

University Facebook Presence: Why So Serious?

Cristy A. Clucas¹, Simone R. St Clair²

¹ The Australian National University, Floor 1, John Yencken Building, Sullivans Creek Road, ANU, Acton 0200, cris.clucas@anu.edu.au

The increase in use of social media has presented both a need and opportunity for tertiary institutions to engage with and support students in new and innovative ways. Until recently most university Facebook pages could be classified into two main categories. The first being official university pages (mix of media and marketing messages) and the second being informal student run pages. Through the Faces of ANU (FoANU) page, The Australian National University (ANU) Student Experience and Career Development (SECD) team set out to create a third category.

This paper examines whether a university Facebook presence can achieve buy-in from its Millennial cohort, archetyped by their civic-mindedness and membership to both local and global communities, as well as their desire for instant gratification, successfully making use of this new opportunity for engagement by utilising the virtual community to support students as they transition through university life.

With a camera now placed firmly in every pocket, no aspect of life is left undocumented. The ANU SECD team embraced this aspect of the Millennial cohort to share the excitement and 'drama' of campus life on the FoANU page. The page taps into the light-hearted melodrama of being a student as well as presenting Academics and staff in a more accessible medium creating a virtual window into 'everyday' life at ANU.

The challenge is to keep the tone informal – it is okay to 'play up' the drama, occasionally misspell names or even be told the incorrect name in the first place! This creates interest and engagement with the student body. At the end of the day, it's all about grabbing attention and engaging the Millennial cohort in an instant in order to create community and communicate student services messages in an engaging way. Does Faces of ANU achieve this?

Key Words

Social media; Millennial cohort; community; student services; Facebook

