



# Reach More Prospective Students With Social Media

SOCIAL MEDIA & HIGHER ED

**capture**



**CAPTURE HIGHER ED**

2303 River Road, Suite 201 // Louisville, KY 40206  
[www.capturehighered.com](http://www.capturehighered.com) // 502.585.9033

# Contents

How Higher Ed Can Use Social Media to Reach Potential Students .....3

Stats About the Mobile Generation and Social Media .....4

What are they looking for?.....5

Quotes from the Front Lines .....6

Differences in Demographics .....7

Best Practices by Platform .....8

Best Practices in Action .....10

#Recruitment Tips .....11

# #Recruitment

## How Higher Ed Can Use Social Media to Reach Potential Students



Current high school students/soon-to-be college freshmen are a part of the Mobile Generation. Today's teenagers leave little of their daily lives to the imagination, now that smartphones and social media apps are readily and constantly available. For all they are sharing, though, they are absorbing just as much.

**So what does that mean for higher education?** It means if you want their attention — their undivided attention at times — you have to meet them where they are. And they are on Instagram, on Twitter, on YouTube, on Snapchat, on Facebook and Tumblr and tons of other apps that keep them one click away from engaging with their peers and others in any number of ways.

Several surveys have been done as social media applications have continued to grow in popularity and they all generally say the same thing — high school students are online (ALL THE TIME), and they're looking at you. What do you have to say to them?

# #Recruitment

## Here are Some Stats About the Mobile Generation and Social Media:

**Fun Fact:** Today's high school students were born when Google began and in elementary school when Facebook took off.

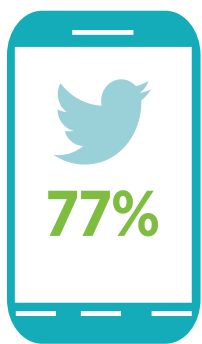
### Research

**68%** of high school students use social media to research colleges



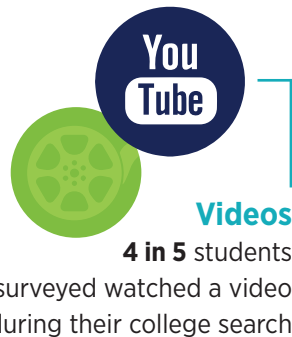
### Deciding Factor

**38%** said they used social media as a research tool when deciding where to enroll



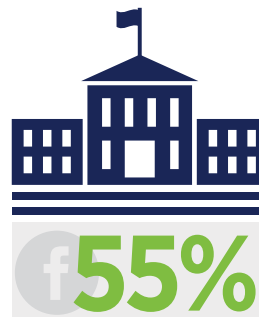
### Mobility

**77%** of students access social media on mobile



### Videos

**73%** said their college provided a Facebook page or group for admitted students, and **63%** said they were likely to join one if there was one.



### Facebook

**55%** of respondents said they used Facebook to review a school's background when researching colleges

### #Hashtags

**31%** of students search for specific hashtags related to their college search

# #31%



**Facebook** usage is trending downward slightly but still high — and visual and mobile-first networks are growing.

*(Instagram and Twitter)*

### Relevancy

Only **44%** of posts are relevant — there's room for improvement



# #Recruitment



## What are they looking for?

- Students think colleges should have a presence on social because: “It helps students or possible future students to learn about the college and get a feel of the environment. Plus students can hear the truth from people their own age, compare and contrast different views, and even keep in touch with friends on campus.”
- Most important interactions: Currently enrolled students, other admitted students, admissions counselors.
- They’re using social media re: college to ask: “Are the students there like me? Will they like me? Will I like them?”
- They’re looking for scholarships and admissions info and they want it now — 61% of students expect a response within a day of contacting a college representative.
- Parts of the university they don’t normally see — give them a look inside a lecture, post a point-of-view photo from commencement.

---

**91%** of high school students say: “I would like to receive communication from college admissions tailored specifically to me.”

# #Recruitment

## Quotes from the Front Lines

- “For students, it’s all about being able to make connections in real time with real people — social media as customer service rather than marketing. According to the survey, students are less interested in hearing ‘updates from the institution’ compared to having an organized way of connecting with ‘people at the institution.’”
- “Having a strong social media presence increasingly seems to fill their needs in that it makes it easier for them to experience a friendly and dynamic relationship with what can sometimes seem like a difficult-to-navigate and faceless institution,” explains Elise Perachio Daniel, senior e-communications marketing manager at University of Washington at Seattle. “This gives them an opportunity to interact with us in a forum in which they’re already comfortable. I think it takes some of the stress out of it for them.”
- Students are turning to other students on university and college channels to find the authenticity they want. “I’m tired of seeing, ‘This school is great!’ and ‘I love it here, it’s awesome’ comments,” commented one student surveyed. “All of the vague comments could apply to anything. I would really like to see opinions people have, the negative and the positive.”
- Junior: “I want to see fun things about going to school there, school news, advice from current students. I’d much rather see it on their social media site than have it clog my email.”

---

“I would like to see, like, an advice column or FAQ section where common ‘worry’ questions can be answered to help ease the tension upon arriving to college.”

- “I would like to be able to ask a question and really have anyone’s response to it, and not just an administrator telling me to look at the blah blah tab on their website.”
- “Real information. Less fluff.”
- Senior: “Twitter and Instagram are the places I share things with close friends, don’t use Facebook much anymore.”



# #Recruitment

## Differences in Demographics

Who prospective students want to communicate with differs, however. White students were the most likely to want to communicate with current students, while Hispanic and black students wanted to connect with admissions counselors; white and Asian students were more likely to want to network with other admitted students than were black and Latino students.

Students from high-income families (39%) — those with family incomes of greater than \$100K — are more likely to visit Twitter than students from lower-income families (28%) — those with family incomes of less than \$60K.

In an article titled, “Social Media: Considerations and Implications in College Admission,” the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), advises that social media should be part of a larger strategic marketing plan. It should be a part of the strategy, not the entire strategy, as it’s no longer something colleges can do without if they want to reach today’s students.

---

“Admission offices should be prepared to spend a significant amount of time on social media initiatives, particularly in the early stages of implementation.”

According to the article, “Admission offices should be prepared to spend a significant amount of time on social media initiatives, particularly in the early stages of implementation. Social media outlets require frequent updating to be effective. If posts have to be vetted by a PR or legal department, admission offices should expect additional time demands.”

Social media is a different type of marketing — and one that is more informal. NACAC and other organizations advise that social media outlets for schools should be transparent, authentic and interesting. They should allow for conversation with the intended audience, rather than the robotic feeling perceived by just pushing out links.

# #Recruitment

## Best Practices by Platform



### YouTube

**Target:** *Prospective Students and Parents*

- **Branding Video** — Talk about your institution and what it has to offer.
- **Campus Tour Video** — Show them around.
- **A Day in the Life Series** — 4 videos focusing on separate students and a day at the university.
- **Extracurriculars** — Compilation of fun activities like football games, campus events, Greek life, ect...



### Twitter

**Target:** *Prospective Students*

- **Event announcements** — homecoming, campus visit days
- **Facilitate students interactions with hashtags** — #FauxState20
- **Twitter Takeovers** — Allow a student to take over the university's Twitter for a day
- **Tips** — Best apps to organize for your first year at Faux State
- **Reminders about Deadlines** — “Don’t forget the 2016 Enrollment Deadline”



### Snapchat

**Target:** *Prospective Students*

- **School Filters** — Mascot faces, school colors, etc...
- **Campus photos** — Show off your awesome campus.
- **Events promotion** — “Campus Visit Coming Up July 29th!”
- Encourage acceptance letter shares to increase brand awareness.
- A Day in the Life Series



# #Recruitment

## Best Practices by Platform



### Instagram

**Target:** *Prospective Students*

- **Acceptance Letters**
- **Events** — Sporting events, social events, graduations, etc...
- **Campus Life** — Students around campus
- **Behind the Scenes** — In a classroom or dorm, Greek life, local hot spots
- **Encourage hashtags** — #firstdayatFauxState #ILoveFauxState #FauxState20



### Facebook

**Target:** *Parents*

- Articles and info about upcoming visit days
- Shares of recognition the school has received
- Articles on how to prepare for first year of college
- Financial aid info and helpful hints
- Links to relevant pages on the institution's website



### Facebook

**Target:** *Students*

- Events
- Campus Life
- Videos
- Info about the institution
- Contact information
- Links to relevant pages on institution's website

# #Recruitment

## Best Practices in Action

**Duke University** – Did “One Day at Duke” hashtag on Instagram/Twitter and got more than 1,000 photos, videos and messages

**Full Sail University** – Offers Facebook chats w/esteemed grads

**University of Kentucky** – #seeblue has taken off for them

**Military Academy** – Launched a YouTube series/channel with insider’s look into soldier/cadet life

**University of Florida** – #UF17: social media initiative for newly admitted Gators, starting with a hashtag on their decision letters, orientation, convocation and beyond.

**University of Texas-Austin** – UT advertising professors tweeted live critiques of commercials during the Super Bowl. Now that’s the meaning of a real-world classroom!

**University of Wisconsin-Madison** – Offers #UWRightNow. It’s a 24-hour snapshot of a day in the life of a Badger.

**University of Michigan** – The university is hosting its first Instagram contest in November, inviting students to upload pictures in response to a weekly theme with the hashtag #MyUMich.

**Misericordia University** – The school offered bookstore gift certificates to freshmen who replaced their Facebook profile photos with the university logo.

Students at different points of their decision journey are going to use social media in different ways — something else that schools should take into account. But the overarching theme for all of their needs is familiarity. The more they can relate to a school’s students, community and values, the more likely they are to apply and attend that school. Currently, nothing offers this ability to become familiar with the college and everything about it like social media. Meet them there. And show them what you have to offer.

# #Recruitment Tips

**1. Don't be everywhere.**

**2. Use visuals.**

**3. Post in real time.**

**4. Update your videos.**

**5. Don't hide.**

(Make a social media hub.)

**6. Make it personal.**

(Nobody likes talking to a logo.  
Show there are real people behind  
these accounts.)

**7. Keep it real.**

(Skip corporate press releases and  
sleek marketing videos.)

**8. Deliver exclusivity.**

(Things they can't find on your  
website already, for example.)

**9. Add value.**

(Ex. Live twitter chat answering  
questions.)

**10. Stay ahead of the curve.**

