

# Student Perceptions of Global Issues

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## Abstract

Colleges and universities serve as a hub for intellectual growth and discourse, making them a profound environment for discussions about international issues. This research project moves to evaluate college students' perceptions of international issues through a survey that combines strategies and questions other universities have posed. By combining Likert scales, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions, the survey seeks to identify global topics students are knowledgeable about and interested in learning more about. The data has been compiled and analyzed into visual graphs to gauge what the perception of current events is on campus. Results from this study are still pending. The results will then be utilized by the Florida State University Global Engagement Committee to curate events, coordinate meetings, and invite guest speakers that reflect the interests of students on FSU's campus. This research will serve as a significant tool to educate and inform students on campus about international issues.

## Background

- Colleges and universities serve as hubs for shaping students' perceptions and awareness of international issues
- A major national survey found that U.S. college-aged students averaged only about 55% correct on questions about world geography, global issues, and U.S. international involvement, which researchers described as insufficient preparation for a globally interconnected world. (Council on Foreign Relations, 2016)
- Student exposure to international topics through courses, campus events, and guest speakers is linked to higher global awareness and civic engagement.

## The Gap

While much research about college students' perceptions of international issues exists, demographically specific information on students at college campuses is lacking. Many college campuses curate events and educational initiatives without receiving the input of students.

## Research Question

How do Florida State University students perceive, understand, and engage with contemporary international issues?

## Hypothesis

After surveying students at Florida State University, I hypothesize that students will report moderate overall knowledge of international issues but high interest in learning more about specific global topics, indicating clear areas where additional educational programming is needed.

## SURVEY QUESTION

I feel informed about current international events. Strongly disagree → Strongly agree

Where do you primarily get information about international issues?

The U.S. has a mostly positive influence on other countries. Very negative → Very positive

Which global issues are you most interested in learning more about?

What format would you be most likely to attend?

## Example Question

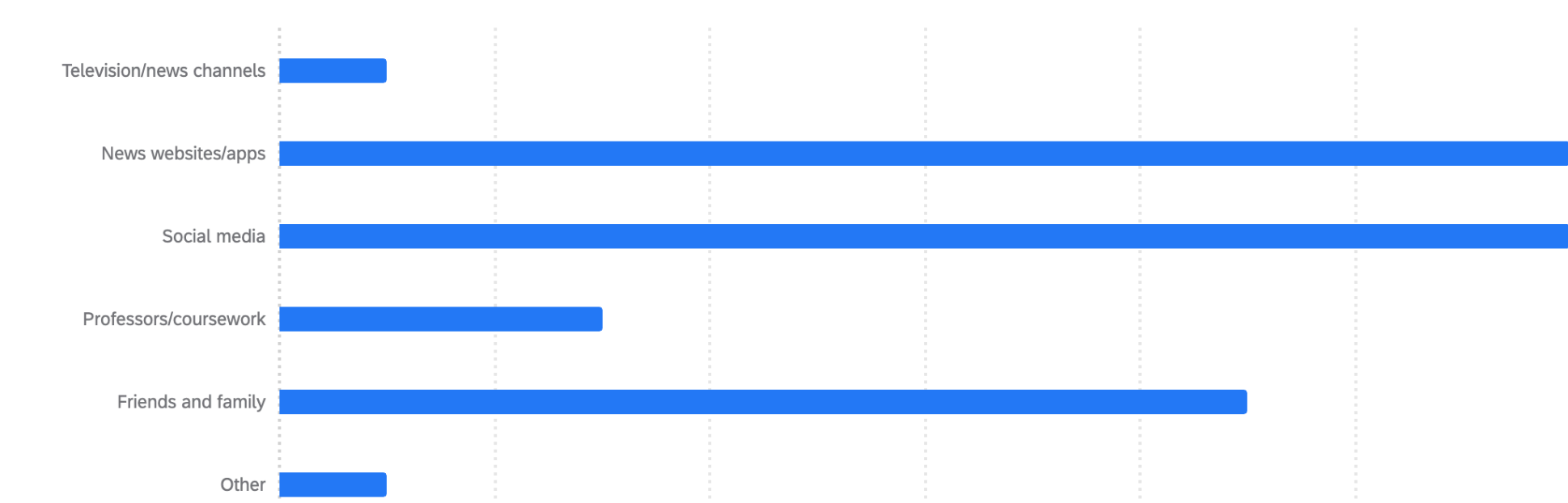


## Methods

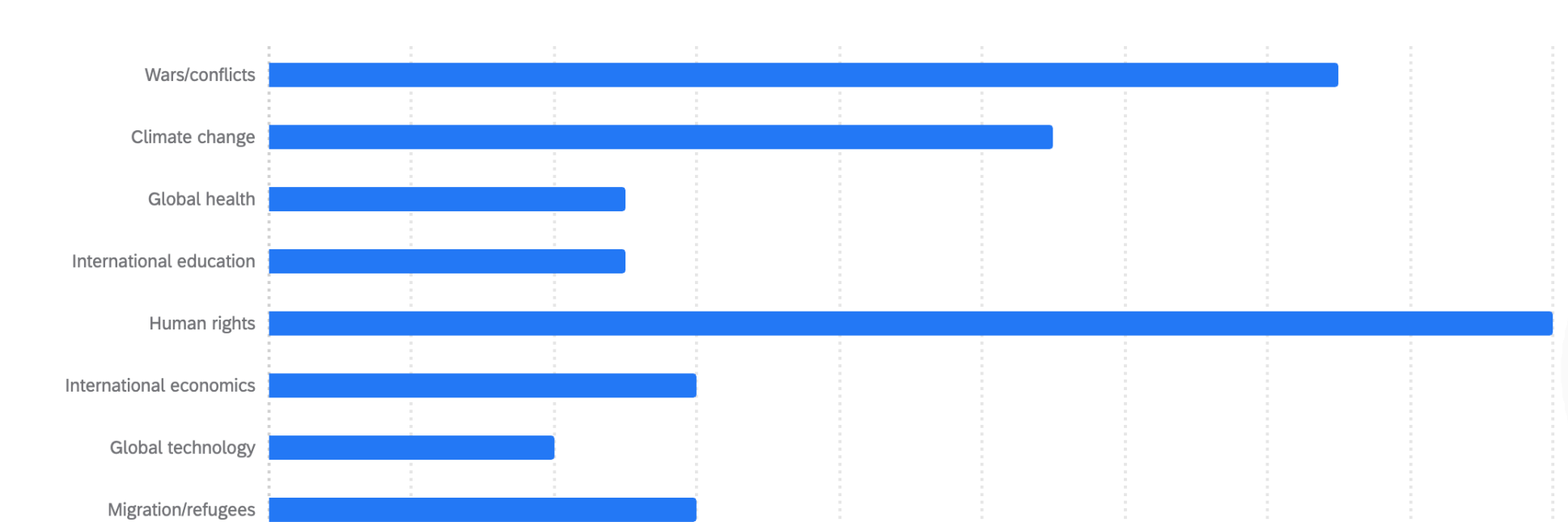
- Students at Florida State University voluntarily completed a survey about their knowledge and interest in international issues.
- 27 students surveyed via the Qualtrics survey tool
- First Years: 58% Second Years: 15% Third Year: 15% Fourth Year: 8% Grad Student: 4%
- Likert scale questions measured students' self-reported knowledge and interests in specific contemporary issues
- Multiple-choice questions assessed participants' knowledge of international issues.
- Open-ended questions gave students the freedom to speak freely about issues that interest them

## Analysis

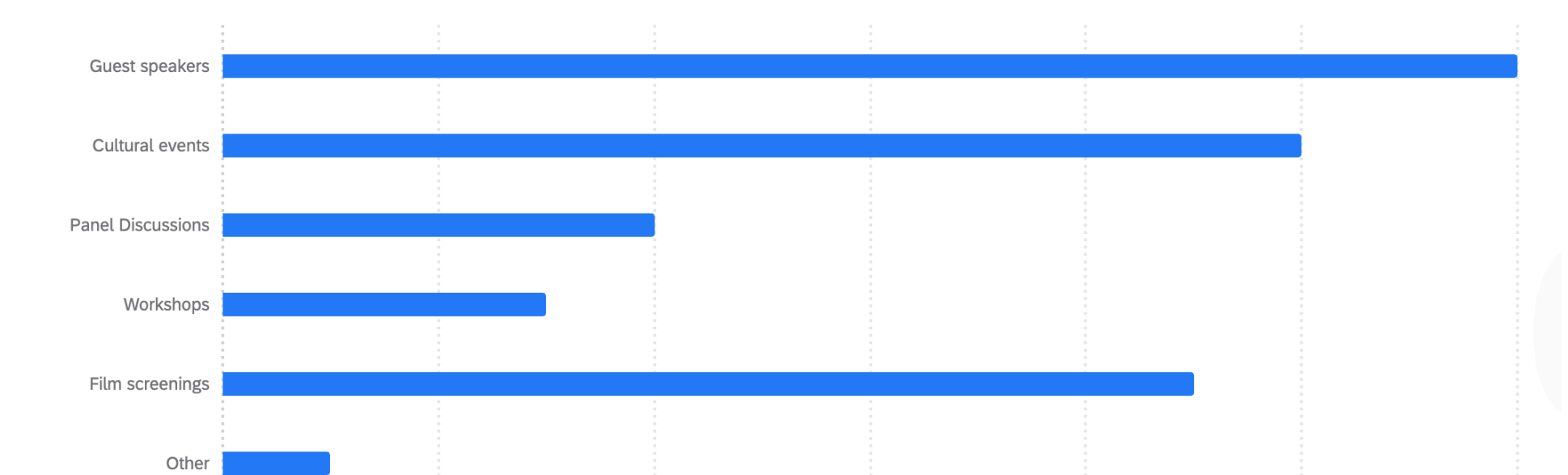
Where do you primarily get information about International Issues?



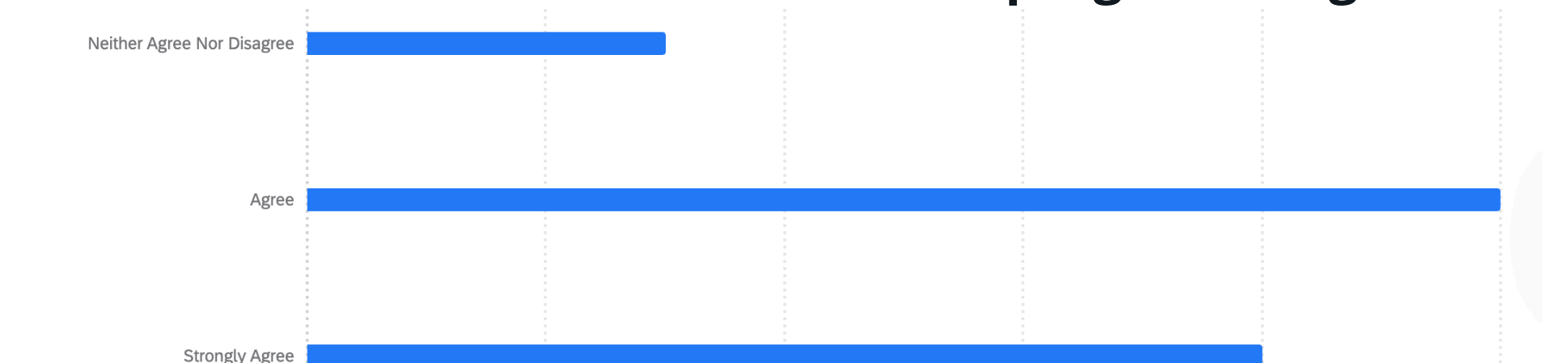
Which international issues are you most interested in learning more about?



What programming format would you most likely attend?



FSU should have more international programming



## Conclusion

- Most students get their information from social media and news apps.
- Nobody who took the survey disagreed with there being a need for more international educational initiatives.
- The older the student is, the more informed they feel about international issues.
- There is a gap between student confidence and the likelihood to engage on campus.
- There should be more programming on FSU's campus that educates students about international issues.
- Specifically, students are likely to attend cultural events and guest speakers discussing wars and human rights.

I feel confident about engaging conversations about international issues with my peers



## Discussion

Quote from a senior at FSU: "I also made the decision two years ago to never look at the news again, and I haven't regretted it at all. I am blissfully unaware of global geopolitical changes that don't affect my life at all anyway."

It is important that FSU works to enhance programming on international issues. It is often found that students who think globally, act locally, and this research can help the administration curate events that students seek to attend.

## Contact details