

# Survey finds colleges looking at students' social media presence

<http://fiusm.com/2011/03/07/survey-finds-colleges-looking-at-students%E2%80%99-social-media-presence/>

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Students may need to monitor their Facebook pages a bit closer. According to a recent survey, more than 80 percent of college admissions officers consider social media presence when recruiting students.

While the Kaplan survey shows that the majority of universities use social media to recruit potential students, FIU is among the smaller percentage of schools that does not take students' Facebook pages under consideration for admission; however, they do use the social media sites as a way to recruit students.

"We're all on Facebook. If you search any of our officers on Facebook, you'll probably find them. However, FIU does not take social media into consideration when admitting students into the University," said Undergraduate Admissions Associate Director, Barry Taylor.

According to Taylor, the Florida Board of Government Regulations has certain components required for college admissions, social media is not one of them. Although the University does not use Facebook to screen for admissions, it does use the social media site for student outreach.

The Undergraduate Office of Admissions currently has a Facebook page available for all students to ask questions about the university, the admissions process and any other general concerns that may arise.

Though the University's Graduate Admissions Office does not use Facebook yet, it has noted that other colleges use it as a recruiting tool.

"We have not utilized social media yet, but I know our colleagues at the College of Business use Facebook as a recruiting tool. However, they do not use Facebook to investigate the students once they have applied to the college," said Graduate Admissions Associate Director, Allison McComb.

The Kaplan survey notes that Facebook is not a definite component for admission, but it is becoming something that universities are looking into. Allison Otis, a former Harvard University interviewer, suggests that social media can actually make an admissions officer prejudiced against a student without consciously realizing it.

"Students need a social life. Personally, I do have pictures of myself partying and dancing at clubs. If colleges turn away from my application because of my social life, then I wouldn't want to be admitted into their college anyway," said freshman, Kelly Mayorga.

Other students such as Juan Simth, share the same sentiments as Mayorga.

Simth believes that it is wrong for admission officers to investigate students on Facebook because college admission should be based academic records and application essays, not about what students do when they are not at school.

"Doing this is so wrong, that I don't even believe they do it," concluded Simth.

The Editor for StudentAdvisor.com, Dean Tsouvalas, recently wrote a blog post stating that there has been at least one known case in which an admissions officer has rejected a strong applicant because of the content of his or her social networking profile.

“I wish more students were able to see that whatever they post is up for everyone to see. I think it’s right for admission officers to look at Facebook or any other social network if they’re looking for further information about the student,” said Freshman Juan Valderrama.

While there are critics for this recruitment method, some students feel that whatever is posted on Facebook is in the public domain, and should contribute to a student’s college admission.

“If you put something on the Internet, it’s no longer personal. There is always ways to get into Facebooks that are on private. Personally, I don’t even curse on Facebook or put pictures of me drinking—even though I’m over 21—because I don’t know if a future employer will search me up,” said John Llombort, senior.

College admission offices are not the only services that are implementing social media sites into their recruitment process

“It should be known that a lot of employers search for further investigation on the applicants they’re considering. However, this tends to occur during the final hiring processes, when it’s almost a fact that the person will be chosen,” said Kyra Spence, assistant director at Career Services.

According to Spence, employers look to Facebook for patterns of behavior. Potential employers can look at posts and pictures to see whether a student displays responsible or irresponsible behavior.

A student’s references about past employers or other professional connections can also affect an employer’s decision.

“Negative comments about previous jobs would definitely turn employers away from the applicant. However, professional connections with different companies would turn them toward the applicant,” said Spence.

Whether college admission officers and employers consider Facebook for selection purposes or not, the University’s admission office advises students to maintain clean online profiles.

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