

Opportunities and Pitfalls of Using Social Media in Student Services

- Issue of creating a Facebook Page
 - Recruiting student groups to assist in page layout, information, and maintenance
- Worries about monitoring (i.e. inappropriate content or information being posted)
- Negative Posts:
 - They'll just post it somewhere else if they aren't posting it on the Facebook page
 - It's better to be there & respond to negative comments
- Should there be new leaders for social media or should it be incorporated into the existing structure?
 - Problem with 'who' gets access to the page
- It is difficult encouraging non-media users to dive into using it on a daily basis
- Issue of not wanting to duplicate Facebook and the school's website.
 - Idea of using Twitter or Facebook for 'exciting' information, events, and orientation
 - Website with more information with things such as office hours, and deadlines.
- Having a Fan Page on Facebook for the institution
 - 'Photo Contest'- drastically increased the number of fans
 - Need a whipper snapper who's up on media to moderate and modify the page
- Should check to see if while on Facebook, people are ACTUALLY visiting the page.
- iPhone/Blackberry Ap: instantaneous messages from your faculty and for events on campus
 - Reminders until it's read
 - "Security" on campus from constable; but security alerts should still be going to everyone and not just those with the Ap
 - Issue of 'who' will update the information
 - Universities will pay the cost and maintain through each faculty (~ 30- 50,000 for yearly maintenance fee)
- Need a more COLLABORATIVE social media approach to get information out to students
- Universities, such as those in Northern BC don't have access to electricity and computers at all times therefore social media CANNOT be the only way to communicate with students.
- We often assume that the majority of people are always checking Facebook or are on their phones using technology, but this is not always true
- Concern of a large investment considering technology with phones changes rapidly
- SPAM emailing students with too much information through email?
 - Facebook pages could be made specific to faculties or different groups; therefore more relevant to students that way they aren't bombarded by email.
 - Ask students what type of media they want to receive communication through instead of receiving it from all forms.
- Being a fan on Facebook is optional therefore an institution should try to establish an interaction and relationship with the students through social media.
- One institution tried out a brief, weekly communication email

- Information was selected across student affairs (Registrar, Student life)
 - Emails increased participation in school events and fewer questions were directed to frontline staff.
- Idea of increasing advertising for the school newspaper, as its popularity has decreased.
- Pay for ads on the side of Facebook to interest students (very inexpensive!)
- 2 min Video Contest (has run for 5 yrs)
 - One yr Facebook was used to advertise and it cut costs so that more prizes could be handed out and it really increased the number of applicants.
 - Facebook has the lowest click through rate
- How best to show students the student policies:
 - Do they want to read it? No way to get past this issue.
 - 1-3min video broadcast would bring the policies to life and make it more appealing
 - Most rules are common sense and people will mostly act the way they usually do.
- Discussion online about asking what students know about student policies
 - What will they get out of reading it? Benefit?
 - Concern with not checking questions asked online frequently enough
- Put student policies IN agenda- they will read it while sitting in a really boring class, making print media useful.
- For smaller institutions there's a question of resources
- Train people for orientation to inform new students
- Face-to-Face contact is important
 - One school engaged in a sign in chat
 - Often used mentor, such as someone from Microsoft (even though they didn't have any mentor training) and found positive results.
 - Made chats available online for others to read.
- Or 'sex sells'- make policies more appealing.
- Using 'Linked In'
 - Useful for business
 - Introduce to students to start their professional life
- Facebook is a multifunctional form of social media (chat, email, games, photos)
 - Does it become less social when schools become involved?
- Social Media for Professional Development
- Meetings with people on Twitter using hash tags about issues once a month
- Question of Maintenance- When do you remove a post? Moderation?
 - You could find out something that you didn't want to know
 - Censorship?
- Usually a moderated site by universities deters negative posts
 - Obligation to monitor it 24/7?
 - Yes, to maintain its integrity
 - Students can also 'report' inappropriate content to Facebook
- Use Facebook for questions and the website for information

- Focus on engagement on Facebook and NOT information pushing
- The Primary role of the page is for recruitment and questions, therefore there should be no negative posts
- Blogs- rules for blogging → found Good Ambassadors that express their opinions but don't belittle any one teacher, person, student, or faculty
- Have had senior students guiding students in the positive direction
- Facebook is diligent in taking down offensive content
- Don't want the university to seem like it's censoring or controlling Vs. Allowing negative content → which one is better?
- Have been instances of personal pages with negative content posted about the university resulting in the university acting on it.
 - If there are problems that fall under community standards universities can act on it even if it's off of a student's personal page
 - Staff won't 'seek' out personal pages but will act on it if brought to their attention by another student
- Do we need a specific policy for social media or add it into existing policies involving respecting other students?
 - It's not just judicial affairs
 - Nurses have their own professional code of ethic on top of student policies to follow
- Are websites friendly to use on the phone?
 - Sometimes they're too slow.
 - Useful for booking library rooms
 - Could get students to develop it and add it to their personal portfolios

