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WRA 260

Sept 29 2020

VIM Magazine Community Profile

Community Demographics and Structure

VIM Magazine is a fashion and lifestyle magazine completely run by students on Michigan State University's campus. While the organization normally meets in downtown East Lansing or in the halls on campus, this year members are participating remotely from all over the United States with over 200 members. To join VIM Magazine, you must pay a due at the beginning of the semester or for the entire school year. Wether you are a general member or have a position higher up, the cost remains the same for all events and positions. Each fall, VIM opens up applications to members who are looking to join any one of their teams which are broken up into two categories. The creative category includes the women & men's fashion, art, lifestyle, photography, editing, digital blog, creative beauty, health & beauty, and graphic design teams. The business category includes the events, social media, marketing, public relations, casting, advertising, digital, finance, fashion relations, diversity & inclusion, and UX teams.

Each team has one or two directors while the two editors-in-chief and their assistant oversee and run the entire collective. Unless a director position is advertised as open for application, one has to work from the bottom up, meaning anyone looking for a leadership position must be accepted onto a team first and the directors of that team will proceed to search within their team

for replacements (if the position becomes available in the coming school year). It is up to the team director(s) wether or not to appoint an assistant director for the team, but usually assistants become directors the next year. The process to becoming an editor-in-chief is vague, but there is somewhat of an understanding that the editors-in-chief pass down their title to whomever they deem fit towards the end of the second semester.

Community Values and Shared Experiences

Like any other club at Michigan State University, VIM Magazine is largely promoted by appearing at Sparticipation, by displaying work on campus, and through word of mouth. Not only does the magazine host meetings and release print and digital issues, but they also roll out blog posts, plan fashion shows, host launch parties, bring in guest speakers, and organize workshops. Based on responses provided in a Google Forms survey, many members classified their favorite part of being a VIM member as being a part of the creation process and putting their name on this kind of work. This response was interesting as roughly sixty percent of the participants were general members, meaning their name does not get printed in the print or digital issue. The major reasons to join VIM were a result of wanting to be surrounded by the member's themselves and a desire to break into the fashion and/or entertainment industry after graduating from college.

This data shows what drives the members of VIM and how invested they are in seeing through the curation process and the magazine's success. This proves that the trade value is prioritized as the members of the community see each other as mutually beneficial to one another. Moreover, it proves that the spirit of the organization entices the members to join and remain within the club. The spirit of the community can be observed online, as more than seventy per-

cent of participants from the Google Form survey answered that they use social media to stay in touch with the VIM community. Through Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube (and more), one can see the laid back and casual rhetoric used. The content that VIM Magazine exhibits is not always formal, therefore it is evident why the members would create a more informal institution. The rhetoric between current and past VIM members on social media is hugely important, as past members still show their support for the organization and often serve as examples for the current members who would like to follow in their footsteps. Although many VIM alumni have left the East Lansing area, they still interact with others from the organization to ensure the professional success of the community (and to support the influencer endeavors that many VIM members go after). I, myself, have used social media to reach out to a past editor-in-cheif in order to find out more about what it takes to gain power within the community. She did not know who I was but with the mention of VIM Magazine, she immediately voluntarily worked with me and took the time to answer my questions thoroughly.

VIM Advocacy

In company with their constant stream of blog posts, VIM's digital presence has built a community that responds to community issues. VIM is aware that it is situated within the Greater Lansing community as well, and they take initiative to cover the topics of that larger community. In the wake of the Larry Nassar scandal, VIM's next feature articles were "#MeTooMSU" and "The Year of the Woman." They organized interviews with local leaders, including Gretchen Whitmer, and released an entire issue dedicated to the Black Lives Matter movement. These kinds of responses show that VIM is not self-serving or oblivious to issues that do not categori-

cally concern fashion or beauty. Just as VIM takes pride in being a part of it's geographical area, it's members aim to have the Lansing community equally notice and value their work as well.

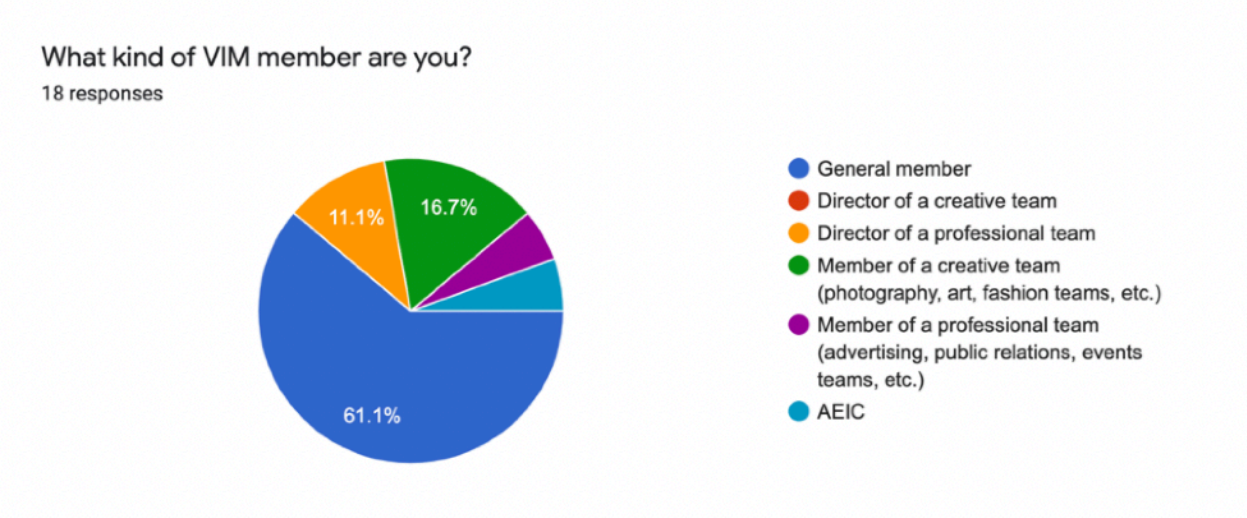
Power and Inclusivity

Previously I mentioned how VIM Magazine is structured and how leaders are selected. In response to a questions asking about the inclusivity of the club, more than a third of the participants signaled that they felt the organization is somewhat exclusive which could be tied back to the notion of a biased power structure. It is evident that some members do not feel the genuine sense of belonging together and could lead to a distrust in leadership. However it is more likely to be a result of the distinction between general and team members, as "community entails alienation" according to the "95 Theses on Politics, Culture, and Method" by Anne Norton. General members of VIM Magazine who aren't required to pitch ideas for articles or blogs. They may volunteer to do so, but may feel dependent on those in leadership positions to accept their pitches or ideas. Through personal experience, I know that the most asked question in VIM interviews requires you to list any ideas that you have to improve the magazine. Those who have the boldest ideas are usually the ones who end up as editors-in-chief. VIM is only successful if the members generate new ideas for the content that we distribute, therefore I feel that "ideas" is the main source of power.

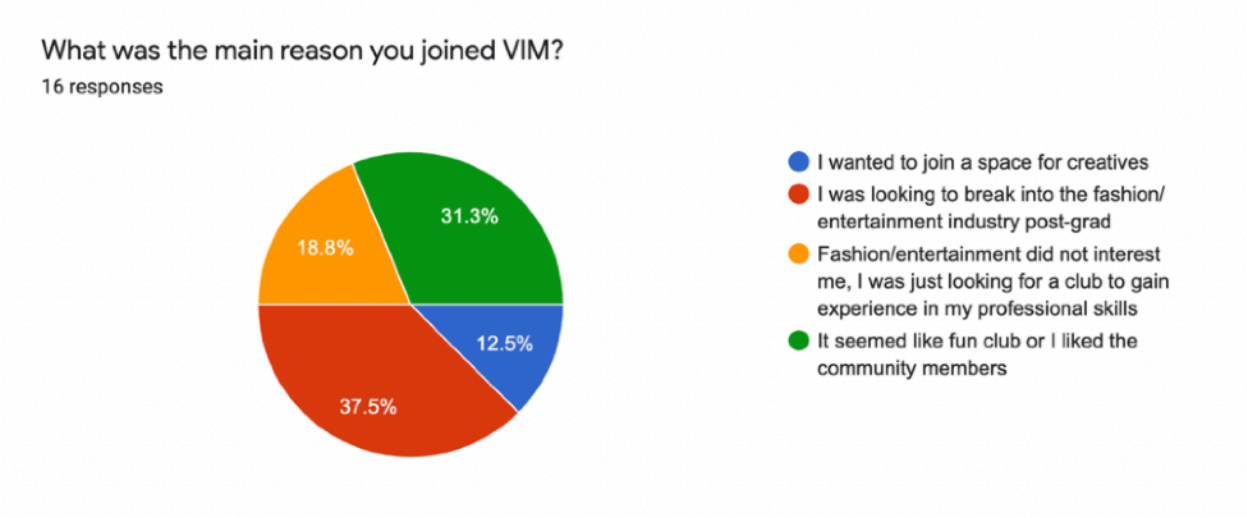
Community Data

Google Forms Surveys

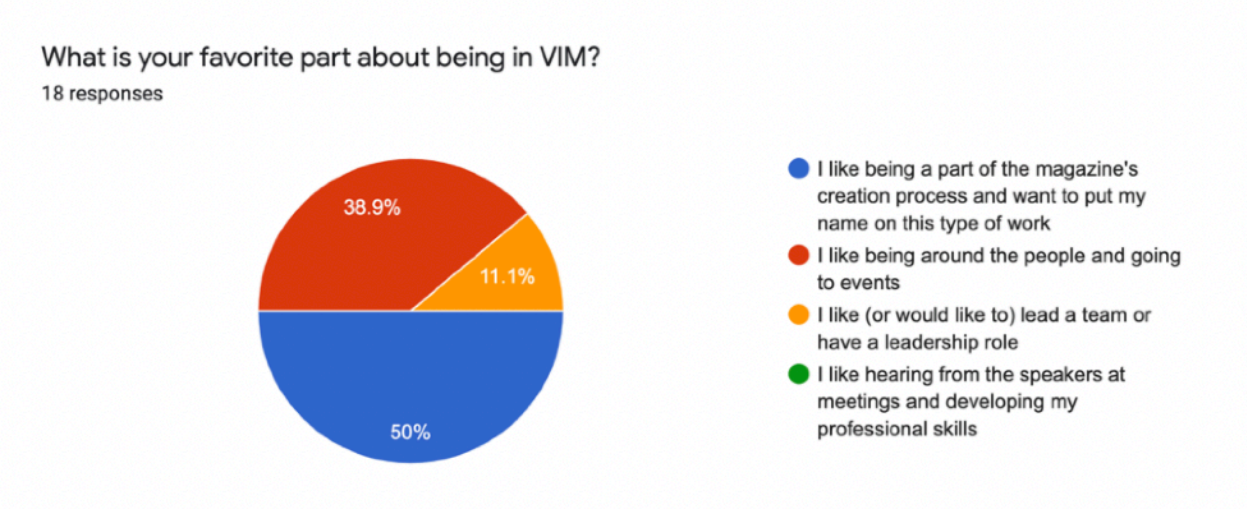
The following responses were provided by 18 VIM Magazine members through a Google Form survey. The participants were given the following context: "The purpose of this survey is to study VIM members and VIM Magazine as a community. If you have any questions about any of the questions, please indicated so in the final question. The survey should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation."



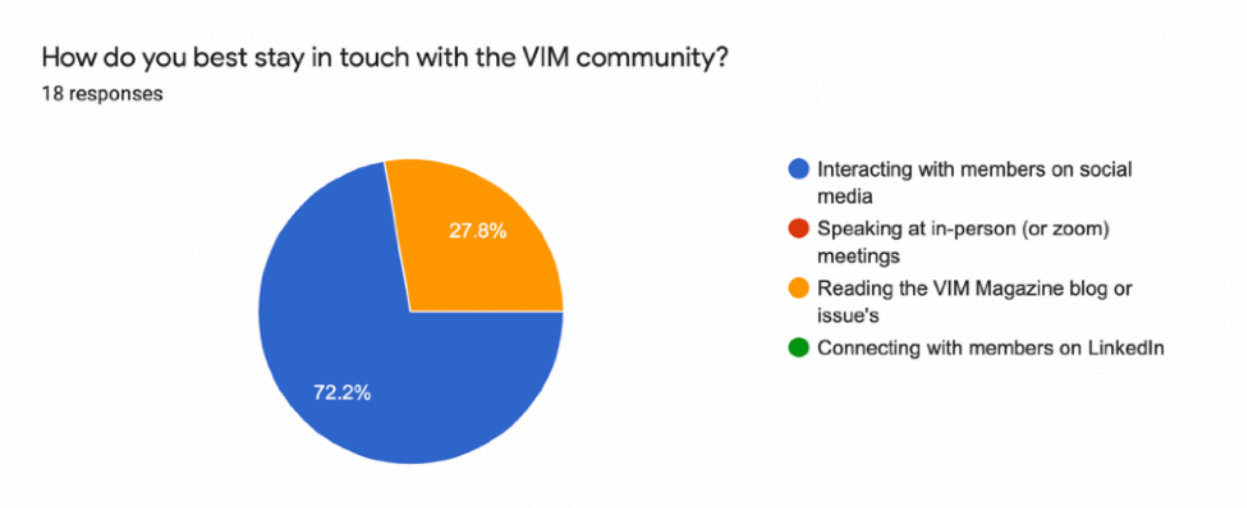
This question served to identify how the participants classified themselves within the community. A majority of the participants were general members, meaning they did not work on a specific team but still attended biweekly meetings, attend events, and pitch ideas. A small amount of members were either members of a team or had a leadership position.



It seems that the reasoning for members to join VIM were rather varied. Their intentions to initially join the club had to do a lot with the spirit of the club, but also the trade value of VIM Magazine presents itself here. This community does a lot of work to mutually beneficially to most of its members, especially for people who thought they could use VIM to help them to achieve their goals.



VIM Members are very driven to see out the curation of the magazine and the clubs success, meaning that documenting the organisation's shared experiences is typically important. Another majority answered that being around the people and attending events were their favourite parts about being in VIM, showing that the spirit of the organization is appreciated, as well as the experiences shared together by going to fashion shows, hayrides, launch parties, and more.



Social media is the clearly the main source of communication by far, meaning that one can observe the laid back and casual rhetoric. The content that VIM Magazine puts out is not entirely formal, so it is logical that the members would create an informal institution. The rhetorical actions of current and past VIM Members on social media is hugely important, as past members still show their support for the organization and can be an example for members who would like to follow in their footsteps. Especially with being highly active on social media and having up-to- speed blog posts, VIM Magazine is consistently building a community that responds to community issues (assisting advocacy). Although VIM alumni may have left the East Lansing area, they can still interact with current and old members and help each other professionally (and support the influencing endeavours of many VIM members).

Do you find VIM is inclusive or exclusive? Please briefly explain.

Exclusive because it feels like sorority members are a majority if the leadership. It is hard to get a leadership position without knowing someone.

Inclusive because we're all coming together to work on one big thing
Exclusive- cliquey within certain groups
Inclusive, everyone is welcome to join!
I think it has inclusive events and meetings in that anyone can join or participate but people rarely interact oustide of VIM events so I think more team bonding/mixers would help create a more tight atmosphere.
Inclusive!
I think it's pretty inclusive because everyone really values pitches for ideas and love to beat each others input
Right at this moment no, but I think having a DEI team this year will help! In the past I feel like there hasnt been enough representation in the magazine.
inclusive
Inclusive- love the casting team
Inclusive, diverse and equal
I find VIM super inclusive there are students with all types of backgrounds coming together to create as a team.
Exclusive, the people in the club are very selective with who is chosen to lead projects, model, and have a say in what gets published

This question was asked to get an understanding of the true spirit of VIM and how the members perceive the community. It is evident that some members do not feel that there is not a genuine sense of belonging together, yet it is not a commonly held belief. The data is roughly interpreted that 4 participants answered "exclusive" and 9 answered "inclusive." With more research, this question could serve to expose the power dynamic and feeling of trust in those authority figures within the club (meaning the team directors and editors-in-chiefs). The exclusivity mentioned stemmed from the spirit of the club, but the reasoning behind answering "inclusive" is held in the notion that any individual can belong in the club and has the option of making their experience advantageous or unique to them. Hopefully, the community's rhetoric expresses its welcoming and acceptance of all.

How has VIM Magazine changed your college experience?

It has given me more responsibility and a creative outlet.
It introduced me to people and experiences that I don't think I would've gotten the opportunity to do otherwise
It has helped me become more creative in my school work
Without VIM I wouldn't have had an outlet to creatively explore and express myself.
Yes, it was one of my favorite parts of college. It was a great creative outlet to contribute to a magazine and I don't know when I would be able to do something like that again unless I changed career pathes.
Feel more connected to people with similar interests!
I wouldn't have discovered that I wanted to work for a fashion or pop culture magazine
I've been able to meet new friends with similar interests and expand my UX skills!

has not as of yet
VIM has completely changed my outlook on the future. I now feel like I have more opportunities to pursue the career that I would like. I have also made countless connections and friends along the way.
It has allowed me to connect with other creatives

Overall, most participants responded that they found VIM helped them realise/improve their career goals, make valuable connections, and explore their artistic identity. Although there were a few different reasons for joining the club, the common means are either met or understood by everyone. The VIM community clearly hopes to support those hoping to choose a creative career path and help make something that impresses and speaks to future professionals.

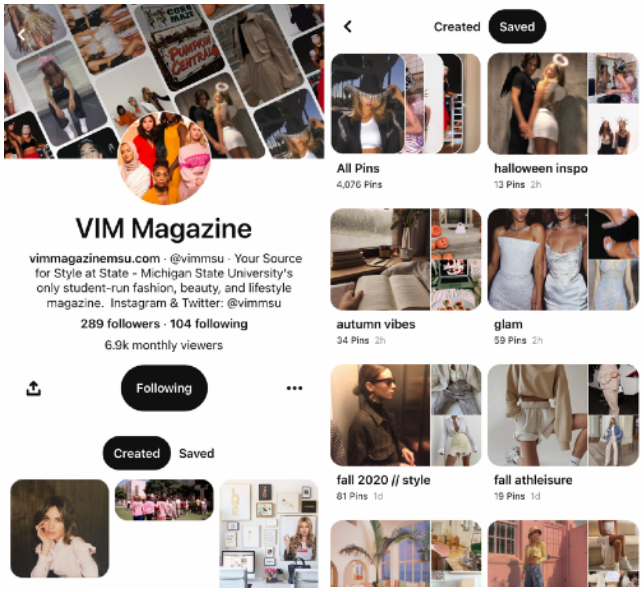
Instagram Stories

Above is an example of the kind of content that VIM Magazine puts on it's stories. Not only do they provide basic information about meeting times and behind-the-scenes looks of members working on the magazine, but they have interactive content to keep their own members engaged and refer back to their other social media platforms. Their use of stories keeps them relevant and people thinking about VIM, their style, and inspiration for the magazine. It's a collective effort to identify what ideas the VIM community agrees upon in a fun and pain-free way.

General Meeting PowerPoints

The images in this section are screenshots of the PowerPoint slides presented at the first VIM Meeting in 2019. As a majority of the participants that their main reason for joining VIM was because they wanted to break into the industry after graduation, this shows how successful the community has been in achieving that objective, as well as inspiring current members to do the same.

The slide titled "Community Involvement" shows that the VIM community is situated within the Greater Lansing community as well, and they take initiative to cover the topics of that larger community. This is important because it shows that VIM is not self-serving or oblivious to issues that do not necessarily concern them. Just as VIM takes pride in being a part of surrounding geographical area, VIM equally wants the surrounding community to notice and value their work as well. Additionally, the slide titled "Our Mission" indicates that VIM Magazine values not only the same subjects but also clarity within the community. They want everyone to work towards the same overarching goals and to ensure that members are not left feeling aimless.



Pinterest

Although Pinterest is not the most useful social media platform for communicative purposes, VIM Magazine's Pinterest account is extremely active with organized mood boards and pins. The social media team runs all of VIM's platforms, and I would assume that Pinterest and Instagram are by far the most successful. Despite only having a little under 300 followers, VIM has around 7,000 monthly viewers meaning people who have seen or saved their content or any Pins they have promoted.

Email Subscription

VIM

Thank You For Joining In!

Here is a brief recap:

We had the pleasure of hearing from **NYFW photographer, Joe Polimeni!** If you would like to connect with Joe, feel free to reach out:

VIM COOKING WORKSHOP
September 28 @ 7PM EST
Vegan Cauliflower Wings

free for VIM members.
Non-VIM members, it is $3 to attend just this class or $10 to attend all five classes.

Zoom link will be available soon! Please share this graphic on your social channels.

VIM Internship 101 Class

Join us for an all things internship class on **Monday, September 28th at 6 p.m. over zoom.** One of our Editors in Chief, Eve Voci, will be going over the following:

- NYC internship experiences
- Where to apply for fashion internships
- Resume and cover letter tips
- How to network
- And more!

Zoom Link: https://msu.zoom.us/j/98264364951
Passcode: 382267

Tentative Schedule

All General Member meetings are always on Monday's 8 p.m EST!

***September 28th (6 p.m.):** VIM Internship 101 Class
October 5th: Meeting with TJX Companies recruiter Kara Bemis
October 19th: Meeting with Cat O'Brien from Alchemy Interior Design
November 2nd: Meeting with Erika Wayne from Marchesa

As always, to keep updated with events and meetings, please check our social media and sign up for our remind 101 text!

Social Media

Instagram: @vimmsu
Facebook: VIM MSU
LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/vim-magazine
Remind 101 Text: Send @vimm to 81010
Website: https://www.vimmagazinemsu.com

VIM Magazine uses an email chain to send out weekly information about the recent meetings and upcoming events to all members. Since the transition to remote work, VIM has introduced online workshops for members and their friends to attend, and has set up Zoom calls with urban professionals to advise on obtaining internships or full-time jobs. This collection of screenshots shows what kind of information are provided to members and is a large part of how the VIM community stays up to date when there are so many members involved.

A Past VIM EIC's Thoughts on Leadership

I conducted this interview with Hannah to get insight for a leadership project and to use later on in a blog post for VIM Magazine. I included these two question-answer's as additional research for the Community Profile to give insight of how the power is approached within the VIM Community. The following introduction and answers are my own words, and the answers were written by Hannah herself.

"Former Co-Editor-in-Chief, Hannah Bullion, has become an icon among the VIM community after landing her dream job as a social media editor for the globally renowned media company, Refinery29. Not only did she depart campus leaving us with mixed feelings of inspiration and envy, but Hannah and her co-editor, Julia Le, were major players in propelling the vision of VIM forward. After her incredible accomplishments on campus, she is recognized as the type of leader that many of us aspire to become. Here are some of her thoughts on leadership that she so generously shared:

Q: How did you practice effective leadership at VIM while you were EIC? A: As EIC of VIM I had to know when to be a friend, when to be a leader, and when to take a step back and remind myself that we're all just college students trying to create compelling, inclusive, and relevant content for our peers.

A: What really made me a (hopefully) effective leader was how much I loved the organization and the people itself. I came into the role knowing I wanted to change the status quo, and with that, I had to convince everyone else on the team that we needed to step up our game and work harder to create better quality content. I think the passion was what really kept me going. I also wanted everyone to enjoy their

time on VIM because I had enjoyed mine SO much. It was the core of my MSU experience and I wanted to be sure that everyone was learning, growing, and doing what they loved.

In terms of HOW I practiced effective leadership, I have to be honest and say that I wasn't perfect! It was my first time leading that many people, but I really just showed my passion, gave examples when possible, sent recap notes, LISTENED to what people wanted/had to say, and really tried SO HARD to not micro-manage

Q: Supervising 200+ VIM staffers is a huge task, was there anything that helped you prepare for taking on that role in terms of keeping people on track and inspired?

A: I was the Social Media Director on VIM prior to being the EIC, and I had been on VIM for all of my college career. I had a lot of really great people to look up to and help me really define the kind of leader I wanted to be. I would come to meetings with visual inspiration, kind words from readers, and examples of other organizations (specifically Teen Vogue, Refinery29, and OUT Magazine) that I know we wanted to mirror in our work. I had a first hand look on what was working on our social media because I was the one directing it for so long, so I took that information with the ideas our staffers had and really tried to figure out what would work and what would make everyone happy and excited."

Personas

AGE: 22
STATUS: FILM DIRECTOR
MAJOR: MEDIA & INFO

JESS L.

ABOUT:
Jess is in her fourth year at MSU, and is hoping to graduate after next fall semester. She has been a member in VIM since she was a freshmen and is happy to finally be the director of a team. In her spare time, Jess takes peoples senior pictures during her free time and looks up to past VIM members who became crew assistants with Vogue, Refinery29, etc.

GOALS

- Produce at least 4 YouTube tutorials
- Film a montage for the fashion show taking footage from photoshoots
- Oversee all team projects

FRUSTRATIONS

- Hard to get participation from team members as general meetings are the same nights as chapter meetings
- Hard to get the EIC's to approve more experimental film

"VIM Magazine has allowed me to grow in my position and collaborate with like minded creatives. I love seeing our work come to life!"

PERSONALITY TRAITS

EXPLORATIVE
EXTROVERT
ENERGETIC
QUALIFIED
TALKATIVE

AGE: 21
STATUS: MEN'S FASHION TEAM
MAJOR: APPAREL & TEXTILE DESIGN

JACK M.

ABOUT:

Jack is a second-year member on the Men's Fashion Team. He feels that VIM has helped him find like-minded people and he dedicates a lot of his time to the club. He takes school very seriously and has been talking to his director about becoming a co-director next year. He is designing a collection to be showcased in the Spring VIM fashion show.

GOALS

- Create a fashion line that stands out from the others
- Apply to multiple large fashion houses for a fashion internship
- Get a director position in order to eventually apply to be an EIC

FRUSTRATIONS

- Balancing school and his dedication to VIM
- Working with the fashion show directors to give him more freedom in the staging of his pieces

"Joining VIM allowed me to make great friends and be involved with the work I see myself doing in the future. It speaks for itself on my resume."

PERSONALITY TRAITS

IMAGINATIVE
INTROVERT
FRIENDLY
POLITE
HARD-WORKING

AGE: 19
STATUS: GENERAL MEMBER
MAJOR: UNDECIDED

NINA K.

ABOUT:

Nina is a freshmen at MSU and just joined VIM with a few of the other women she is rushing with. She attends general meetings via Zoom and wants to go to the casting call to be picked to model for a shoot. She isn't sure what team she wants to join or if she'll continue to stay in VIM, but is excited to see what the club accomplishes during her first semester.

GOALS

- Get to know some of the team directors before applications are due next year
- Choose a major like Marketing, PR, or Comm.
- Get picked by a top tier sorority

FRUSTRATIONS

- Doesn't know wether to join a creative or business team
- Has to walk far to get to general meetings and events
- Hard to get people to take a freshmen seriously

"I joined VIM because it seemed like a great way to bond with the few people I have already met during my first semester on campus."

PERSONALITY TRAITS

ANALYTICAL
EXTROVERT
AMBITIOUS
RELIABLE
COOPERATIVE