast, we were inspired! We set out to work on our project, and found it easy to feel inspired when we were in the presence of experts who were so passionate about their work.

The second and third challenges were time management and communication. As we began during the pandemic, we navigated Zoom, group messaging, emailing, and more as we

scheduled our meetings and communicated with our guests. As a group, we created a flow of virtual conversation and set group expectations to manage our workload. For our guests, we perfected our skills of professionalism as we requested their time and expertise and coordinated it with our four student hosts.

Our final challenge was marketing. Once we created the podcast, we then had to spread the word about our project. We shared our project with our friends and family, our VOICE cohort, and staff from our university. We were featured on the [UC San Diego's "Tritons Tools & Tidbits" podcast](#) and promoted our work. We also utilized [social media](#) to update our community with new episodes and information.

Impact:

The four students from our organization who participated in creating the podcast felt the opportunity completely transformed the way we understand activism, and have influenced how we are activists every day. For our wider campus community, we were able to infuse passion into issues that can feel unnecessary, unrelated, or time-consuming. Issues like voting, student government engagement, police conduct...all of these issues prior to the pandemic may not have meant much to individual students in our community. However, the intersection of our work with the pandemic and the rise of many social movements this year in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, Asian-American and Pacific Islander populations, and more have helped us understand just how important it is to learn and ally ourselves with these causes. Our podcast has served as a space where students and staff in our community can learn digestible, meaningful, and daily tasks to support these movements.

Working with The Center:

We greatly appreciate The Center's support. The VOICE grant has served as an enlightening learning opportunity and given us the opportunity to pursue our passions in uncertain times. Our favorite part of our time together has certainly been attending the #SpeechMatters conference in Washington, DC. We learned a great deal from Center Fellows and other VOICE awardees at the conference, and these partnerships have persevered through the pandemic. Our hope is that future awardees can also experience these conferences in-person when it is safe to do so again—as it was the highlight of our year!