10 TIPS

to Help College Applicants Establish Their **Social Media Presence**

#1 Know the 3 Tenets of Social Media

You are never anonymous. Your posts will never disappear. Anyone in the world with an interest in finding everything you've ever posted can. These rules apply to all social media activities including Snapchat, Finsta, and social media accounts believed to be private or hidden by an alias.

#2 "Nothing to Hide" Is Not the Same as "Something to Show"

"I know colleges will be looking, so I've never posted anything that can embarrass me." We hear this from students all the time and always ask whether they're certain about this (see Tip #1) and then remind them an empty or neutral digital presence will not help their college admissions chances. If colleges will be looking, then give them something to see.

#3 Create Content for Your Intended Audiences

Personal and college-oriented social media activities do not mix. The content students should be sharing with colleges is very different than the content they are willing to share with their friends and peers. Different audiences demand different content.

#4 Create New Social Media Profiles Specifically for College

Social media is fun, so students need not worry about compromising their online activities with friends (but remember Tip #1). It is liberating for students to separate their social media activities with friends from the content colleges will want to see (see Tip #3). Think about using less popular teen platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter, or Facebook to build your college facing digital presence.

#5 Anchor the Social Media Accounts for College with the Email Address Used for College Applications

Create a Gmail account using a recognizable form of your name and this email prefix should also become your college social media user name (firstnamelastname@gmail.com = @firstnamelastname). This technique will lead colleges to discover the social media content students want them to see. This will help students increase their "Likelihood to Enroll" score by leveraging the algorithms measuring their digital activities (see Tip #8).

#6 Build a Digital Portfolio Designed to Showcase Your Strengths

This is the opportunity to take control of your digital narrative. Social media is a great place to showcase your character attributes—leadership, volunteer service, commitment to an activity, teamwork, resiliency. Students can also use social media to build portfolios showing colleges the depth of their interest in their intended course of study—graphic design, art history, architecture, fashion.

#7 Register on College Websites

Once your college list is assembled, visit the admissions webpage and find the "Request More Info" link. Some websites hide this link behind other links so keep looking. Register with the email you created in Tip #5. This enables enrollment management algorithms to track your digital engagement with that college's digital content. This measurable digital engagement will increase a student's likelihood to enroll score.

#8 Follow Student Social Media Ambassadors, Read Student Blogs, Follow Colleges and College Departments on Social Media

Use your college-specific social media accounts to actively engage with a college's digital community. Follow colleges from your LinkedIn account. Most colleges are very active on Twitter. Follow the main college account. Follow specific schools within the college. Follow professors who teach at those schools. Build a community. Show your interest.

#9 Only Follow, Comment, and Mention Colleges From Social Media Profiles Created or Curated For College

Students would not go to a college interview straight from the gym without first showering and changing their clothes. The same principle applies to social media. Students need to know that colleges see every mention of their name. Social media listening technology is in wide use. Posts such as "I got accepted to X College but will go to Y College if accepted there" will be seen by both X & Y College.

#10 Invite Colleges to Look at Your Curated Social Media Profiles by Including URLs Within Your Applications

Getting into a selective college is hard. Getting a large merit aid award is challenging. Use social media to stand out from other highly qualified applicants. When you embed your social media URL(s) within your college applications and invite reviewers to learn more about you, you are increasing the chances that they will and, if done right, will be delivering compelling and differentiating information directly to the reviewer. This is your opportunity to shine!

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