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**Educational Session**

**2336 - In A Virtual World, Let’s Get Social! Using Social Media to Recruit Transfer Students**

Transition Programs and Services, Partnerships and Collaboration

Despite efforts to adapt recruitment strategies and re-imagine what it means to “meet students where they are” in the virtual world, we watched virtual recruitment programs fall flat and get less “social” over time. So, we shifted our efforts to where transfer students were already “socializing”- Social Media. Join us for insight into strategic social media content that is allowing us to use our social media presence as a wildly effective transfer recruitment tool.

**Jami Dawkins**, *Assistant Director, Transfer Admissions*

University of North Carolina at Charlotte
In A Virtual World, Let’s Get Social!

Using Social Media to Recruit Transfer Students

Jami Dawkins, MA
Assistant Director, Transfer Admissions
University of North Carolina at Charlotte
A Little About Charlotte...

- Large Public Institution | 30,448 Students
- NC’s Urban Research University
- Diverse Student Population
- Largest Transfer Institution in North Carolina
- 3,600+ Transfer Students Enroll Each Year
- Transfer Students Make Up for 50% of the Total Undergraduate Population
Social Media Platforms

Facebook
- 8,700+ Likes
- During the 2020-2021 academic year, we increased by 1,330 new followers.
- During the 2021-2022 academic year, to date, we have increased by 50 new followers.

Instagram
- 7,294 Followers
- During the 2020-2021 academic year, we increased by 1,640 new followers.
- During the 2021-2022 academic year, to date, we have increased by 300 new followers.
Using a General Admissions Account

Pros:
• Consistent Branding
• Broader Reach
• Easier for Students to Find & Follow
• Streamlines Account Management

Cons:
• No Differentiation of Followers
• Clarifying Intended Audience is Required on Posts and Events
• Relevance
Interactive & Engaging Content

Instagram Takeovers:

• Day-Long Q&A Style Event on Admissions Instagram Story

• Transfer Counselors Record Video Responses to Student Questions that arePosted on the Story

• Average 200-400 Views During 24-Hour Period

• 100+ Questions Have Been Received During a Takeover
Interactive & Engaging Content

Instagram & Facebook Live Events:

- 1 Hour Duration for “LIVE”
- Led by Transfer Admissions Counselors & Have Featured Transfer Students (NinerGuides) and Other Campus Partners
- Approx. 50+ Viewers During Live
- Approx. 20+ Questions Received During Live
- Facebook = More Parent Questions
- Instagram = More Student Questions
Interactive & Engaging Content

Transfer Student Spotlights:

• National Transfer Student Week Effort
• Select Tr. Students Are Featured on Facebook & Instagram
• Students Receive a Photoshoot from the Enrollment Management Communications Team
• Spotlight May Include:
  • Student Transfer “Story”
  • Why Charlotte?
  • Major/ Hometown/ Class Standing
  • Involvement
  • Tips or Advice for Incoming Transfer Students
How Do We Know This Is Working?

Facebook

• 375% increase in Reach in 2021 Academic Year
• 52% increase in Page Visits in 2021 Academic Year

Instagram

• 84% increase in Reach 2021 Academic Year
• 125% increase in Engagement 2021 Academic Year
Why Is This Working?

• Something For Everyone
  • Live & On-Demand Options
  • Transfer Event Views vs. First-Year Event Views

Post-Event Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2020</th>
<th>Spring 2021</th>
<th>Fall 2021</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>687</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>344</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Fall 2020 Spring 2021 Fall 2021
Why Is This Working?

• Varying Topics & Campus Partners
  • Topics: Application Tips, Financial Aid, Housing
  • Partners: Current Transfer Students, Advisors, FinAid Counselors, Housing Assignment Coordinator

• Student Anonymity
  • Safe Space Without Questions Being Tied to Application

• Using Social Media Best Practices
  • Strategic About Topics, Platform Usage, Program/Post Timing & Length, Frequency, Consistency & Branding
Why Is This Working?

- Promotion & Communication Around Social Media Efforts
  - Intentional Emails to Students
  - Printed Materials that Encourage Social Media Following
  - Advertising Social Media Events on Admissions Website
  - Promoting Social Media Handles in Email Signatures

- Logistics & Staffing
  - The Key to Our Success: Enrollment Management Communications Team
Social Media vs. Other Virtual Efforts

- Meeting Students “Where They Are”
- Quick Interactions that Highlight:
  - Common Questions
  - Concerns
  - Pain Points
  - What Students Feel is Important or Pressing
- Student Engagement on Social Media is a Form of Feedback:
  - Identify Confusing Information on Website
  - Pinpoint What is Important for Transfer Students
  - Improve Other Recruitment Strategies
Challenges & Our Evolving Efforts

Challenges:
• Ebb & Flow of Engagement
• Spammers/ Inappropriate Comments
• Off-Topic Engagement/ Interactions from Students
• Volume of Social Media Presence

Ongoing Efforts:
• Moving Away From “Scripted” Responses When Live & Recording Responses
• Shortening Length of Live Events
• Strategic Posting: Platform, Using “Reels”, Pre-Recorded/General Video Promotion
What We Have Learned

- National Transfer Student Week & Beyond
- More is Not Always Better
- Duplicating a Social Media Effort May Not Always Yield the Same Success
- Find the Balance: Is A Transfer Specific Post/Event Necessary?
- Staff Training, Research & Preparation is Needed
Broader Applicability

- What Successes and/or Challenges Have You Faced With Social Media Efforts?

- How Might Enhancing Your Admissions Presence on Social Media Have Positive Cross-Campus Impacts?
  - Do Other Departments Across Campus Use Social Media? Is Collaboration Possible?

- “Working With What You’ve Got”
  - Any Ideas for Modifying Today’s Topics to Use in Your Recruitment Efforts?
Questions?

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