2020 COMMUNICATIONS TRENDS & LEARNINGS

UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

UNIVERSITY*of* VIRGINIA

BACKGROUND

In addition to our standard data-focused reporting, we wanted to examine longer term trends and patterns in terms of user behavior and key trends. In this report, we will identify six key takeaways from 2020 that fall under the following categories:

AUDIENCE GROWTH & EXPANDED READERSHIP STRATEGIES

NEW OR UNEXPECTED USER BEHAVIOR

OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE PROCESSES

KEY FINDINGS

LATENT DEMAND EXISTS FOR CONTENT

In 2020, we were surprised to find that despite auto-subscribing students and parents to the Daily Report - performance did not decline. This suggests that these groups had unexpected demand for content, and there may be additional untapped demand out there for us to find.

VIRAL MOMENTS HAPPEN - AND SHOULD BE LEVERAGED

On occasion, stories will be picked up and shared widely on social media. While we cannot organically manufacture true viral content, we can set protocols to ensure a swift response to make the most out of the expanded readership from a viral story.

ORGANIC SEARCH OFFERS OPPORTUNITY

Organic search gives us a clear picture of user intent. By analyzing what users are interested in reading and what brings them to UVA Today, we can find ways to expand related content and lean into content that readers are looking for.

KEY FINDINGS (CONT.)

EMAIL REMAINS A CRITICAL PILLAR

Despite marketing trends suggesting that email may have been on its way out a few years back, it continues to prove itself to be a highly valuable channel for distributing news content and shows no indication of slowing down.

SOCIAL MEDIA SUCCESS RELIES ON PLATFORM-SPECIFIC INSIGHT

Social continues to show that users behave differently on different platforms, and what works well on one may not perform well on another. Leaning into channel-specific learnings will help boost performance and allow for a well-rounded social suite.
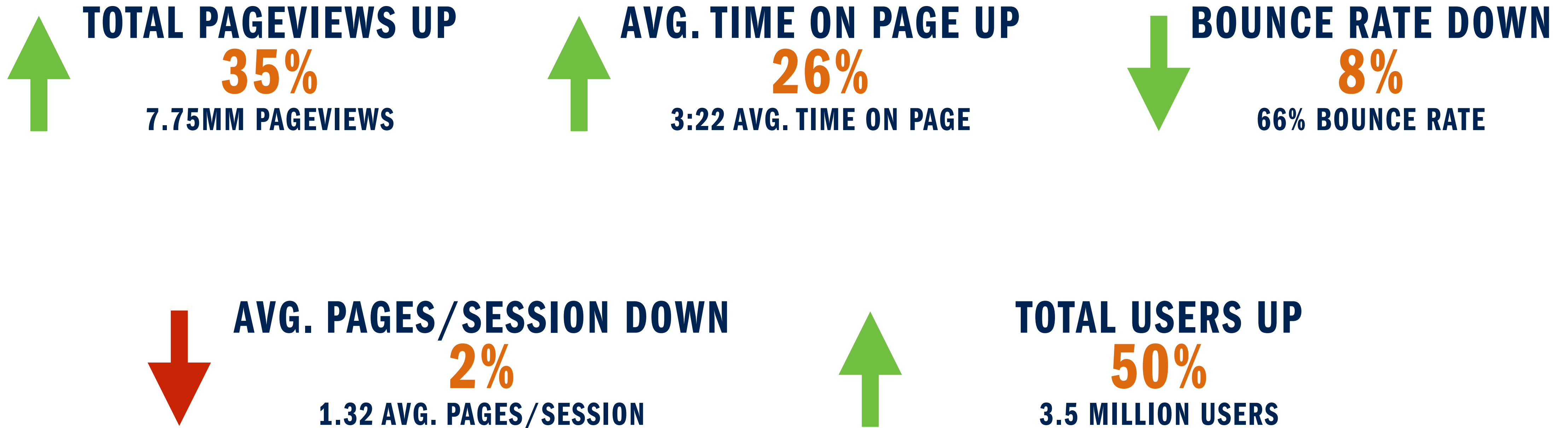
PARSE.LY TAGGING NEEDS REFINEMENT TO BE A USEFUL TOOL

While our current Parse.ly tagging is useful for certain ad-hoc reporting, there are opportunities to refine the process for high-level reporting purposes. By being more intentional with tagging, performance trends will be more easily identified.

UVA TODAY 2020 PERFORMANCE AT A GLANCE

The below metrics compare UVA Today site statistics in 2020 vs. 2019
(previously reported in 2020 UVA Today data report)

TOTAL PAGEVIEWS UP
35%
7.75MM PAGEVIEWS

AVG. TIME ON PAGE UP
26%
3:22 AVG. TIME ON PAGE

BOUNCE RATE DOWN
8%
66% BOUNCE RATE

AVG. PAGES/SESSION DOWN
2%
1.32 AVG. PAGES/SESSION

TOTAL USERS UP
50%
3.5 MILLION USERS

SOURCE: Google Analytics
DATE RANGE: 1/1/19 - 12/31/20

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF LATENT DEMAND

What Is Latent Demand?

Latent demand occurs when new users have an interest or appetite for UVA Today content that may not have been previously predicted or expected, by the user and/or our team. It can typically be identified in one of three ways:

- Tapping into new audiences who demonstrate an unpredicted appetite for content

- Viral content that is being shared widely by users across social channels

- Old content that is still being accessed through organic search activity

AUDIENCE APPETITE FOR CONTENT

What Did We Learn About Audience Behavior?

In 2020, we added around 40,000 new users (students and parents) to the Daily Report to keep them informed about updates related to the pandemic. Typically, when increasing audience size, engagement can be expected to decline, particularly when auto-subscribing, as the understanding is that these groups are likely less interested in the content.

Instead, we found that open rate for the Daily Report actually improved when these groups were added, and held strong throughout 2020.

This tells us that there may be other related audiences that may also have an appetite for this content (alumni, researchers, etc.)

IDENTIFYING LATENT DEMAND THROUGH NEW AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Despite auto-subscribing ~40,000 new users to the distribution in March (students & parents), open rates remained steady through the end of the year, indicating that these audiences contained previously untapped users who are interested in consuming UVA Today content.

DAILY REPORT 2020 PERFORMANCE

MID-MARCH 2020 - STUDENTS AND PARENTS ADDED TO DAILY REPORT

Legend: Open Rate · Click Through Rate · Average Recipients
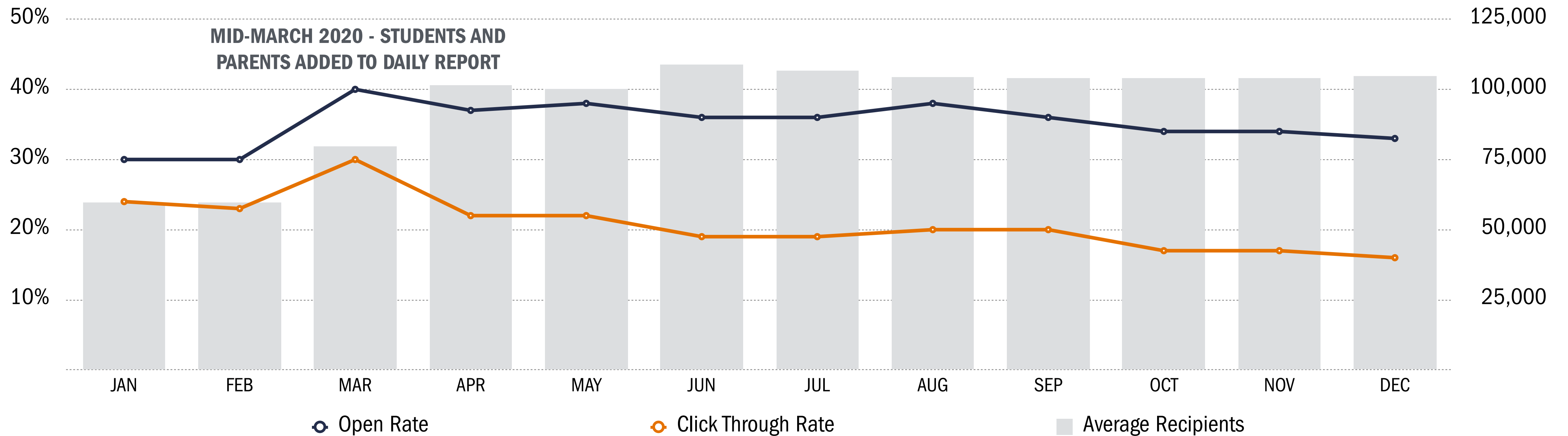
AUDIENCE OPPORTUNITIES

Below are steps that may help identify opportunities to expand audiences and readership for UVA Today products, capitalizing on unmet demand

☐ EVALUATE OWNED AUDIENCE LISTS AND ASSESS WHO RECEIVES WHAT PRODUCTS - IS THERE OPPORTUNITY TO CROSS-SELL SOME AUDIENCES ON PRODUCTS THAT THEY ARE NOT CURRENTLY RECEIVING?

☐ DEVELOP TARGET AUDIENCES FOR EACH PRODUCT AND IDENTIFY ANY GAPS - IS THERE ANYONE WHO MAY BE INTERESTED IN A PRODUCT THAT ISN'T CURRENTLY RECEIVING IT? IF SO, DETERMINE HOW WE MAY INFORM THEM ABOUT THE PRODUCT AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO SUBSCRIBE

☐ STREAMLINE THE OPT-IN EXPERIENCE BY EASILY ALLOWING USERS TO SUBSCRIBE TO VARIOUS UVA TODAY PRODUCTS THAT THEY MAY BE INTERESTED IN

VIRAL MOMENTS: BE READY

What Is Viral Content?

To identify when a story is going "viral," we must keep an eye on website traffic. Any time a story receives an above-average number of pageviews, source traffic should be analyzed to determine where this traffic is coming from. Additionally, Parse.ly's Evergreen reporting tool can be utilized to identify older traffic that is still receiving pageviews.

LEVERAGING VIRAL MOMENTS

The below story was the #1 driver of pageviews in 2020, as a result of viral activity on social media. Overall, this story earned over 300K pageviews, with over 110K of those views occurring 8 months after the story was first published.

EXERCISE MAY PROTECT AGAINST DEADLY COVID-19 COMPLICATION, RESEARCH SUGGESTS

UVA researchers found that regular exercise may reduce the risk of acute respiratory distress syndrome, a major cause of death in patients with the COVID-19 virus.

April 15, 2020 • Josh Barney, jdb9a@virginia.edu

Find the latest information on the University's response to the coronavirus here.

Regular exercise may reduce the risk of acute respiratory distress syndrome, a major cause of death in patients with the COVID-19 virus, a top exercise researcher reports. He is urging people to exercise based on his findings, which also suggest a potential treatment approach.

A review by Zhen Yan of the University of Virginia School of Medicine showed that medical research findings "strongly support" the possibility that exercise can prevent or at least reduce the severity of ARDS, which affects between 3% and 17% of all patients with COVID-19. Based on available information, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 20% to 42% of patients hospitalized for COVID-19 will develop ARDS. The range for patients admitted to intensive care is estimated at 67% to 85%.

Research conducted prior to the pandemic suggested that approximately 45% of patients who develop severe ARDS will die.
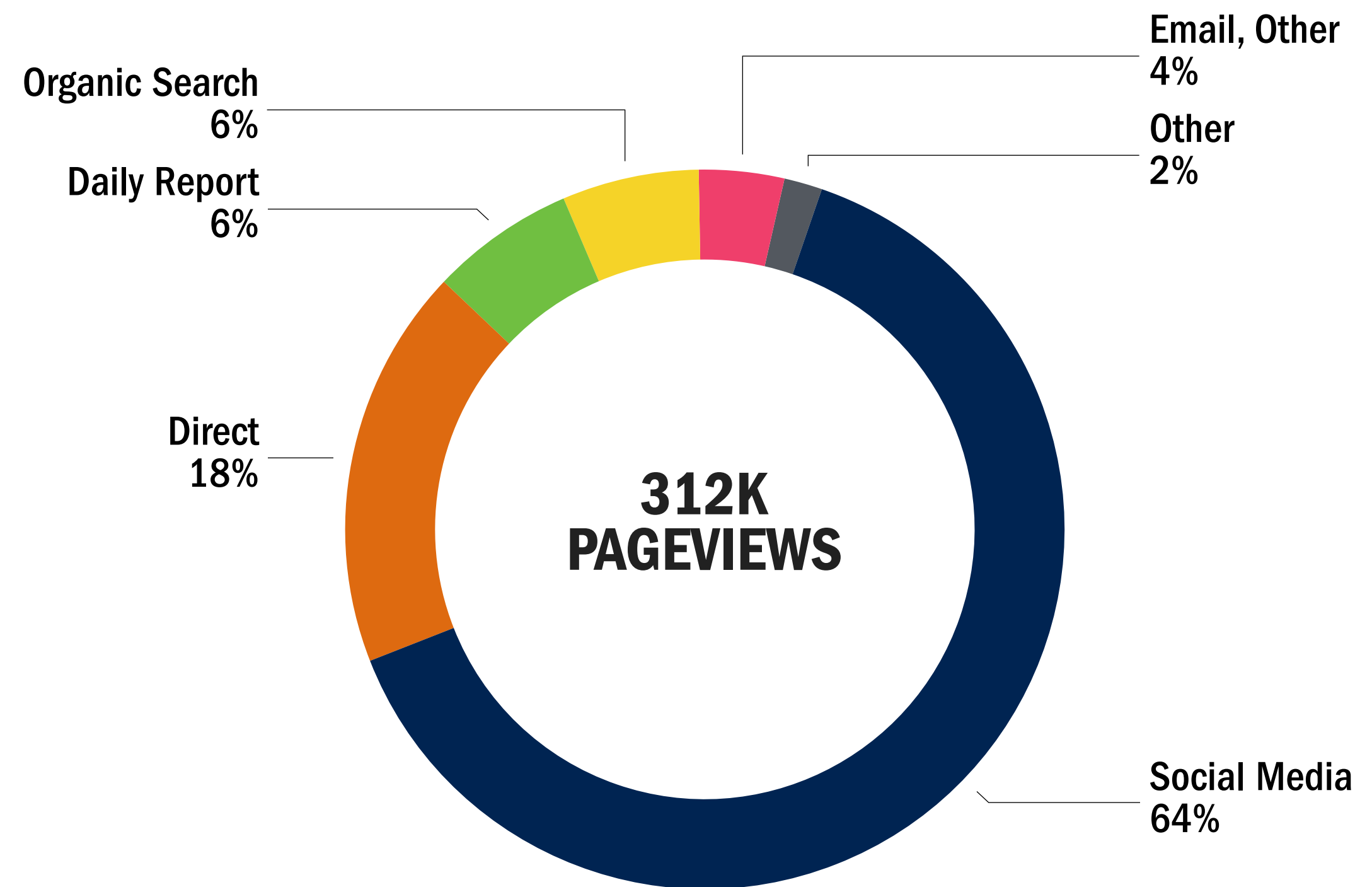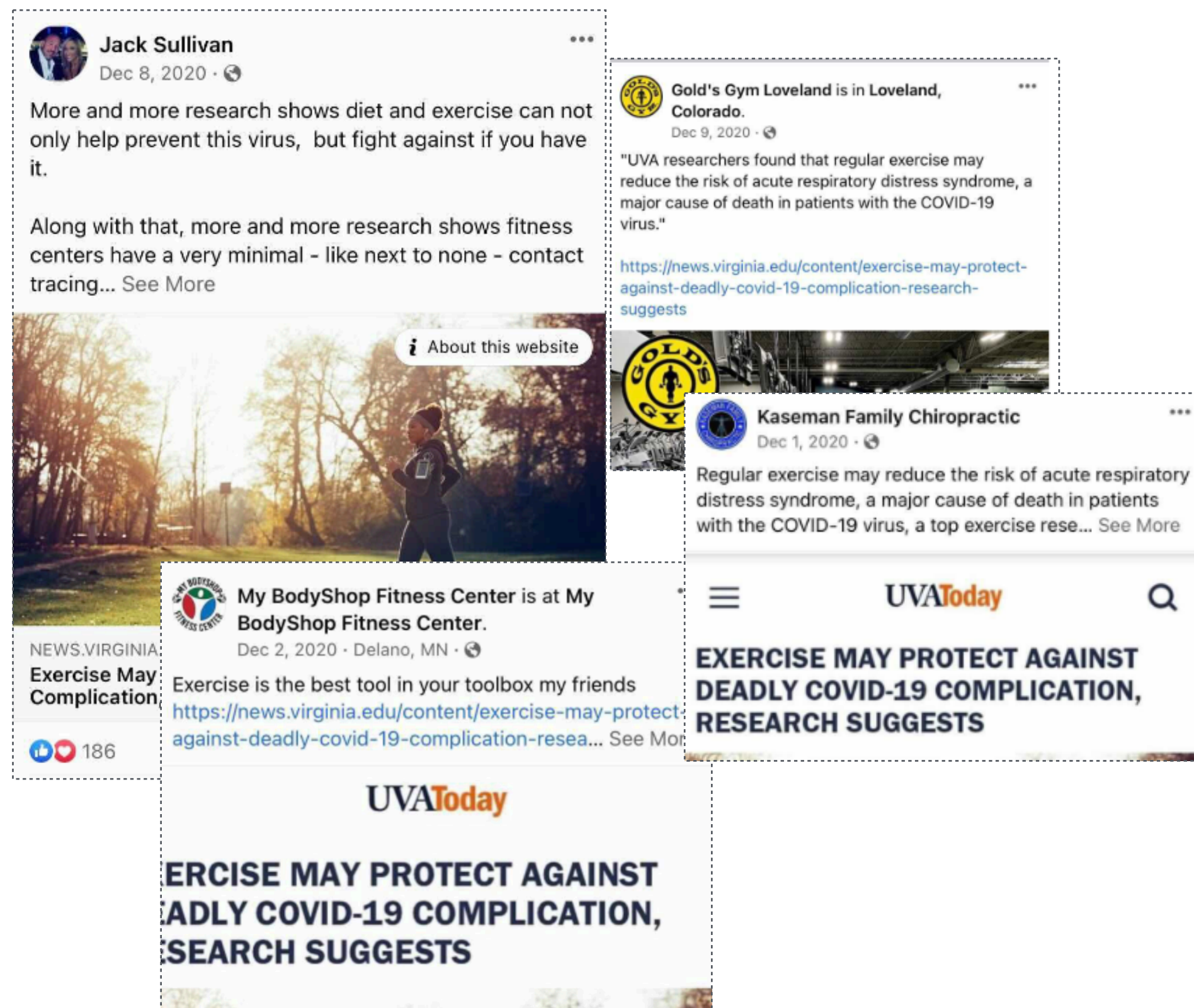
PAGEVIEWS OVER TIME

167K PAGEVIEWS

114K PAGEVIEWS

○ PAGEVIEWS
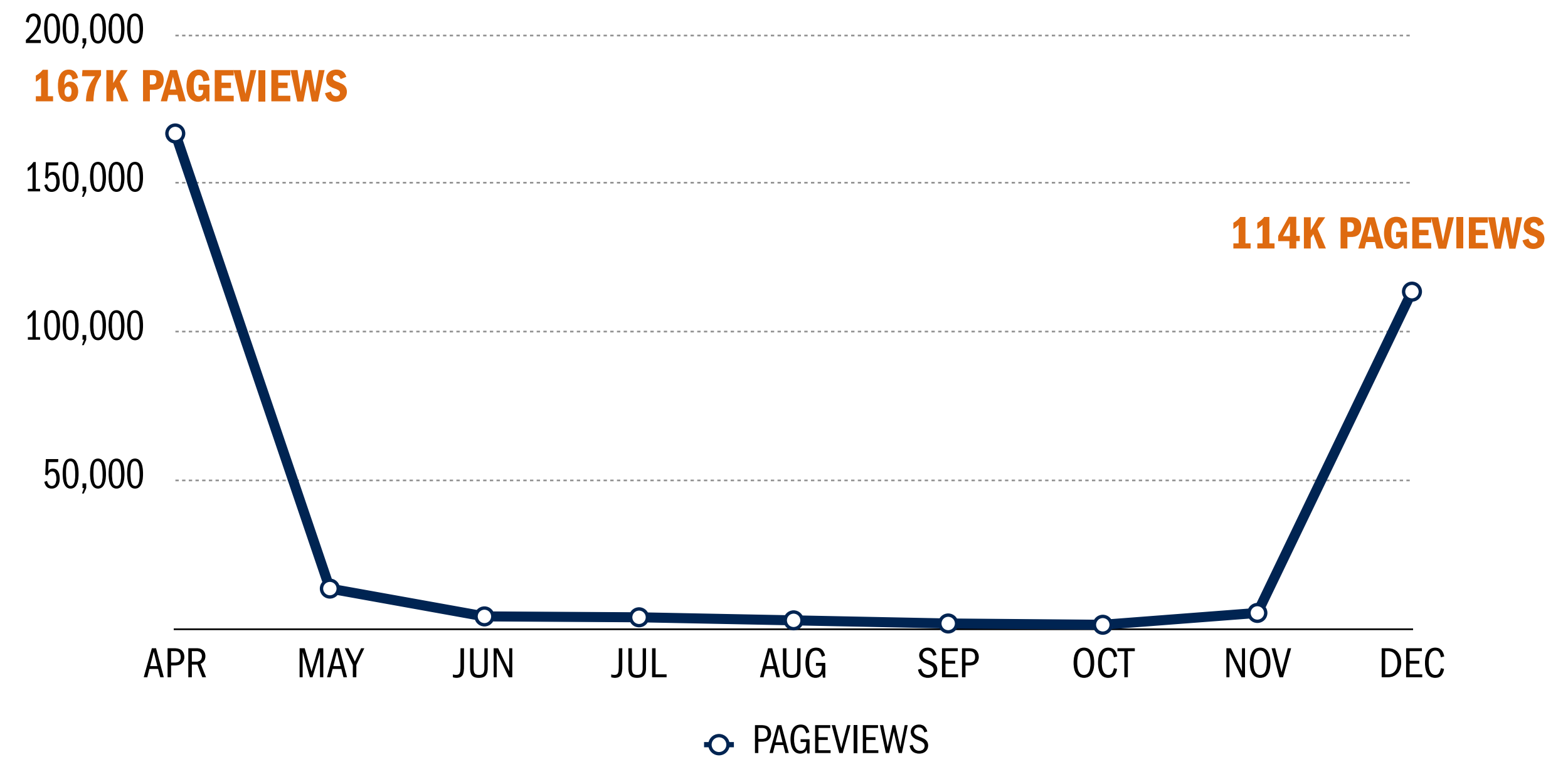
SOURCE: Google Analytics
DATE RANGE: 4/1/20 - 12/31/20

LEVERAGING VIRAL MOMENTS (CONT.)

In December, 8 months after it was first published, this story gained traction on Facebook, where it was shared by fitness influencers, local fitness centers, and chiropractors (see below). This activity was largely responsible for getting this story to 312K pageviews. When a story sees a "viral" spike in popularity similar to this, there are several actions we may be able to take to capitalize on the moment, outlined on the following page.

312K PAGEVIEWS

- Social Media 64%
- Direct 18%
- Daily Report 6%
- Organic Search 6%
- Email, Other 4%
- Other 2%

CAPITALIZING ON VIRAL CONTENT - CHECKLIST

Below is a proposed plan to help identify when latent content is trending, and what steps we may want to take to further promote this content.

☐ MONITOR SOURCE TRAFFIC/SOCIAL MEDIA TO DETERMINE IF A STORY SEEMS TO BE GAINING VIRAL TRACTION

☐ DETERMINE IF THE STORY CONTENT IS A GOOD FIT FOR ADDITIONAL PROMOTION (STILL TIMELY, RELEVANT)

☐ ENSURE THAT THE UVA TODAY SITE IS SET UP WELL TO ENCOURAGE NEW READERS WHO MAY BE UNFAMILIAR WITH UVA TO SUBSCRIBE TO UVA TODAY CONTENT TO STAY INFORMED OF RELATED CONTENT (IF APPROPRIATE)

☐ DETERMINE APPROPRIATE CHANNELS FOR PROMOTION

☐ LOOK FOR ANY ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE VIRAL OPPORTUNITIES - WHILE YOU CAN'T FORCE ORGANIC ACTIVITY, THERE MAY BE OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE THE CONTENT TO NOTEWORTHY "INFLUENCERS" WHO MAY SHARE IT OUT

ORGANIC SEARCH: READY FOR MINING

What Is Organic Search?

UVA Today stories appear in the organic search results when a user types a relevant search query into their search console (Google, Bing, etc.). Some search queries may be a great match for UVA Today content which may help provide the user with the information they are looking for, while others may be more loosely related and won't match a user's search intent.

Opportunity exists within highly aligned organic search content. These are stories that receive a substantial number of clicks and impressions on search, indicating that they fulfill the searcher's needs or intent.

ORGANIC SEARCH - RELEVANCY EXPLAINED

Below are several examples of UVA Today stories that appeared in the Google search results in 2020.

HIGHEST INTENT/RELEVANCY
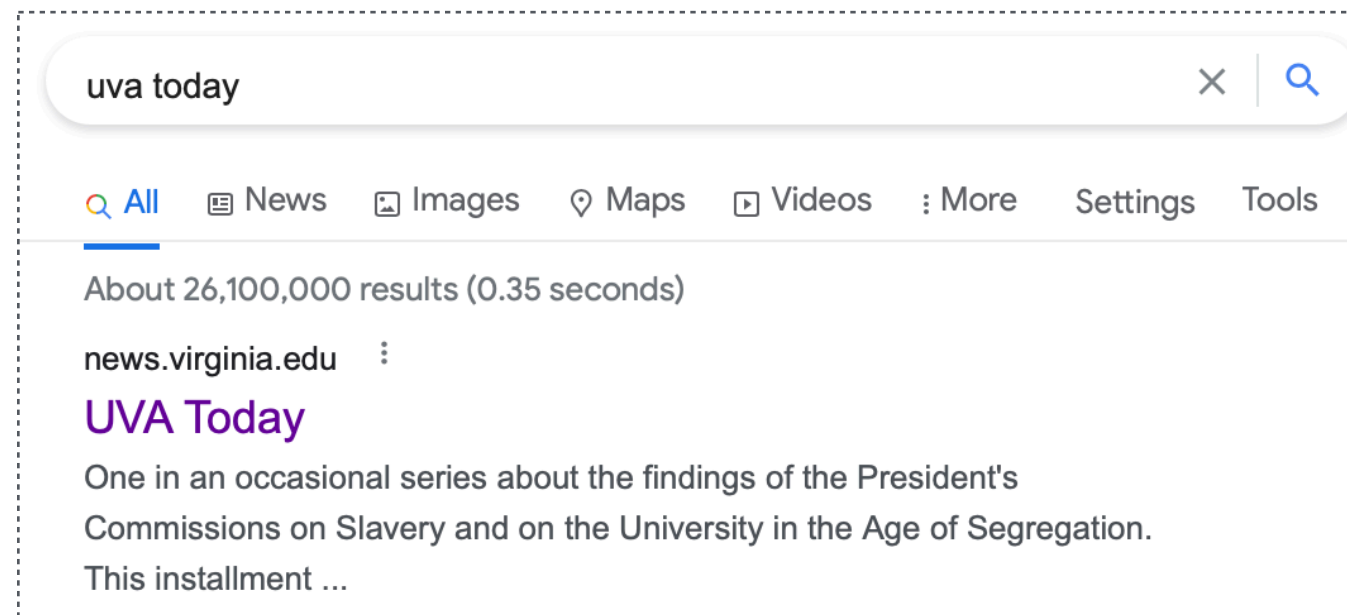
The search query "uva today" is about as high intent as it gets, signaling that a user is specifically looking for UVA Today content. The result returned here is highly relevant, as it matches the intent of the user's search, but may do little to increase actual story pageviews since it is so general.
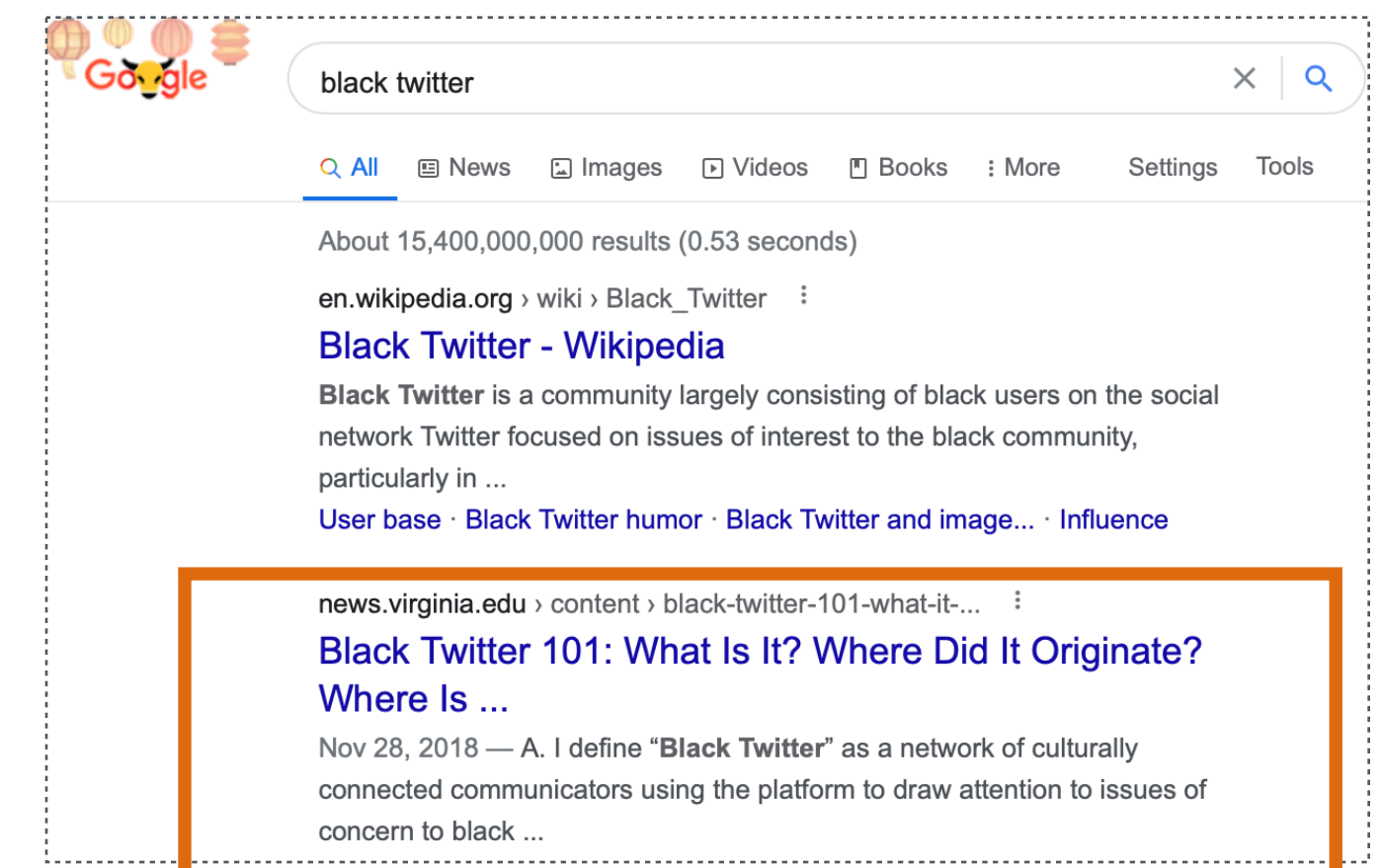
LOW RELEVANCY

The above story about UVA alum and Reddit co-founder occasionally shows up in the search results for the search query *reddit.* This is a low-relevancy result, because users simply searching for "reddit" are likely not looking for a story or information about the founder, are instead just looking to get to the website.

HIGH RELEVANCY

The search query *black twitter* likely signals that a user is looking for more information about what Black Twitter is. Though they aren't specifically looking for UVA Today content, the UVA Today story about Black Twitter is a relevant search result, as the story provides them with the information they're looking for.

THIS IS OUR BEST OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE UP SPECIFIC CONTENT THAT MATCHES USER INTENT.

TOP ORGANIC SEARCH TERMS

Below are some of the top 15 search terms that pulled UVA Today content into the Google search results. On the left are the most clicked organic search terms, and on the right are the search terms with the highest impressions. The search terms on the left below are where we should focus our efforts, as this is where we have content that meets user demand.

HIGH VALUE QUERIES

TOP SEARCH TERMS BY CLICKS TO UVA TODAY SITE*	
SEARCH QUERY	CLICKS TO UVA TODAY
black twitter	10,660
what is black twitter	4,660
dr brandon rogers	3,406
greg smith prodigy	3,037
largest civil rights movement 2020	1,880
activewear masks	1,879
greg smith genius	1,832
lewy body dementia	1,757
is lewy body dementia fatal	1,684
virginia coronavirus	1,517
dr cameron webb wife	1,488
coronavirus virginia	1,312
exercise and covid 19	1,231
quoth the raven nevermore meaning	1,158
dr. brandon rogers	1,105

TOP SEARCH TERMS BY ORGANIC SEARCH IMPRESSIONS*	
SEARCH QUERY	ORGANIC SEARCH IMPRESSIONS
christoph waltz	1,146,894
reddit	496,811
black twitter	398,018
cistern	354,159
walter reed	294,790
d day	249,720
virginia population	235,154
alexis ohanian	173,309
coronavirus virginia	165,746
sasheer zamata	149,256
greg smith	127,382
virginia coronavirus	124,617
population of virginia	122,829
quoth the raven	93,966
jim ryan	89,365

LOWER VALUE QUERIES**

*Organic search queries reflect performance on Google search, specifically. These terms exclude any queries directly searching for "UVA" terms to better identify related content.
** Low value queries do not inherently stay low value forever. If a story is published that better matches user intent, the value of these terms may increase.

SOURCE: Google Search Console
DATE RANGE: 1/1/20 - 12/31/20

HIGHLY ALIGNED CONTENT PERFORMS WELL OVER TIME

The below story about Black Twitter was originally published in 2018, yet it earned its highest ever monthly pageviews in June 2020. In that month, 90% of that traffic came from organic search, indicating that users were finding the content on their own, and that the topic was still of interest to users searching on the internet, indicating that it may be interesting to an even larger audience, if we were to promote it further.

BLACK TWITTER 101: WHAT IS IT? WHERE DID IT ORIGINATE? WHERE IS IT HEADED?

UVA assistant media studies professor Meredith Clark is writing a book on "Black Twitter." (Photo by Dan Addison, University Communications)

November 28, 2018 • Whitelaw Reid, wdr4d@virginia.edu

black twitter

All News

About 15,400,0...

en.wikipedia.org

Black Twitte...

Black Twitter i...
network Twitter...
particularly in ...

User base · Black Twitter humor · Black Twitter and image... · Influence

news.virginia.edu › content › black-twitter-101-what-it-...
Black Twitter 101: What Is It? Where Did It Originate? Where Is ...
Nov 28, 2018 — A. I define "**Black Twitter**" as a network of culturally connected communicators using the platform to draw attention to issues of concern to black ...

PAGEVIEWS OVER TIME

8K PAGEVIEWS

3K PAGEVIEWS

10,000

7,500

5,000

2,500

Nov-18 Feb-19 May-19 Aug-19 Nov-19 Feb-20 May-20 Aug-20 Nov-20

⟲ PAGEVIEWS
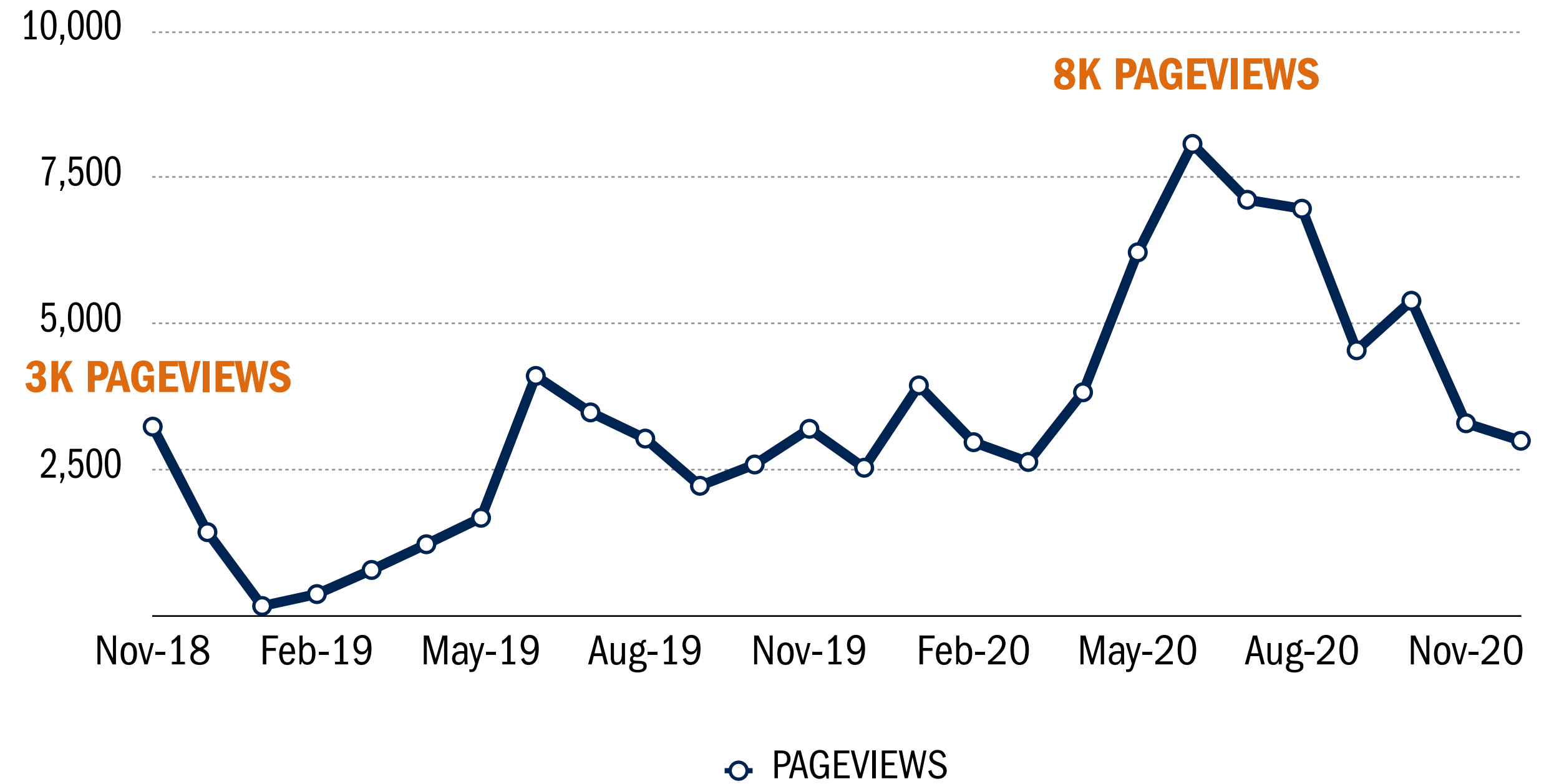
SOURCE: Google Analytics
DATE RANGE: 11/1/18 - 12/31/20

USING ORGANIC SEARCH BEHAVIOR TO GUIDE STRATEGY

By identifying top performing search queries, we can implement the below opportunities capitalize on the popularity of the story or topic.

☐ CUSTOMIZE DESCRIPTION TEXT TO IMPROVE CLICK THROUGH RATE

☐ CONSIDER PROVIDING A STORY UPDATE OR WRITING A NEW, RELATED STORY, SINCE THIS EXAMPLE IS OVER A YEAR OLD. UPDATED CONTENT MAY ENCOURAGE NEW READERSHIP AND WILL INCREASE RELEVANCY

☐ FIND OTHER AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE THE STORY - IF IT IS POPULAR AND TIMELY ON GOOGLE, IT MAY BE WORTH RE-POSTING ON SOCIAL CHANNELS

☐ CONSIDER OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE THE CONTENT VIA PAID CHANNELS. TEST PROMOTING THIS STORY THROUGH PAID SEARCH, SO THAT IT APPEARS AT THE TOP OF THE SEARCH RESULT WITH CUSTOM AD COPY, OR BOOSTING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

EMAIL: EFFECTIVE, PROVEN, GROWING

Is Email Still Working?

Around 10 years ago, marketing trends began suggesting that email may be "dying" or "on its way out" with platforms such as social media taking over and becoming the primary channels for content distribution.

That has not happened; in fact, email is still highly effective. 2020 data show UVA Today email products performing well, and well above industry averages. Email is still one of our most effective channels, driving nearly 40% of all pageviews on UVA Today.

IS EMAIL DEAD? IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE IT

"EMAIL IS DYING"

"EMAIL IS STILL VALUABLE AND EFFECTIVE"

Inc.
NEWSLETTERS SUBSCRIBE

WIRE

It's 2018 and Email is Already Dead. Here's Who Zapped It Into Extinction Gen-Z workers don't bother with email. It's just a matter of time before everyone else catches on.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.
News U.S. Politics | Economy Business Tech Markets Opinion Life

Why Email No Longer Rules...
And what that means for the way we communicate

By Jessica E. Vascellaro
Oct. 12, 2009 12:01 am ET

Email has had a good run as king of communications. But its reign is over.

Adobe | Marketo Engage

Email Marketing

Is Social Media Going to Kill Email?

Forbes
Oct 26, 2020, 11:09am EDT | 8,088 views

Email Marketing: Still The Most Powerful Tool To Take Your Business To The Next Level

Campaign Monitor

You've probably heard the myths. Social media is replacing email. People don't want to share their data online. Millennials don't use email. Other marketing methods are more successful than email marketing. Email marketing is dead.

Don't believe these myths. Nobody's abandoning email. In spite of the rising popularity of social media, people still love to receive emails in their inboxes. Email isn't dead, and email marketing remains one of the most cost-effective ways to reach consumers today.

EMAIL BY THE NUMBERS: 2020

The numbers show that email clearly is not dead for UVA Today content. Across our three major email products (Daily Report, UVA This Month, Research Digest), over 27 millions emails were delivered in 2020, earning nearly 3 million clicks on content.

27.5 MILLION
TOTAL EMAILS DELIVERED

17.5 MILLION
TOTAL EMAIL OPENS*

2.9 MILLION
TOTAL EMAIL CLICKS*

* Total opens and clicks reflect cumulative engagements, therefore counting multiple opens or clicks by one user on an individual email. This differs from the unique metrics typically used to calculate open and click through rates.

SOURCE: Marketing Cloud
DATE RANGE: 1/1/20 - 12/31/20

STATE OF EMAIL CONSUMPTION

Email continues to be a critical pillar of UVA Today content distribution strategy. While marketing trends had suggested that email may be "dead," the volume of email consumption across products indicates that email is still a highly valuable channel for UVA Today content.

35% OPEN RATE
ACROSS EMAIL PRODUCTS*

➡

41% ABOVE
EDUCATION INDUSTRY
BENCHMARK OF 25%**

20% CLICK THROUGH RATE
ACROSS EMAIL PRODUCTS*

➡

163% ABOVE
EDUCATION INDUSTRY
BENCHMARK OF 7.5%**

* Includes the Daily Report, UVA This Month, and Research Digest emails.
** Education industry benchmark from HubSpot Email Benchmarks, reflecting period November 2018 - November 2019.

SOCIAL IS NOT ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL

How Do We Develop Social Strategy?

While "Social Media" can be looked at as one channel as a whole, the reality that each individual social platform is highly unique, and must be assessed independently.

The 2020 data show that what works well on Facebook may not work as well on LinkedIn or Instagram, and that's okay. Developing strategy for each individual channel, rather than social as a whole will deliver the best results.

SOCIAL MEDIA - CHANNEL BY CHANNEL

Below are key learnings from each of our four major social media platforms

FACEBOOK	INSTAGRAM	TWITTER	LINKEDIN
Facebook is the top driver of pageviews to UVA Today among social channels. In 2020, social drove 23% of all traffic on UVA Today, with 75% of that social traffic coming from Facebook. Photo content reaches the most users, but can't be used alone to meet our goals. Top performing posts of 2020 included research based stories and COVID-19 updates.	Carousels are the top-performing content type on Instagram, industry-wide, and for UVA. In-feed videos (under 1 minute long) outperform IGTV videos (over 1 minute long).	Top Tweets of 2020 included 2 institutional announcements or updates, demonstrating the platform's strength in delivering timely, "breaking" content. Top Tweets also reflected a mix of content types; video, link, and photo, indicating that even within the platform, users consume a mix of content types.	Top LinkedIn posts included stories about UVA rankings and student and alumni accomplishments, demonstrating a sense of pride across our audience on LinkedIn.

FACEBOOK PERFORMANCE BY CONTENT TYPE

On Facebook, our content mix includes links to UVA Today articles, photos and video.
In 2020, 23% of traffic to UVA Today came from social media and almost 75% of that traffic came from Facebook. On average, visual content has a higher reach and engagement rate. A mix of content, both links and visuals, are important to drive our audience to the UVA Today site and boost reach and engagement on the platform.

AVG. REACH/POST

ENGAGEMENT RATE

LINK   PHOTO   VIDEO

■ AVG. REACH/POST   ■ ENGAGEMENT RATE

% OF POSTS BY POST TYPE

14%
14%
72%

● LINK   ● VIDEO   ● PHOTO
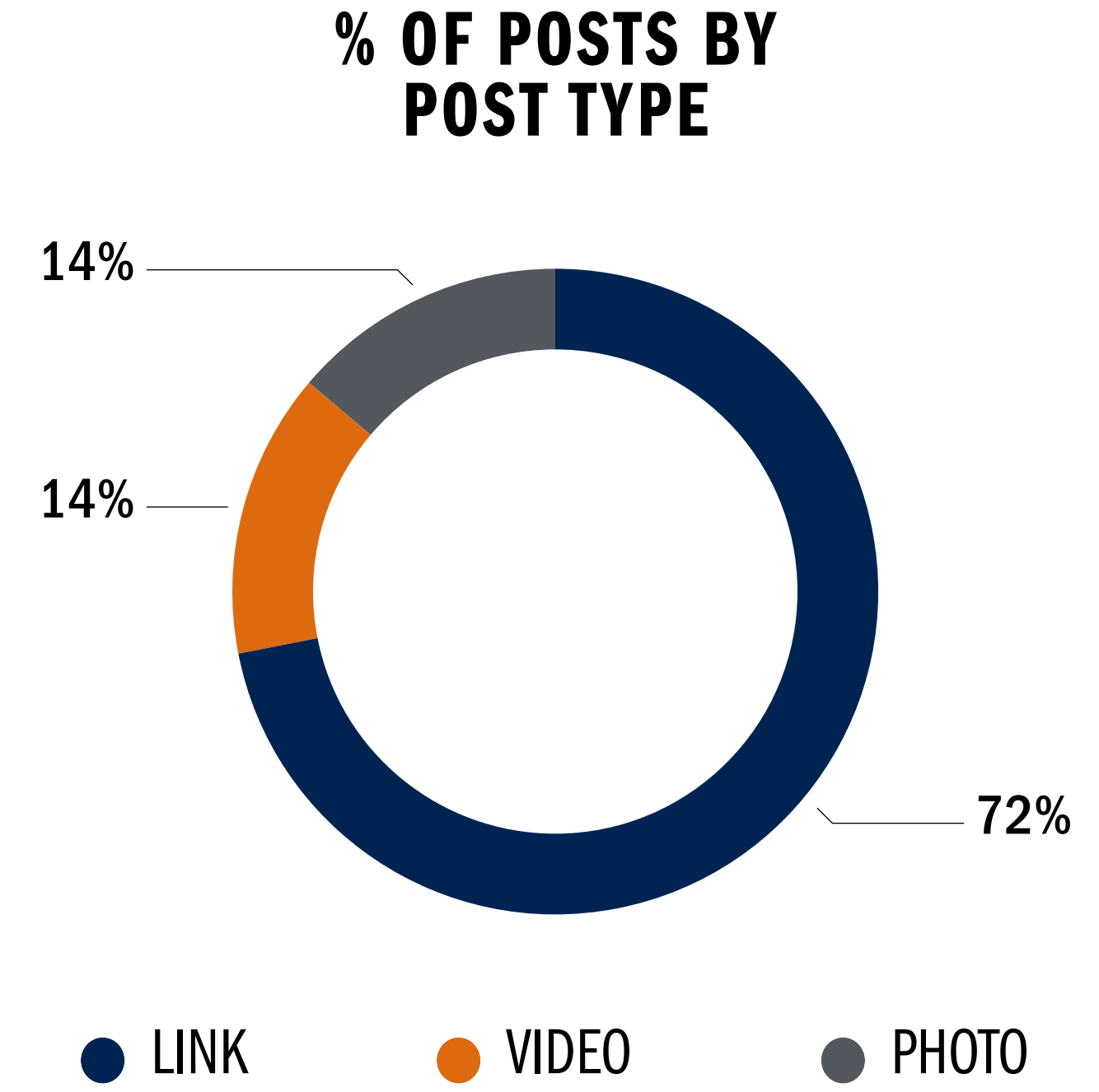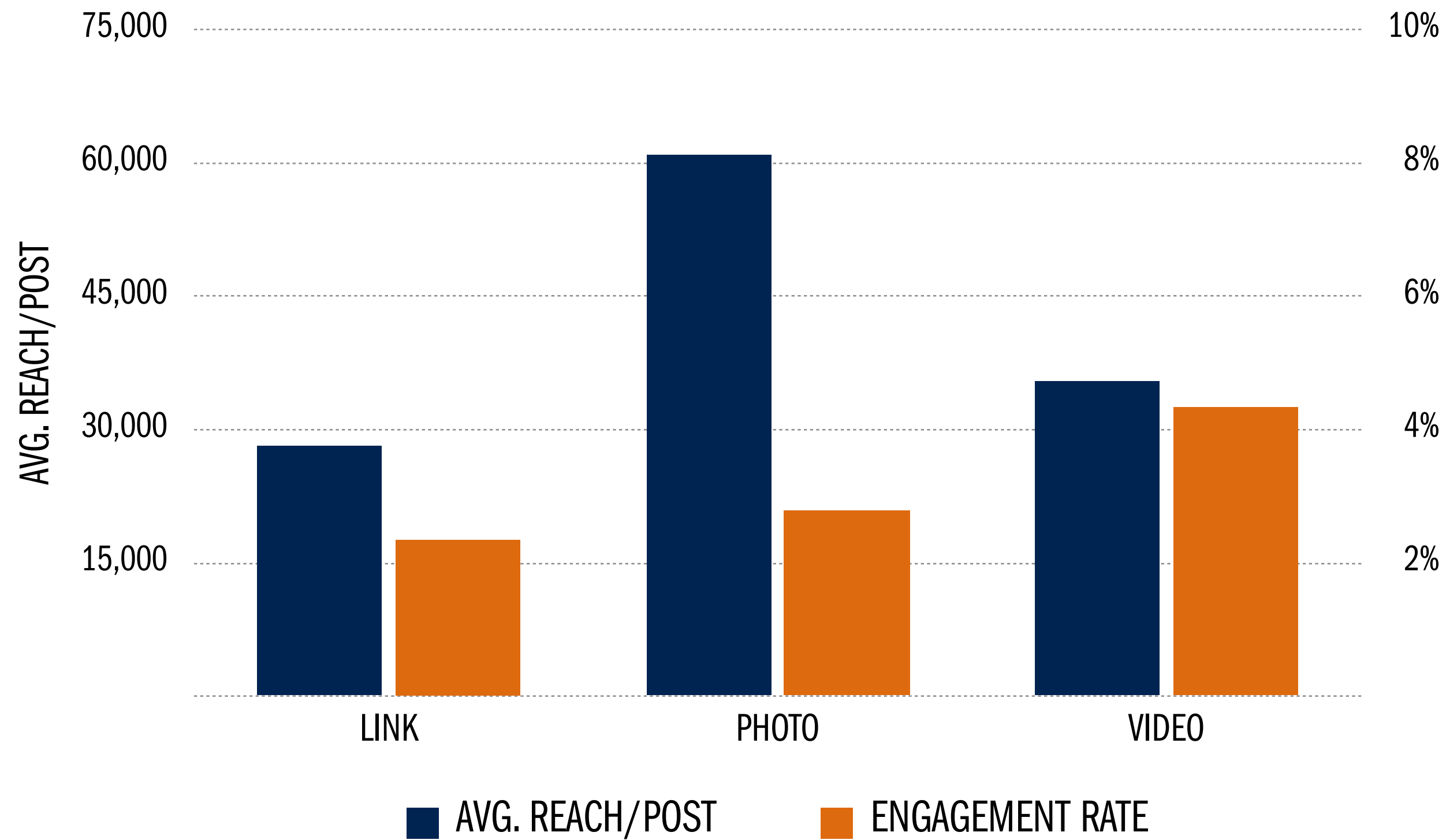
TOP FACEBOOK POSTS OF 2020

The top three posts from 2020 are University news link posts from UVA Today. Updates on how the University adjusted to the pandemic and the anomaly — news about a UVA-made FDA approved artificial pancreas — show that our audience on Facebook is tuned into informative, noteworthy content about news happening at UVA or involving UVA.

TOP POSTS BY ENGAGEMENT RATE

LINK POST
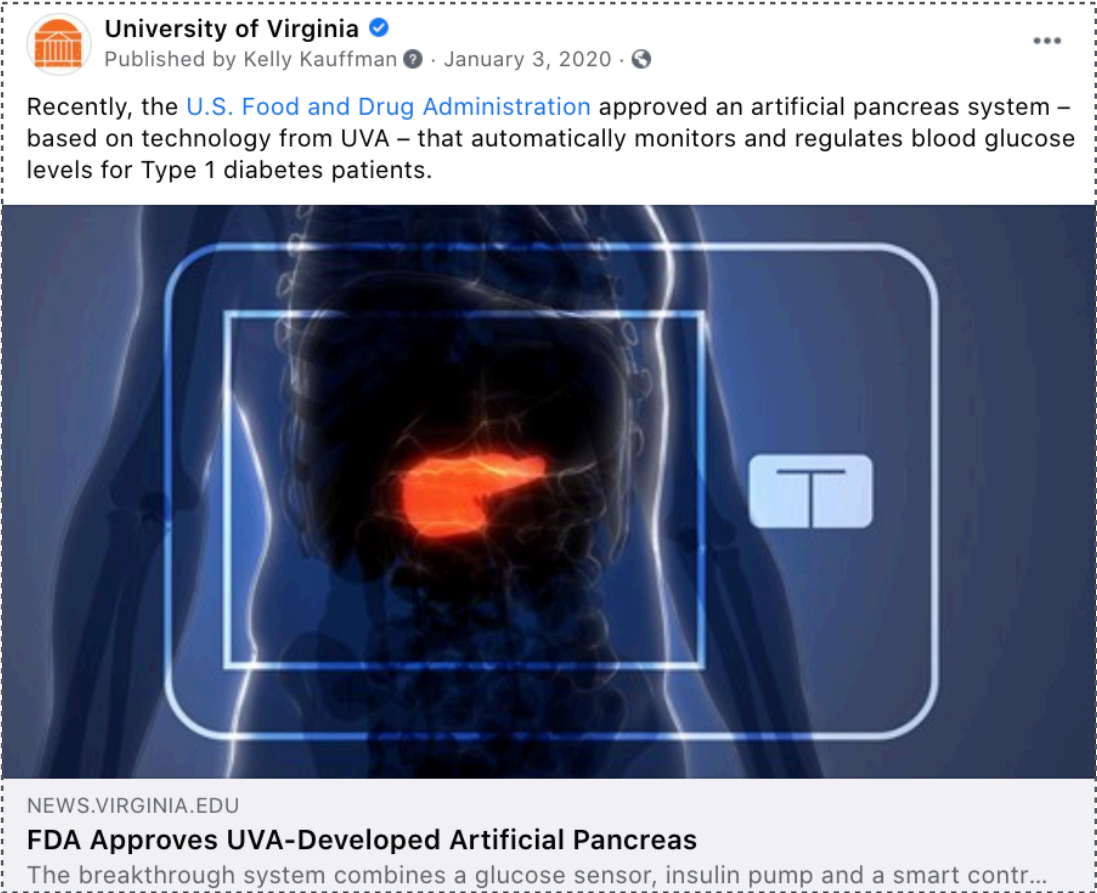
LINK POST

LINK POST

VIDEO CONTENT ON INSTAGRAM

There are two main types of video content on Instagram — in feed videos and IGTV.
Videos shorter than one minute can be posted directly on the page and appear in the feed. IGTV is for videos longer than one minute. A one minute long snippet of an IGTV post can be viewed in-feed, but the viewer must click "keep watching" to view the full video in the IGTV player.

IN-FEED VIDEO
(LESS THAN 60 SECONDS, VIEWED IN-FEED)
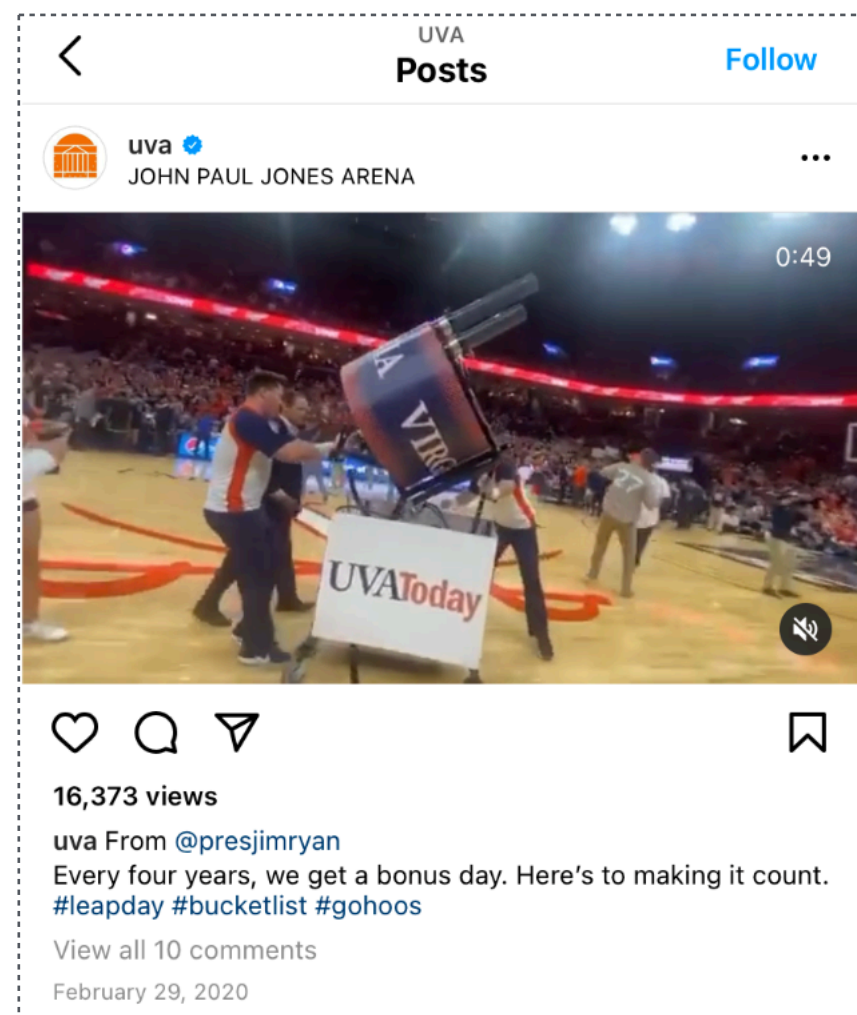
IGTV VIDEO
(PREVIEWS IN-FEED, THEN TAKEN TO IGTV PLAYER IF USER SELECTS "KEEP WATCHING)
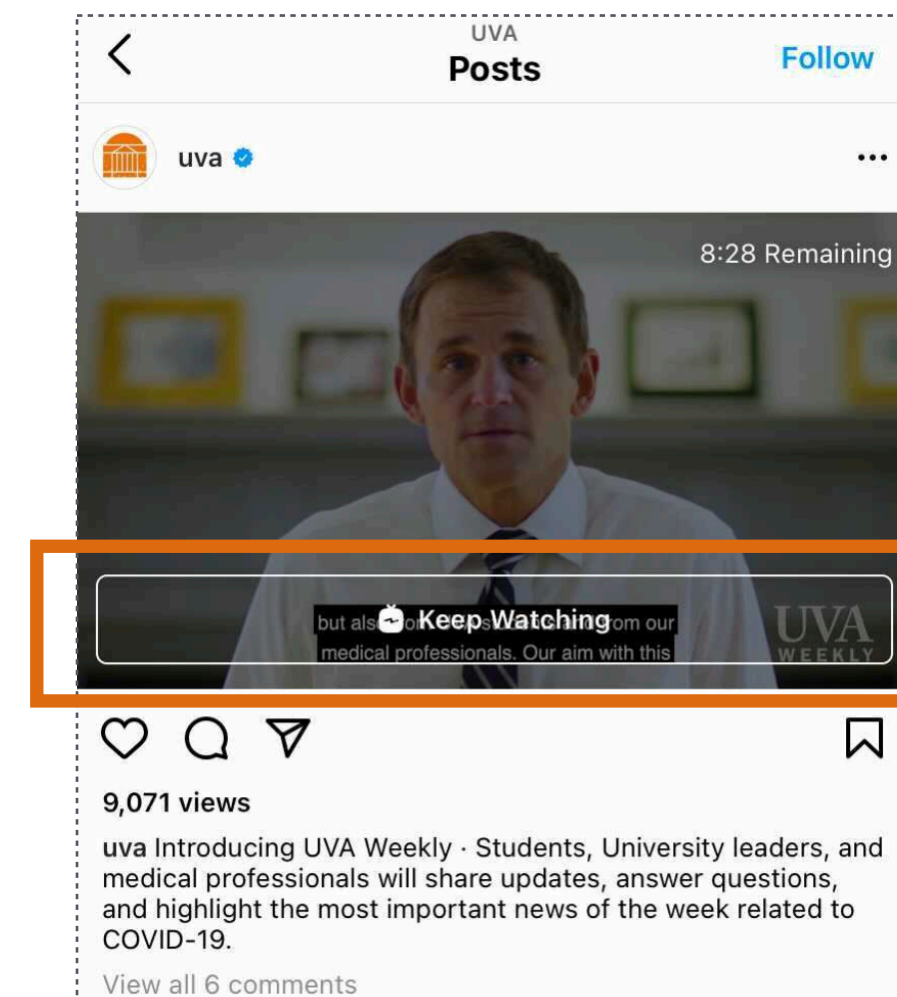
On Instagram, short-form in-feed video content outperforms longer IGTV content. The in-feed video engagement rate is more than twice that of IGTV (12% vs. 6%, respectively). Users are more engaged with shorter video content that they can view all in-feed, rather than having to navigate to the IGTV player. We should aim to keep Instagram video content under one minute for optimal performance.

INSTAGRAM PERFORMANCE BY POST TYPE

In terms of average reach, photos and carousels (more than one photo in a post) perform higher than posts with a video. However, carousels and shorter videos (one minute or less) perform the best in terms of engagement rate.

% OF POSTS BY POST TYPE

- Photo — 49%
- Carousel — 26%
- IGTV — 21%
- Video — 4%

Legend: ● Photo ● Carousel ● IGTV ● Video

Bar chart legend: ■ AVG. REACH/POST ■ ENGAGEMENT RATE

Bar chart axes: AVG. REACH/POST (0, 15,000, 30,000, 45,000, 60,000); ENGAGEMENT RATE (5%, 10%, 15%, 20%)

Categories: PHOTO, CAROUSEL, IGTV, VIDEO (NON-IGTV)
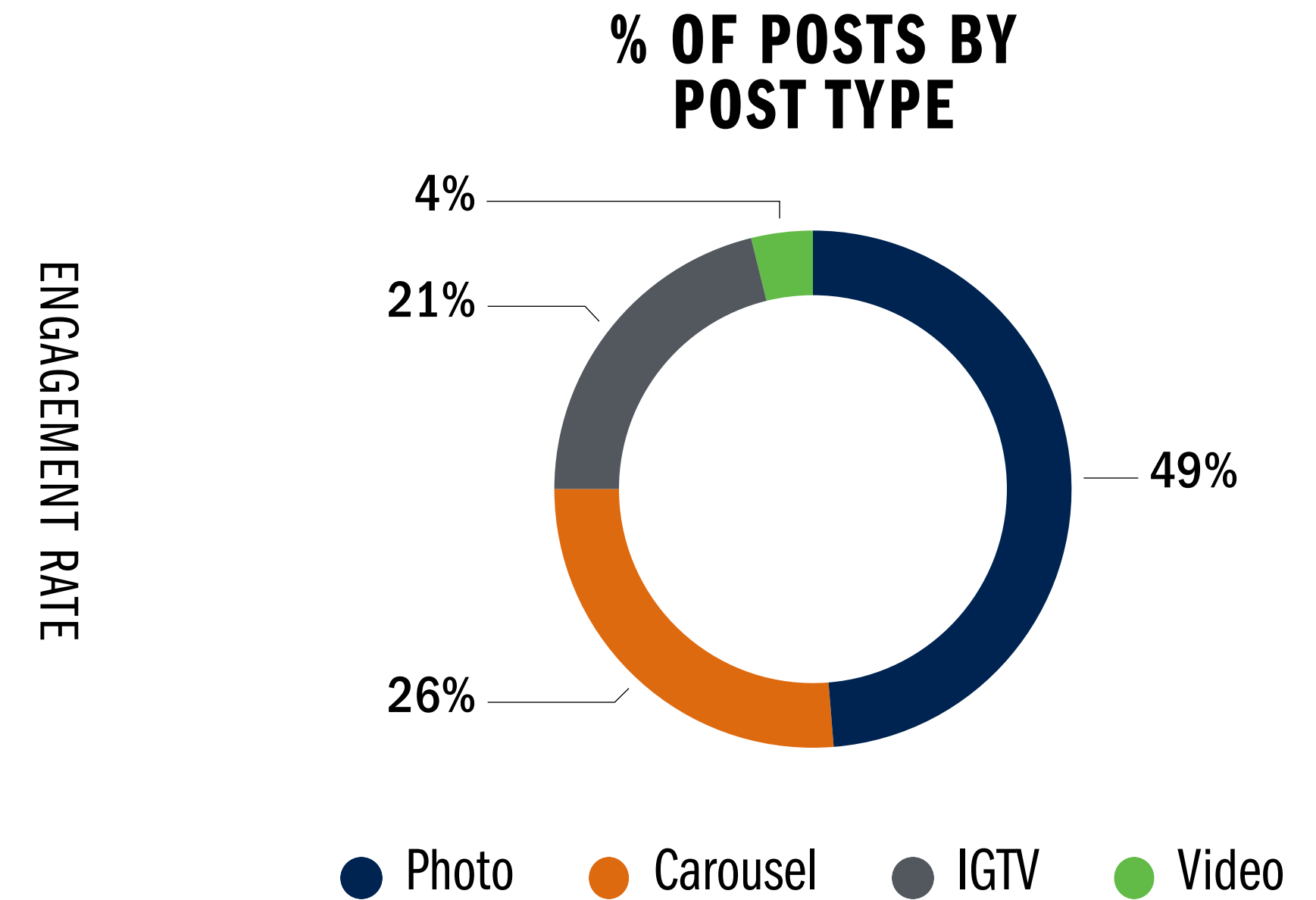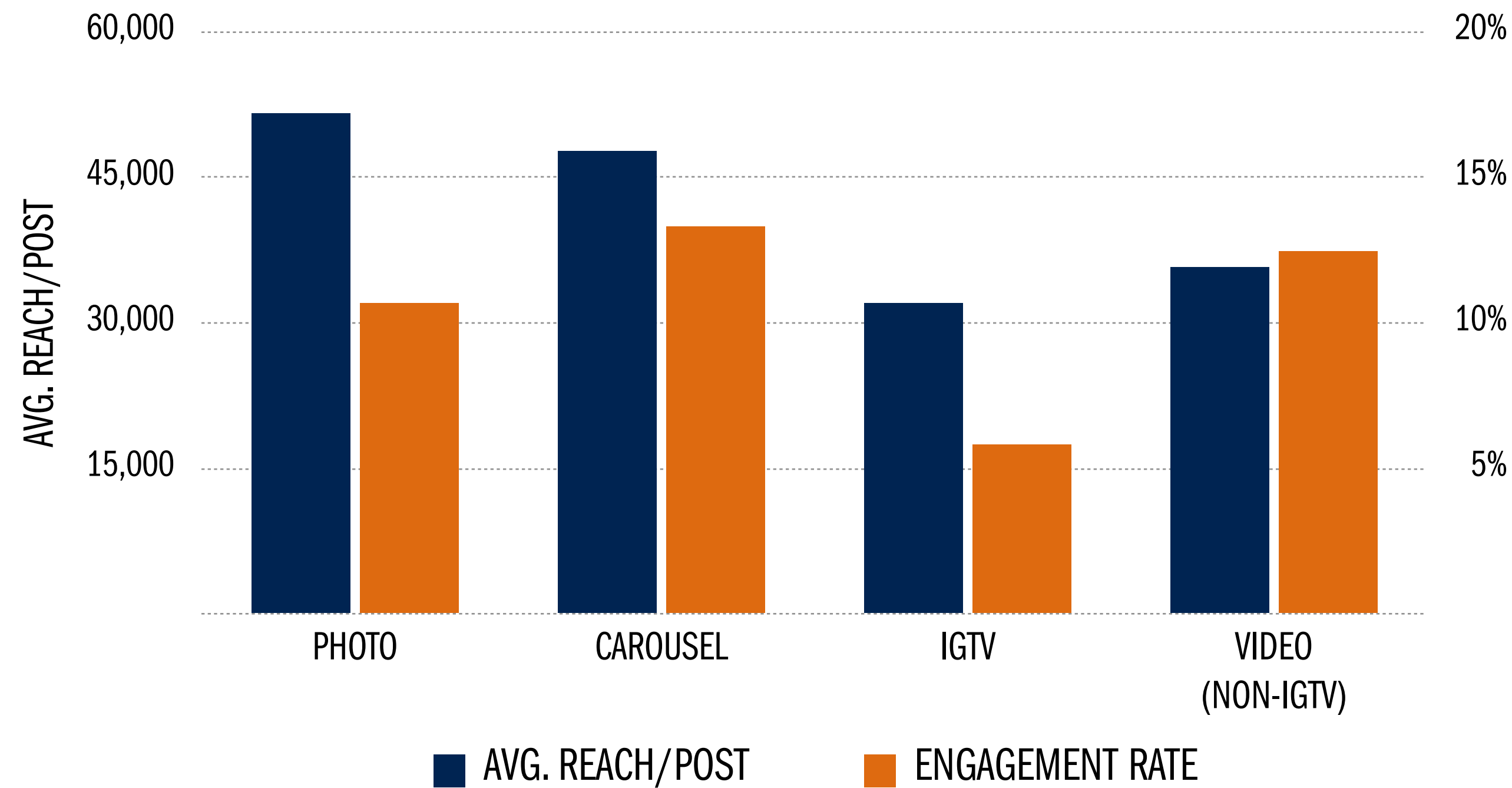
INSTAGRAM PERFORMANCE BY POST TYPE (CONT.)

As seen on the previous slide, carousels and short-form video content perform best in terms of engagement rate, however, these content types do not make up a significant amount of our content mix. Carousels and short-form video made up just 30% of all post volume, while photos and IGTV, which have lower engagement rates, made up 70% of posts in 2020. Posting more carousel and video content may help drive improved performance.

ENGAGEMENT RATE　　**NUMBER OF POSTS**
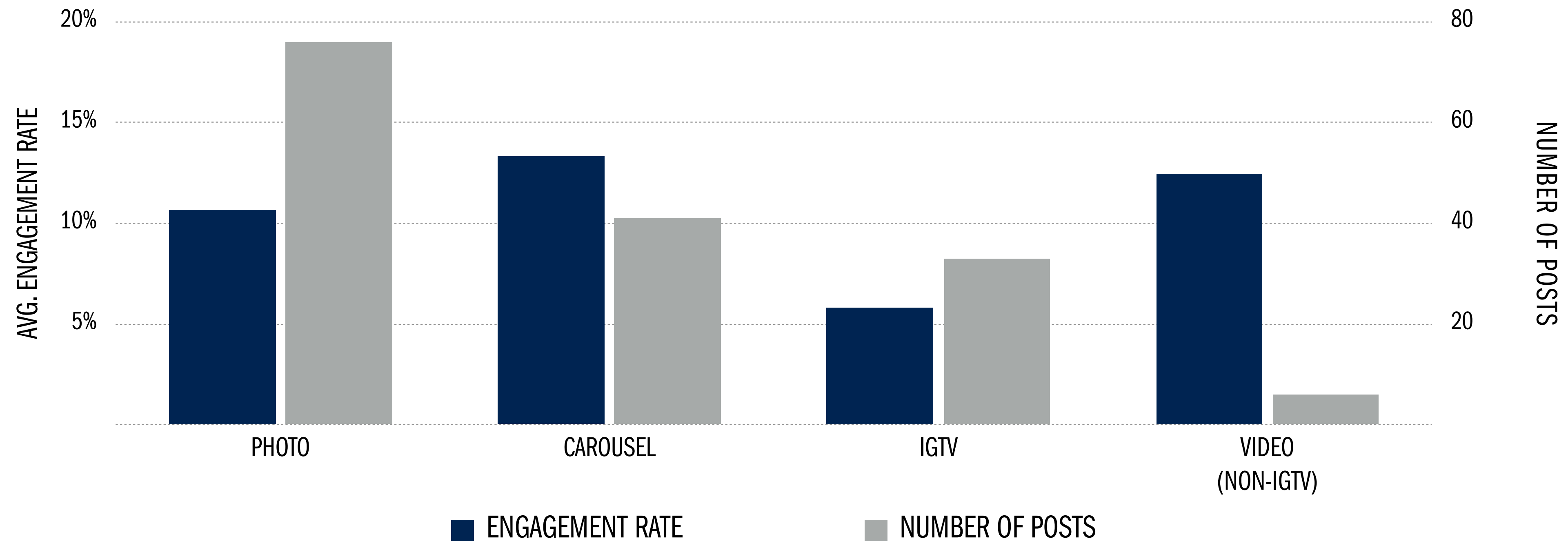
TOP INSTAGRAM POSTS OF 2020

Despite the lack of activity due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our top performing posts on Instagram showcase life on Grounds, perhaps driven by nostalgia and desire for a sense of community. On Instagram, engaging photos and short video perform the best on this visual platform.

TOP POSTS BY ENGAGEMENT RATE
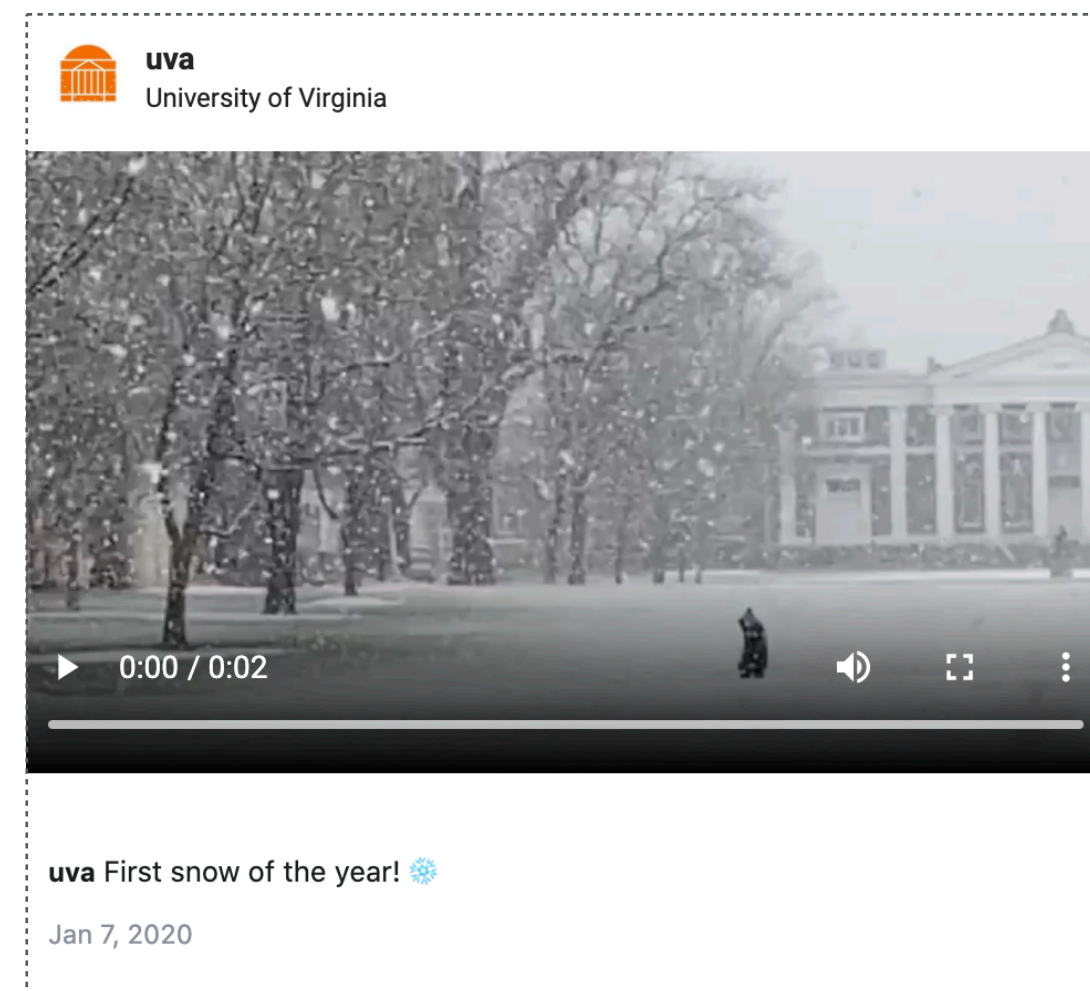
VIDEO
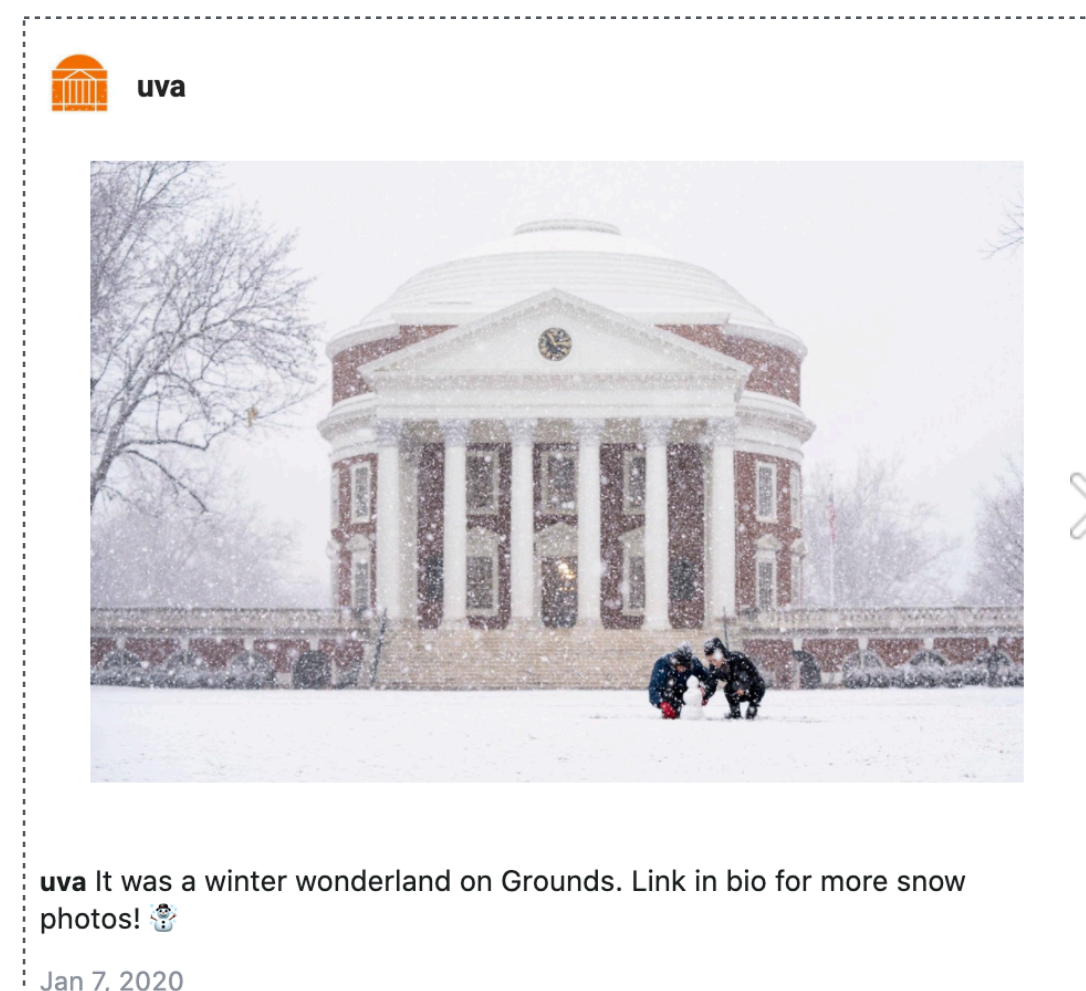
CAROUSEL
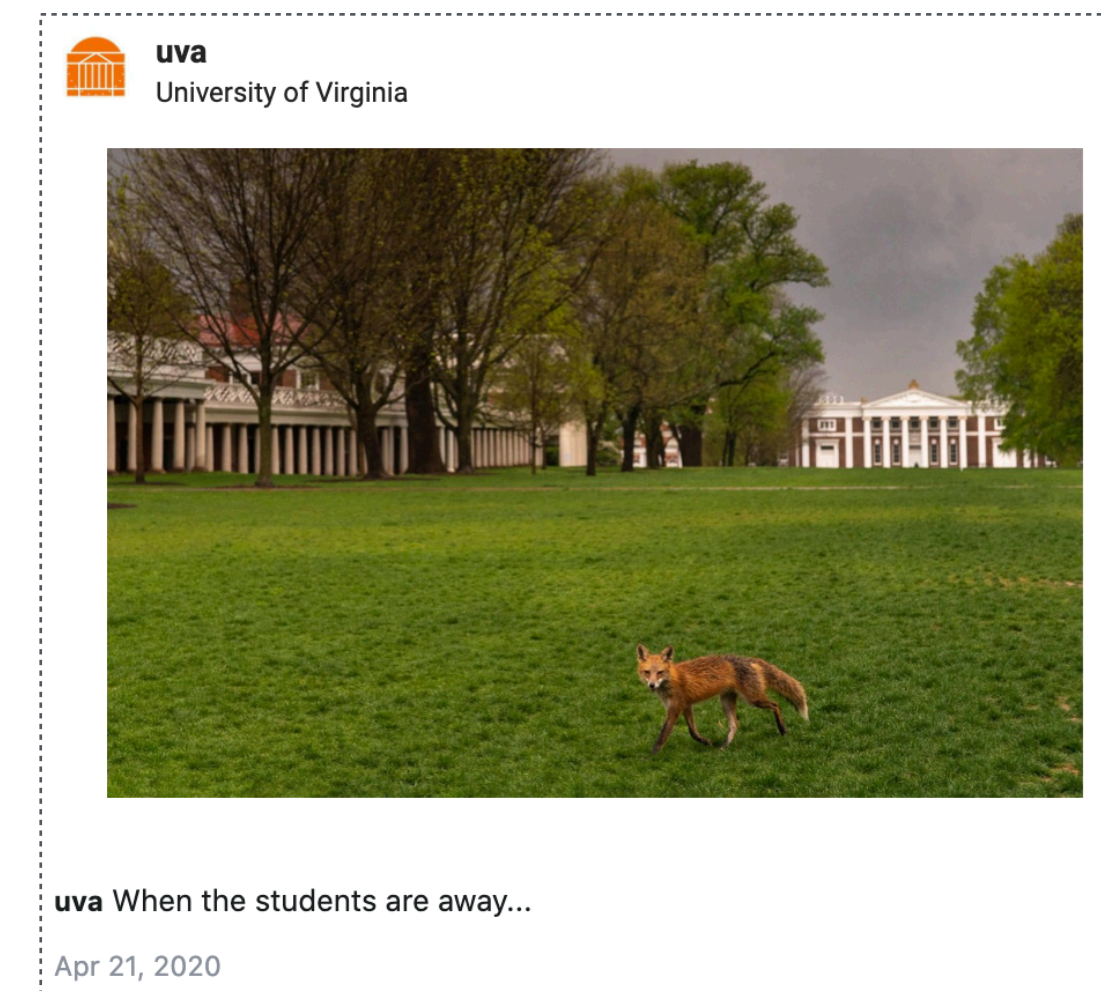
PHOTO

TOP TWEETS OF 2020

The top three posts from 2020 highlight important moments from the fall 2020 semester. All three content types are represented — a link to UVA Today article, video and photos. From the posts, we can clearly see how quick updates on institutional announcements, or "breaking news," are perfect for the platform.

TOP TWEETS BY ENGAGEMENT RATE

UVA ✓ @UVA · Sep 22, 2020

President Jim Ryan addressed the University community, outlining three new restrictions that will be in place for at least the next two weeks.

Ryan Announces Policy Changes to Slow the Spread of COVID-19

President Jim Ryan addressed the University community Tuesday evening, outlining three new restrictions that will be in place for at...

🔗 news.virginia.edu

LINK POST

UVA ✓ @UVA · Aug 22, 2020

.@UVADeanGroves shares a message for UVA students.

7:58   34.4K views

VIDEO

UVA ✓ @UVA · Sep 3, 2020

Boxes packed ✅
Masks on ✅

UVA's move-in starts today.

PHOTO

Over the course of the year, several top tweets were statements from the University. These Tweets have been excluded from this slide to better show content-based themes.

TOP LINKEDIN POSTS OF 2020

Most of the content on LinkedIn is comprised of links to UVA Today stories.
Among those stories, UVA rankings and student/alumni successes have performed the best in 2020. This shows us that our audience on LinkedIn likes to see content where they feel a sense of pride for their alma mater and witness the accomplishments of their peers.

TOP LINKEDIN POSTS BY ENGAGEMENT RATE

University of Virginia
231,886 followers
5mo •

In its 2020 ranking of best colleges by value, UVA climbed five spots to the No. 2 best public school.

Money Magazine Ranks UVA as Nation's Second-Best-Value Public University
news.virginia.edu • 2 min read

LINK POST

University of Virginia
231,886 followers
11mo •

Two UVA students developed a website that provides near-real-time information about the spread of the coronavirus.

Computer Science Students Build Coronavirus Tracking Website
news.virginia.edu

LINK POST

University of Virginia
232,189 followers
4mo •

UVA boasts the top graduation rate of any public university in the country. UVA also graduates the highest percentage of Pell Grant recipients of any public school in the United States. https://lnkd.in/edxrepi

U.S. News Ranks UVA No. 4 Best Public University in the Country
news.virginia.edu • 2 min read

LINK POST

TAGGING: OPPORTUNITY FOR ACTIONABLE LEARNINGS

How Can We Use Parse.ly for Actionable Insights?

In its current state, Parse.ly allows us to tag posts in a way that is useful on an ad-hoc basis, but does not provide valuable high-level reporting insights due to the way that Parse.ly and the CMS function. Since most stories are "tagged" under multiple categories, it is difficult to view tag-level performance and understand what is truly performing well and what is not, due to significant overlap.

By working to implement a new process for tagging, we will be able to better assess tag-level performance and use this information to understand what's working and make decisions.

TOP TAGS OF 2020 - TOTAL PAGEVIEWS

Below are the top Parse.ly tags of 2020 by total pageviews*. Since one story can currently receive multiple tags, there is overlap across tags (for example, COVID-19, University News, and Crisis tags likely contain similar stories).

TAG	PAGEVIEWS	NUMBER OF POSTS	AVG. PAGEVIEWS/POST
COVID-19	3,155,099	373	8,459
University News	2,626,345	369	7,117
Faculty	2,289,459	381	6,009
Crisis	2,285,184	226	10,111
Health/Medical	2,278,385	307	7,421
Students	2,146,253	365	5,880
Research	1,813,045	328	5,528
Community	1,561,958	298	5,241
Research & Discovery	1,267,179	238	5,324
School of Medicine	1,070,087	154	6,949

*Tag reporting uses Parse.ly analytics, which varies slightly from Google
Analytics data due to differences in data collection by the two platforms.

SOURCE: Parse.ly
DATE RANGE: 1/1/20 - 12/31/20

TAGGING FOR VALUE

The example below outlines the problems with the current state of tagging, and a recommended solution.

Exercise May Protect Against Deadly COVID-19 Complication, Research Suggests ⬈

Apr 15, 2020 3:23 PM   Josh Barney   Research & Discovery

COVID-19   Crisis   Faculty   Health/Medical   Precision Medicine   Research   Research & Discovery   School of Medicine

CURRENT STATE

PROPOSED SOLUTION

In the current state, a story may receive 10+ tags. On the CMS side, these "tags" are connected to specific fields within the CMS, but those fields don't translate to Parse.ly, and therefore all tags receive the same "weight" and there is no hierarchy applied.

The result, is that when reporting on tag performance on the aggregate level, stories are counted under multiple tags, and it is therefore challenging to understand meaningful differences in tag-specific performance.

In order to achieve clean tag reporting, we may consider creating an additional field in the CMS specifically for reporting purposes. This would allow for us to ignore all other tags applied to a story, and solely report on one tag per story. This would involve creating a set of 5-10 tags, and requiring that each story is tagged with exactly one tag in this field.

This would allow for cleaner reporting, as each story would only be attributed to one tag. We could then see differences in performance, but the other tags would remain in place as necessary for ad-hoc purposes.

THANK YOU

APPENDIX

UVA TODAY PAGEVIEWS OVER TIME

UVA Today pageviews increased 35% year over year, earning nearly 7.8 million pageviews in 2020

PAGEVIEWS

8,000,000

7,000,000

6,000,000

5,000,000

4,000,000

3,000,000

2,000,000

1,000,000

4.46M PAGEVIEWS 2017

4.53M PAGEVIEWS 2018

5.75M PAGEVIEWS 2019
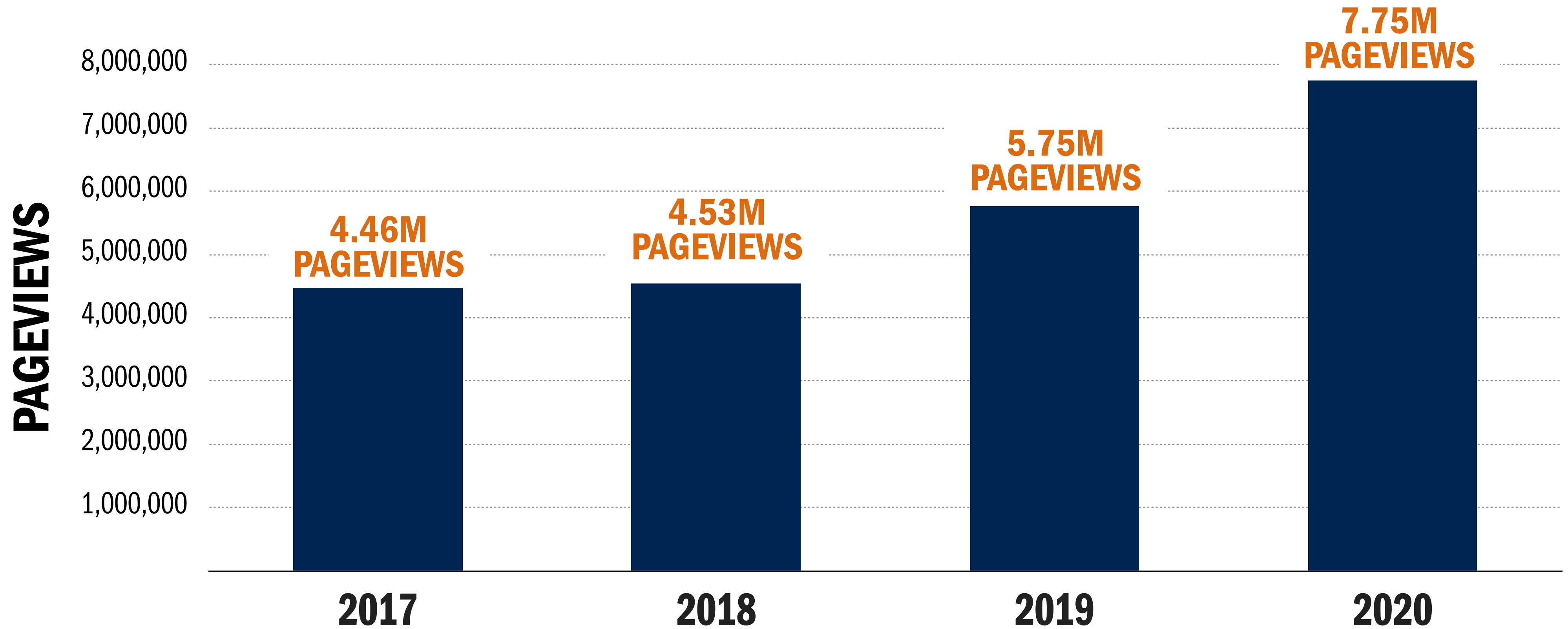
7.75M PAGEVIEWS 2020

TOP PERFORMING UVA TODAY STORIES OF 2020

Below are the top 20 stories by pageviews on UVA Today in 2020

STORY	PAGEVIEWS
Exercise May Protect Against Deadly COVID-19 Complication, Research Suggests	312,651
Coronavirus Aggregation Page	307,043
'Write It Down': Historian Suggests Keeping a Record of Life During Pandemic	189,282
How to Protect Your Mental Health During a Quarantine	88,219
Computer Science Students Build Coronavirus Tracking Website	84,303
UVA Health Independently Develops New COVID-19 Tests	74,428
Black Twitter 101: What Is It? Where Did It Originate? Where Is It Headed?	57,972
Physics Professor Lou Bloomfield Explains the Crucial Math Behind Social Distancing	57,195
UVA Outlines 'Return to Grounds' Plan for Fall Academic Semester	55,486
Class of 2020 Celebration	54,142
UVA Intends to Start In-Person Classes in August	50,242
University Unveils Early Action Decisions for UVA's Class of 2024	44,577
Virginia Athletics Announces Changes to New V-Sabre and Cavalier Shield Logos	43,882
UVA Delays In-Person Instruction, Move-In for Undergraduates by Two Weeks	43,437
Last Looks at the Old Alderman Library	41,045
What Will Fall at UVA Look Like? This Committee Is Exploring Options	38,828
Q&A: Historian Compares Today's Protests to Civil Rights Movement of '50s and '60s	35,405
Get Your UVA Zoom Backgrounds Here	34,166
A PSA From Your UVA Med Students	31,541
Ryan Announces Policy Changes to Slow the Spread of COVID-19	54,469

* This includes the top stories and pages by pageviews during 2020, regardless of when the story itself was published.

UVA TODAY SESSIONS BY SOURCE

The Daily Report, Organic Search, and Social Media are the top drivers of traffic to UVA Today. The share of Daily Report traffic increased in 2020, likely a result of adding students and parents to the distribution list and increasing overall audience size.
*Total sessions to UVA Today increased by 37% over 2019.*

2019
4,284,183 sessions

- UVA Homepage 2%
- Push Notification 1%
- Social Media 28%
- Daily Report 25%
- Organic Search 23%
- Other 10%
- Direct 8%
- Illimitable Email 3%

2020
5,866,687 sessions

- Other 4%
- Email (Other)* 6%
- Direct 10%
- Social Media 23%
- UVA Homepage 3%
- Daily Report 32%
- Organic Search 23%
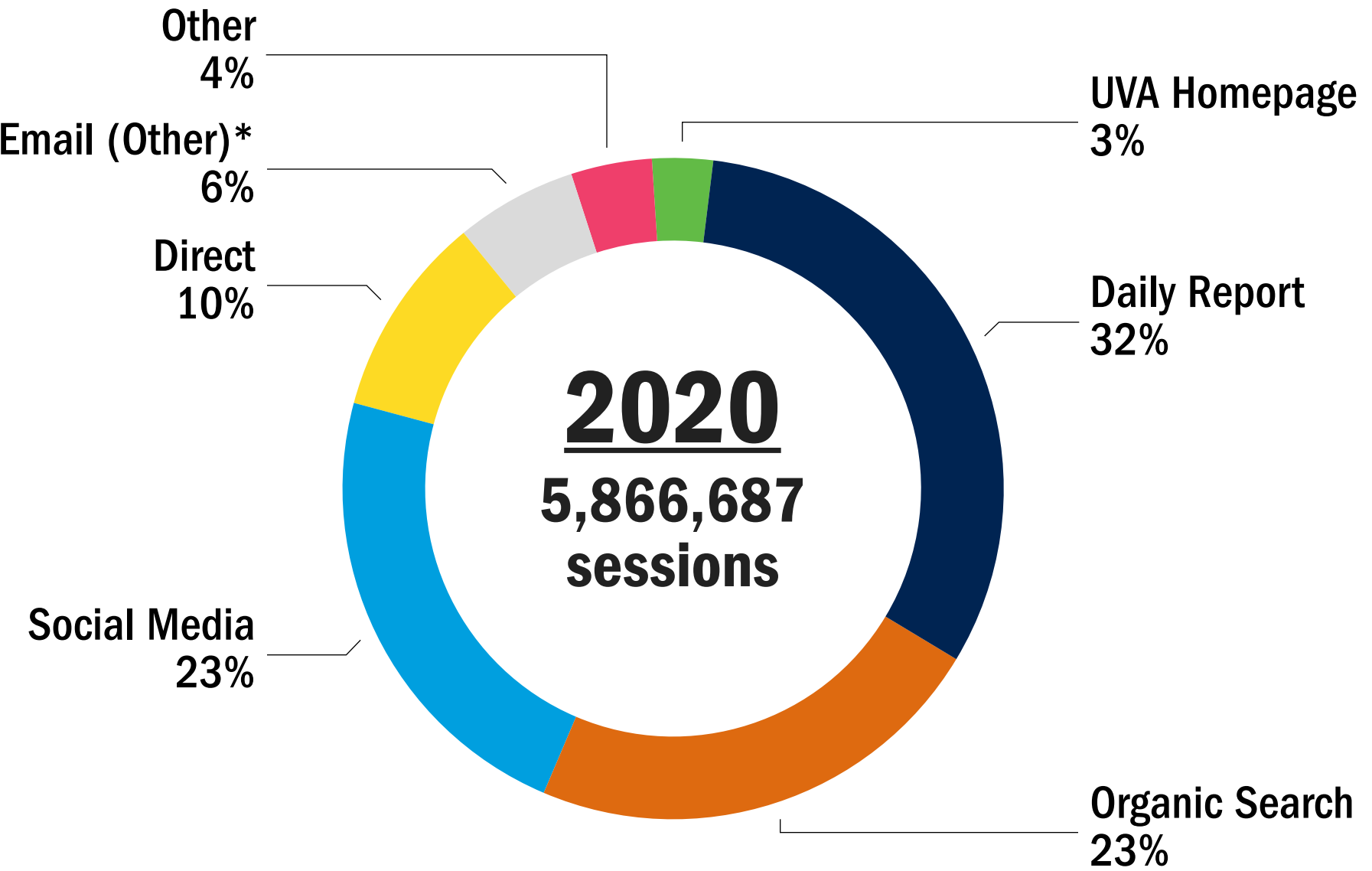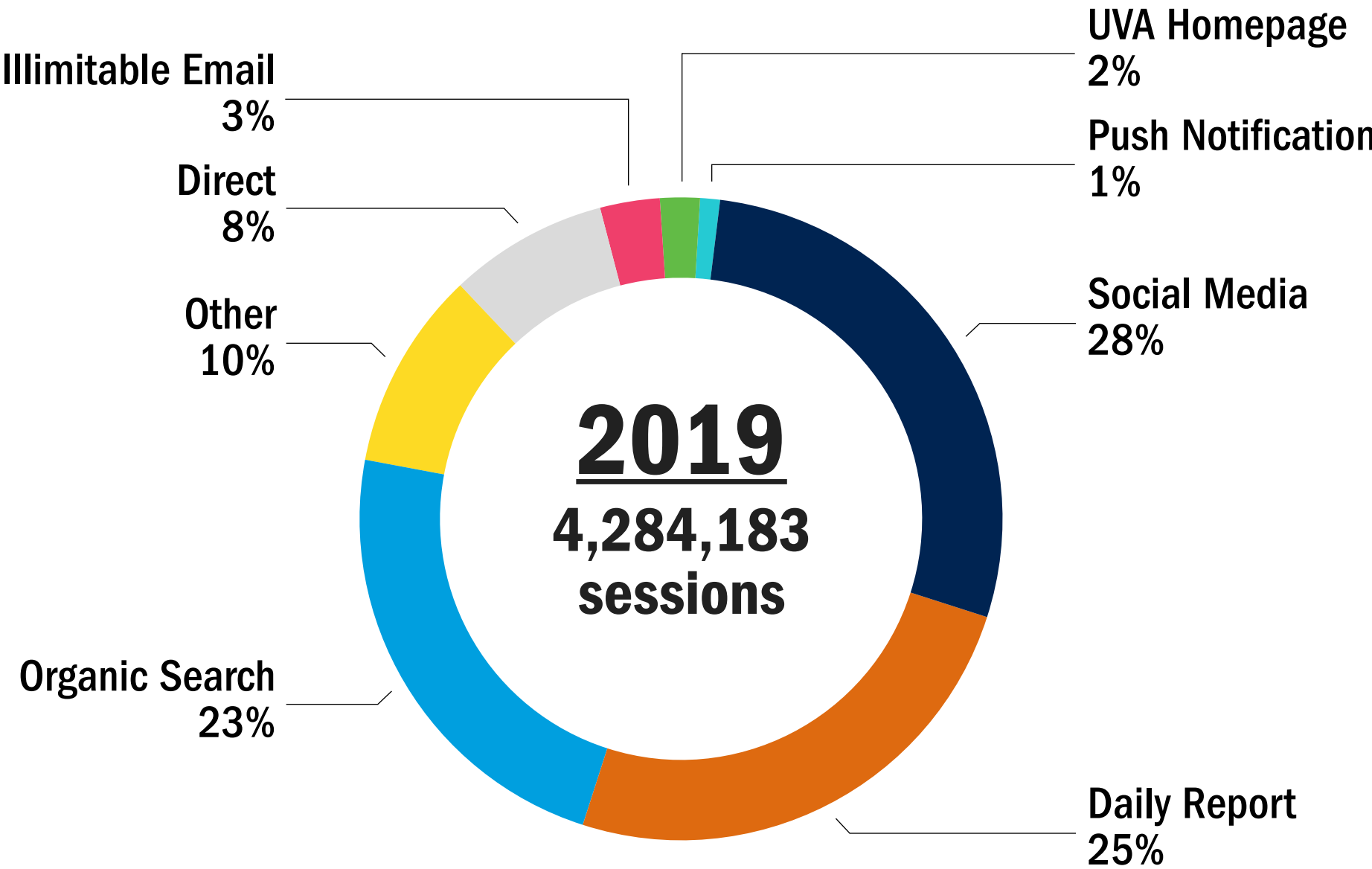
* Email, Other includes products such as UVA This Month, Research Digest, and Return to Grounds emails.

UVA TODAY SITE DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2019, there was a 50/50 makeup of female and male users on the UVA Today site. In 2020, the percentage of female users grew, now making up about a 58% to 42% split. There were no notable changes in the age of the users accessing the site.
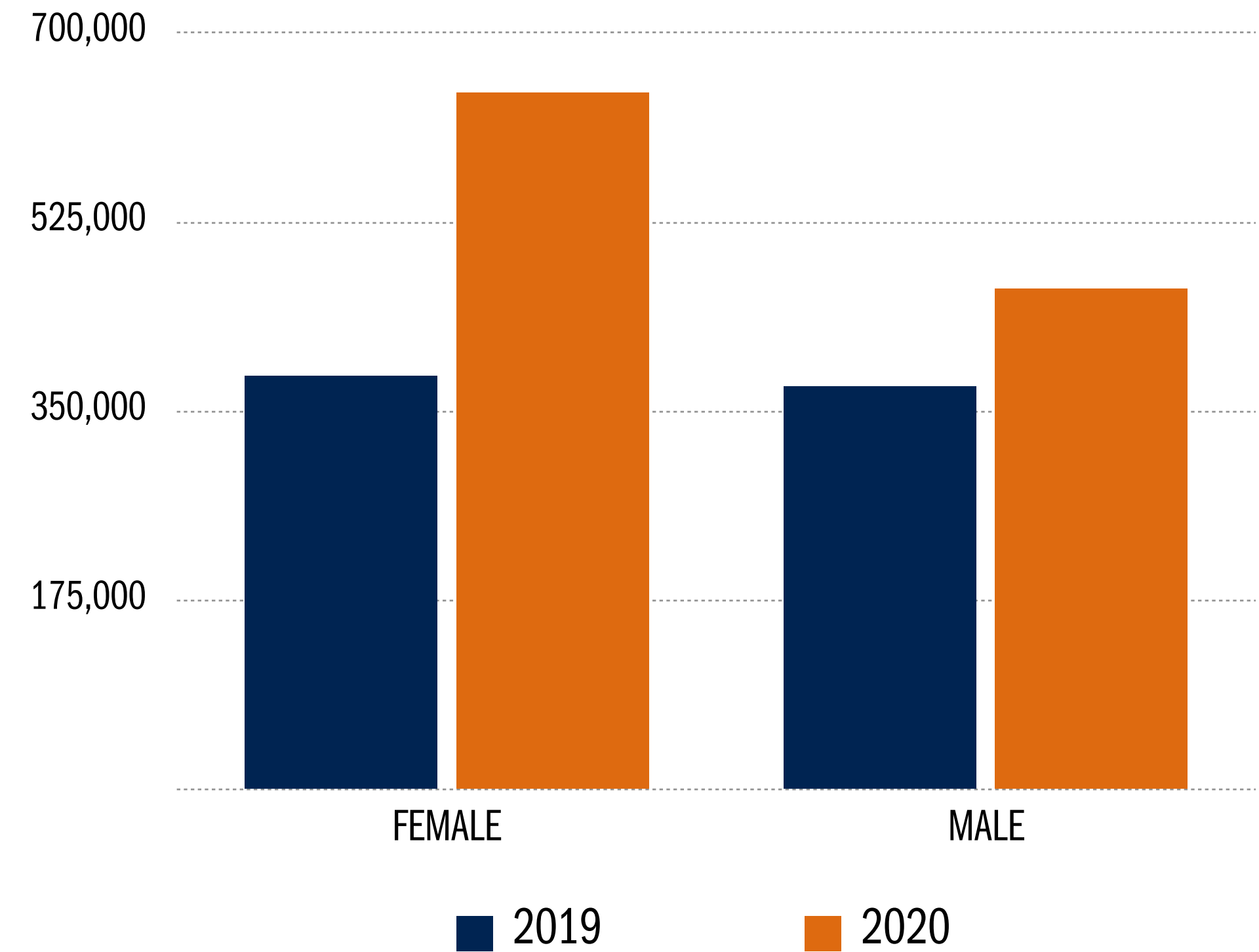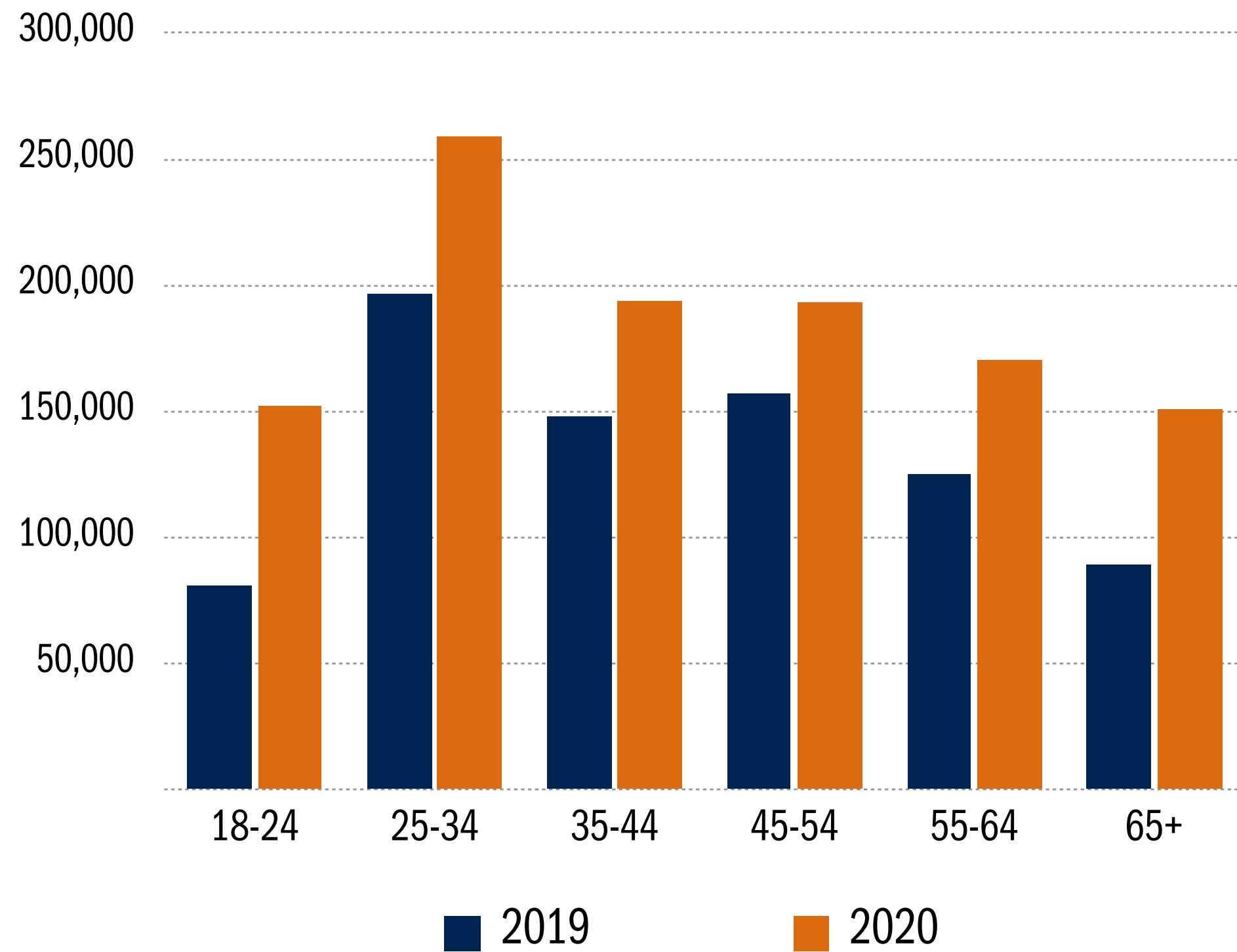
* Due to Google's data collection limitations, demographic data does not reflect 100% of site activity. These charts reflect approximately 30% of site users.

DAILY REPORT PERFORMANCE - 2020

Students and parents were added to the Daily Report distribution list in March 2020. During this month, Open and Click Through Rates peaked for the year, with major COVID-19 related announcements being distributed during this time.

STUDENTS & PARENTS
ADDED IN MARCH 2020

Legend:
- ○ Open Rate
- ○ Click Through Rate
- ▢ Average Recipients
- △ Education Industry Open Rate Benchmark
- △ Education Industry CTR Benchmark
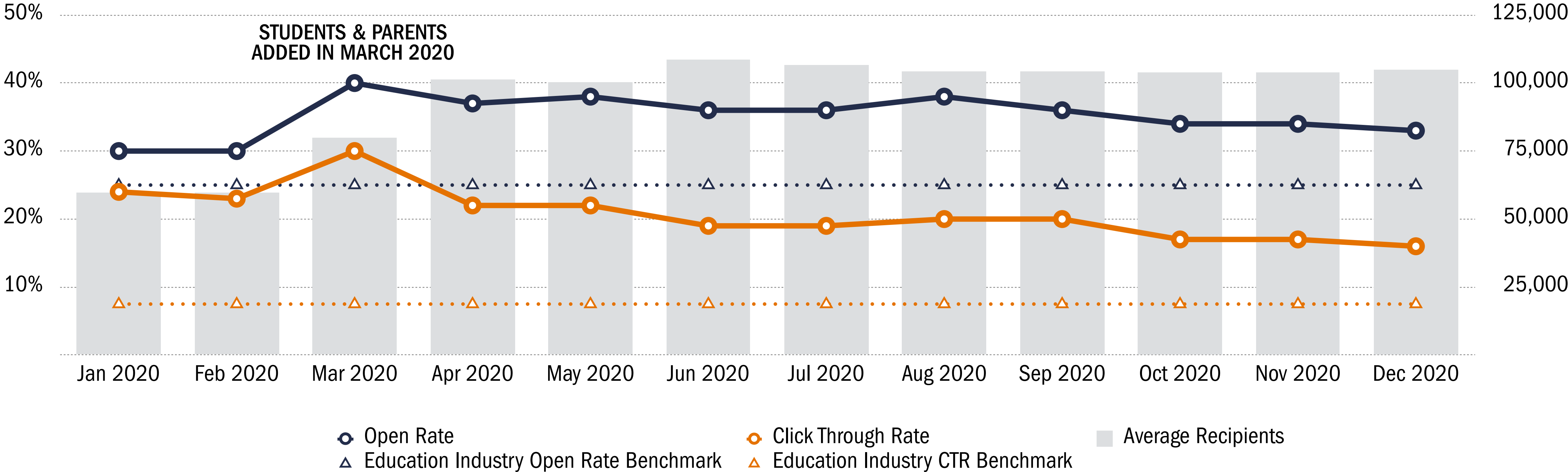
36% 2020 OPEN RATE
21% 2020 CLICK THROUGH RATE

Open rate is calculated by dividing unique opens by emails delivered. Click through rate is calculated by dividing unique clicks by unique opens.

DAILY REPORT OPEN RATE BY AUDIENCE

Since students were added to the Daily Report in March 2020, this audience has consistently shown the highest open rate of all groups. Open Rate for Medical Center Employees grew throughout the year, while Daily Report Subscribers, Faculty, and Staff performed consistently. Parents, who were also added in March, saw Open Rate decline as the year went on.
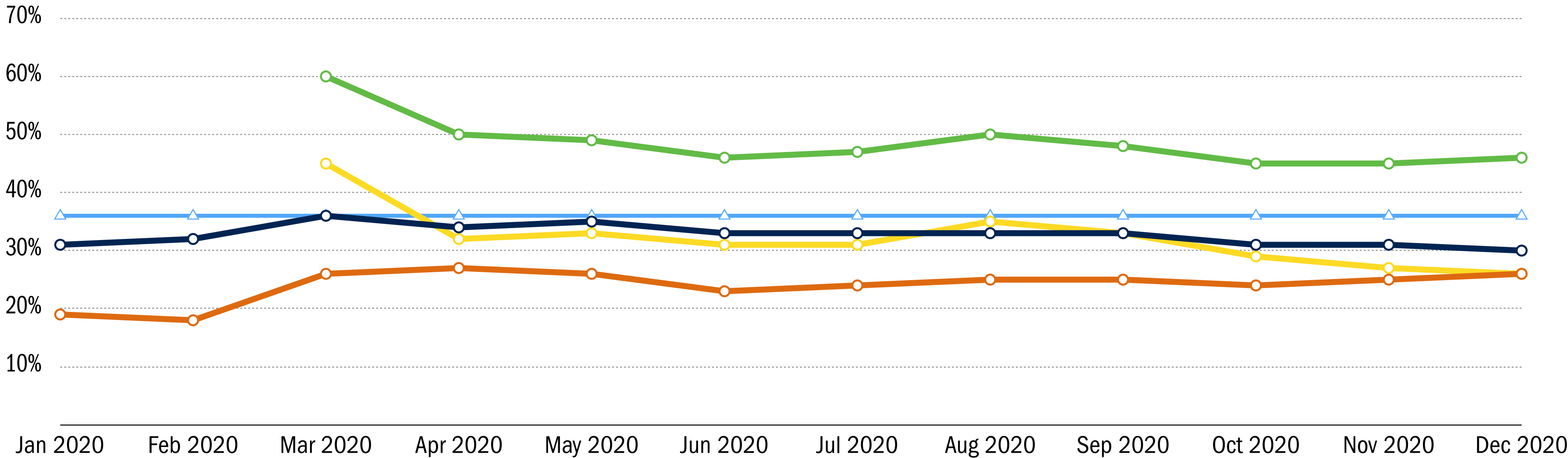
Legend:
- Subscribers, Faculty and Staff Open Rate
- Medical Center Employees Open Rate
- Parents Open Rate
- Students Open Rate
- Daily Report 2020 Average

Open rate is calculated by dividing unique opens by emails delivered.

DAILY REPORT CLICK THROUGH RATE BY AUDIENCE

While Students open emails at a high rate, they don't click on emails nearly as often as our other audience groups.
Across all audiences, engagement peaked during March, and softened as the year went on.
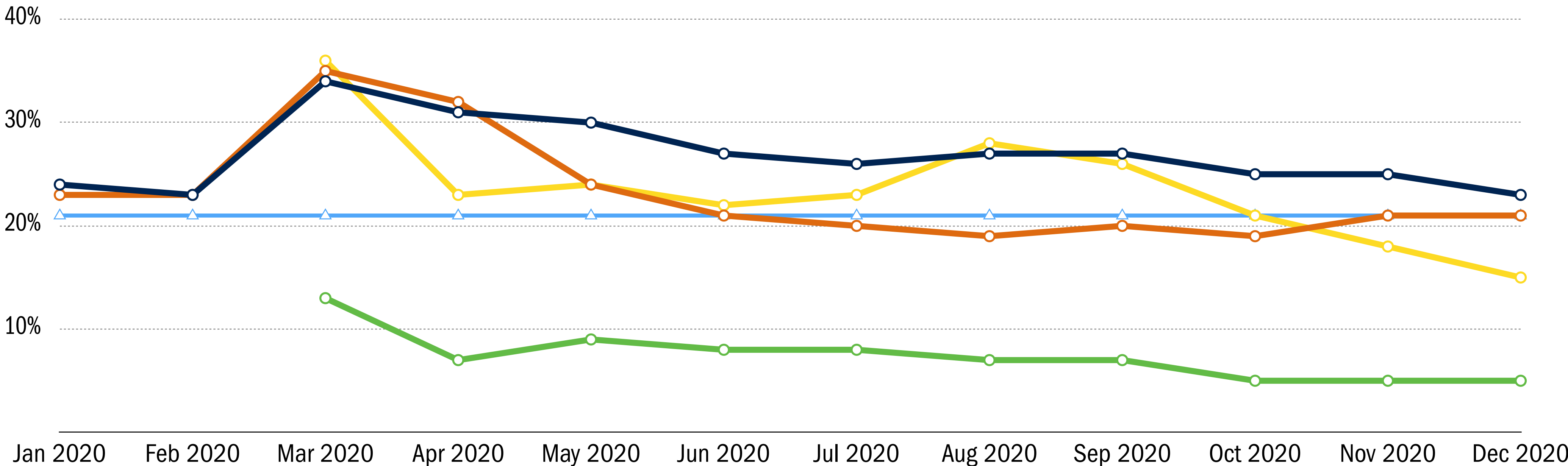
Legend:
- Subscribers, Faculty and Staff Click Through Rate
- Medical Center Employees Click Through Rate
- Parents Click Through Rate
- Students Click Through Rate
- Daily Report 2020 Average

Click through rate is calculated by dividing unique clicks by unique opens.

FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT RATE VS. INDUSTRY AVERAGE

The below graph shows UVA's monthly Facebook Engagement rate alongside 2020 average Engagement Rates for UVA and competitor schools.
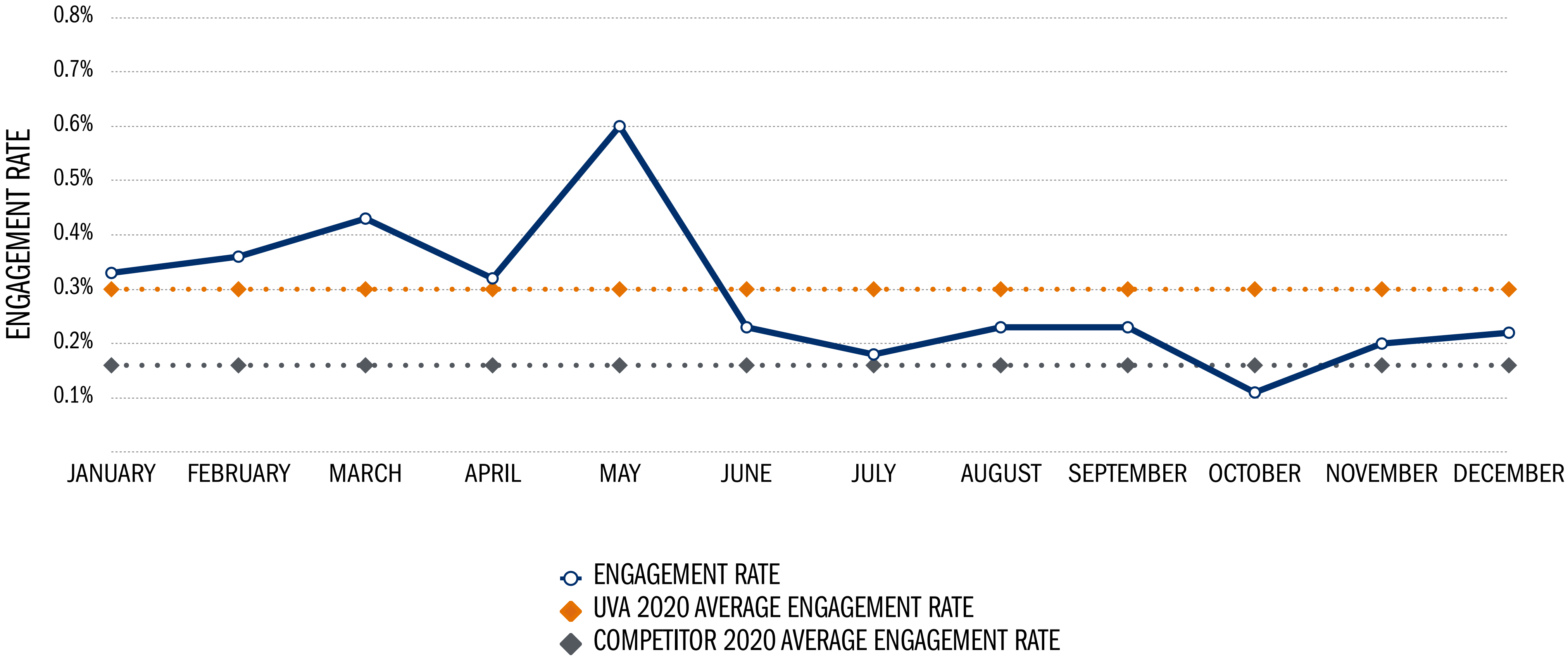
Legend:
- ENGAGEMENT RATE
- UVA 2020 AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT RATE
- COMPETITOR 2020 AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT RATE

Due to differences in publicly available data vs. private data, reported metrics for our competitive landscape will differ from our private reporting.
Competitor set includes the following schools: Maryland, Illinois, UNC Chapel Hill, Georgia, Purdue, Berkeley, Michigan, Florida, Texas

INSTAGRAM ENGAGEMENT RATE VS. INDUSTRY AVERAGE

The below graph shows UVA's monthly Instagram Engagement rate alongside 2020 average Engagement Rates for UVA and competitor schools.
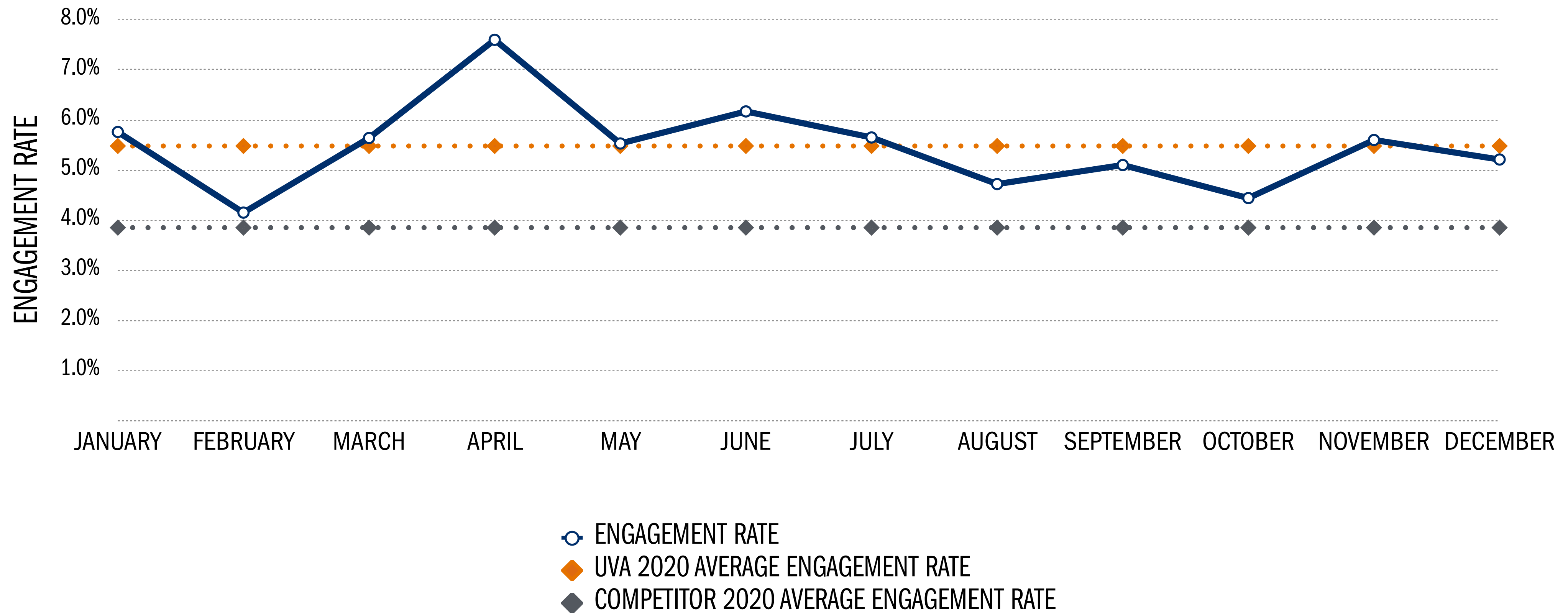
ENGAGEMENT RATE (y-axis: 1.0% – 8.0%)

Months: JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH, APRIL, MAY, JUNE, JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER

Legend:
- ENGAGEMENT RATE
- UVA 2020 AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT RATE
- COMPETITOR 2020 AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT RATE

Due to differences in publicly available data vs. private data, reported metrics for our competitive landscape will differ from our private reporting.
Competitor set includes the following schools: Maryland, Illinois, UNC Chapel Hill, Georgia, Purdue, Berkeley, Michigan, Florida, Texas

TOP FACEBOOK POSTS OF COMPETITOR SCHOOLS

Below are some of the top Facebook posts of 2020 by competitor schools by engagement rate*

University of Georgia
January 1, 2020
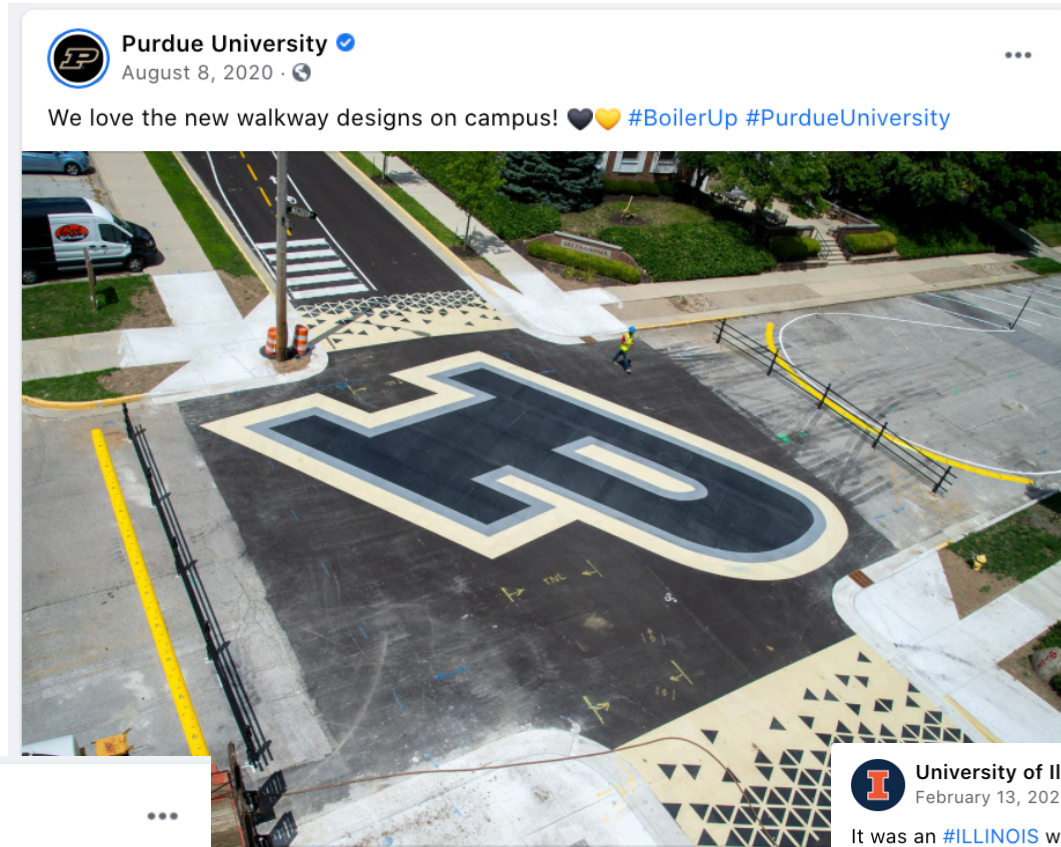
Go Dawgs!

He's the #1 mascot in College Football History according to *Sports Illustrated*.

Purdue University
August 8, 2020

We love the new walkway designs on campus! 🖤💛 #BoilerUp #PurdueUniversity

UC Berkeley
November 20, 2020
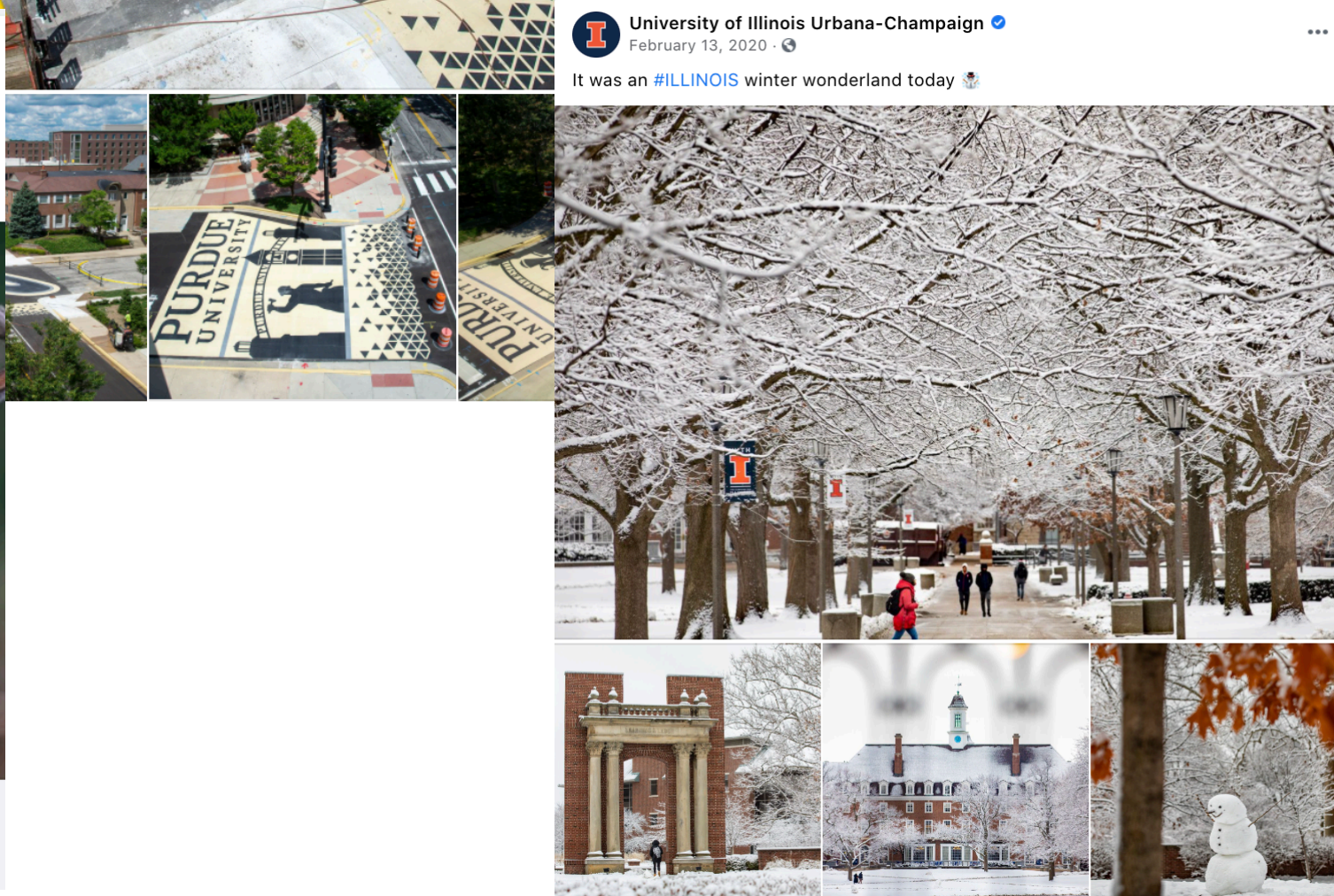
Like humans who can instantly tell which friend or relative is calling by the timbre of the person's voice, zebra finches have a near-human capacity for language mapping. #BerkeleyResearch

NEWS.BERKELEY.EDU
Zebra finches amazing at unmasking the bird behind the song
These spirited songbirds possess a near-human capacity for language mapping

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
February 13, 2020

It was an #ILLINOIS winter wonderland today ☃️

University of Florida
March 27, 2020

A team from across the University of Florida is creating an open-source ventilator that can be built in 15 minutes for $125.

"My sincere wish is that all the effort we are doing is never used," says UF Health/UF Anesthesiology professor Samsun Lampotang "But on the other hand, I think I would be remiss as an engineer and a member of the University of Florida faculty if I don't do anything about it."

Open Source Ventilator Project:
https://simulation.health.ufl.edu/.../open-source.../

SIMULATION.HEALTH.UFL.EDU
University of Florida and UF Health faculty pioneer a ventilator made from hardware-store parts
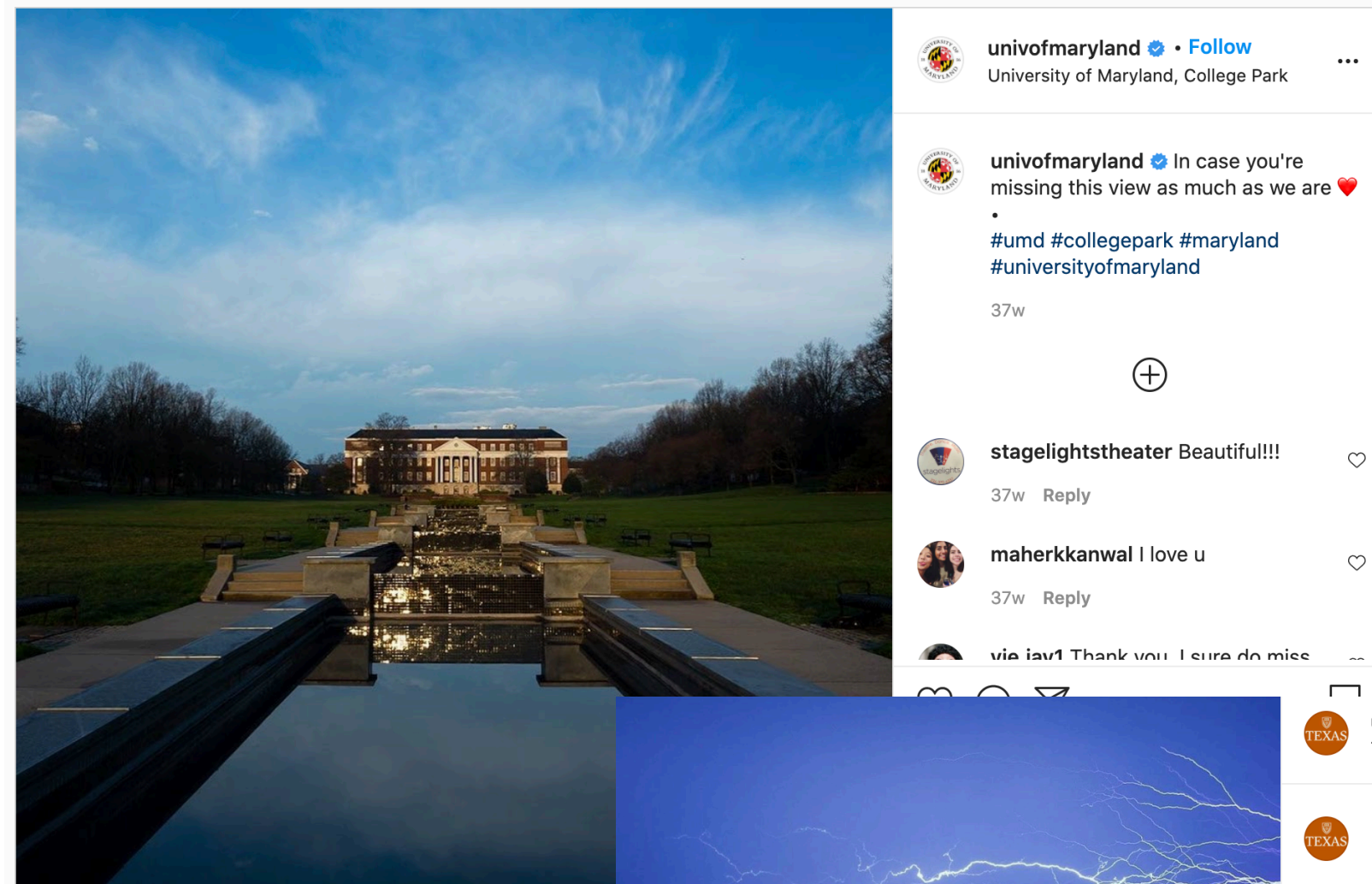
Learn More

* Due to differences in publicly available data vs. private data, competitor engagement rates are calculated differently than our standard reporting which uses our first-party data.

SOURCE: RivalIQ
DATE RANGE: 1/1/20 - 12/31/20

TOP INSTAGRAM POSTS OF COMPETITOR SCHOOLS

*Below are some of the top Instagram posts of 2020 by competitor schools by engagement rate**

* Due to differences in publicly available data vs. private data, competitor engagement rates are calculated differently than our standard reporting which uses our first-party data.

SOURCE: RivalIQ

DATE RANGE: 1/1/20 - 12/31/20

SOCIAL MEDIA THEMES AND SENTIMENT

This word cloud is based on the biweekly digital themes and sentiment report from July 2 - Dec. 4, 2020
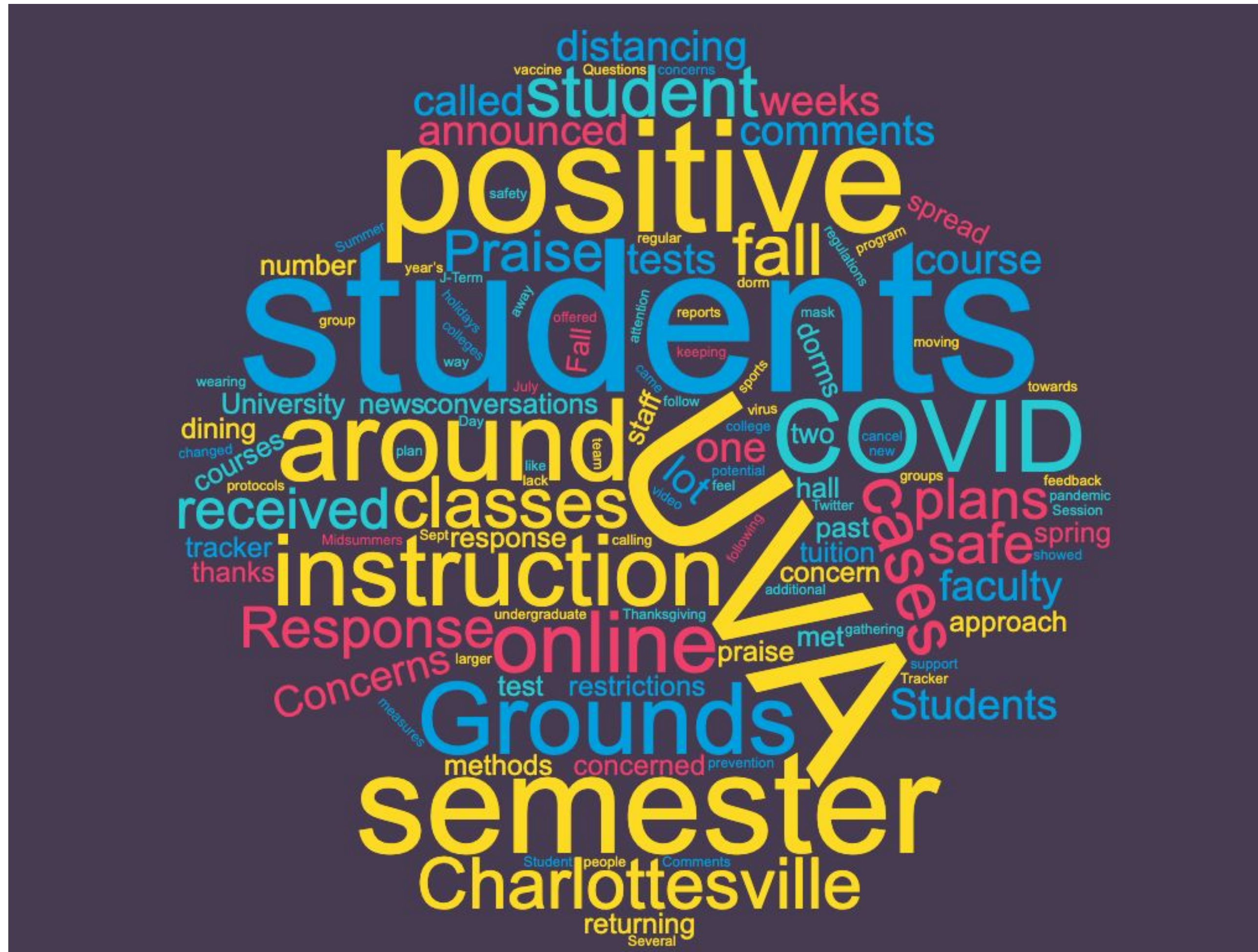
This word cloud captures key words in comments on posts across social media channels from July to December 2020 as it relates to the coronavirus pandemic and the start of the fall semester. The frequency and overall themes of each key word is shown by the font size and color.

The findings are based on the digital themes and sentiment report. The social media portion of the report is created by the social media team. To produce the report, conversations were analyzed and cross-checked with data points like most retweets/shares, most replies and commentary from social media influencers, celebrities and other verified accounts with a large following. Then overall themes of conversations on social media were compiled into a report.