



Proposal for the Creation and Maintenance of Study Abroad Social Media Platforms: Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest

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Vanessa Costa

Department of Cultural and Global Engagement Intern

Overview

The rise of social media over the last decade has caused more and more businesses, organizations, schools, and nonprofits to turn to platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest to reach their audience. These platforms are particularly appealing to millennials, adults between the ages of 18-34, who rely heavily on social media for news, event announcements, and so on. In a recent study conducted by the IDG Research group, 50% of millennials used social media to find information. The majority of Quinnipiac University organizations and groups- academic or extracurricular- use some form of social media to disseminate important messages. With this in mind, it would be extremely useful for the QU Study Abroad program to implement a Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest platform for the following reasons:

Goals

1. Promote study abroad as a means of attaining a valuable international education
2. Connect with past, present, and future study abroad students at Quinnipiac
3. Keep current and future study abroad students updated on key deadlines and meetings
4. Create a network that allows for an exchange of ideas and experiences between study abroad students and the Department of Cultural and Global Engagement
5. Provide valuable resources where students can access helpful information for their study abroad experience before, during, and after they go

Specifications

During the Spring 2016 semester, the social media platforms will be managed by the Department of Cultural and Global Engagement intern. The accounts will be managed by a designated Global Student Ambassador each year afterwards. The designated GSA will be in charge of maintaining the accounts' posting schedule and creating new content as needed.

Operation

The three social media platforms; Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest, will be cross-promoted on each of the accounts and linked on the study abroad portal. An email

will also be created for students to submit photos or testimonials to be posted on these accounts. This will ensure that the GSA will not miss any of these messages since they will not get lost in the busy study abroad email account.

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Facebook

Purpose

The Facebook page will be used mainly to announce deadlines, events, and answer questions if they are submitted. It will also be used to spotlight study abroad alumni. This will help to promote the study abroad program and provide a student's perspective on their experience.

Operation

The Facebook page's posting times will mostly be determined by the timing of the events for the semester as well as the deadlines. As a rule of thumb, deadline reminders should occur on a weekly basis leading up to the deadline. The posts spotlighting a study abroad alumni should be posted once a month.

Content

I. Student Spotlight

Preference for the spotlight should be given to students who studied in uncommon locations. Many students are already aware of QU study abroad programs to locations like Barcelona, Florence, Australia, and so on. However, they are often unaware of the range of possible locations that are less common such as Norway, Thailand, India, or Croatia. This would be a great way to promote more programs and inspire students to step outside of their preconceived notions of the study abroad locations. The post will consist of an image from the student's time abroad, their name, year, and study abroad destination as well as a brief statement from the student about their experience in that country.

II. Events

Study abroad information sessions should be posted about multiple times. The first post should include a list of all of the info session dates, times, and location for the semester. On the day of each info session, a reminder of the date, time, and location for the session occurring on that day should be posted. Any other events hosted by or relating to the Department of Cultural and Global Engagement should follow a similar pattern. The event should be announced one to two weeks prior to the event and then another post the day of the event as a reminder.

Instagram

Purpose

The Instagram account will be used as a dynamic way to connect to students before, during, and after their study abroad experience. The account will utilize a combination of student submitted photos and sourced location photos. It will also be a vehicle to promote a photo contest for students while abroad. This platform acts as a way for study abroad students to engage with Quinnipiac while abroad as well as promoting the program through student images and captions.

Operation

I. Contests

A. #BobcatsAbroad Contest

1. This contest will be open to all students studying abroad during the semester.
2. Photos are to be submitted by students posting the picture to their instagram and using the hashtag “#BobcatsAbroad.
3. The picture must contain the Quinnipiac University name or logo in some way. This can include QU apparel, flags, or any other creative representation of QU.
4. The contest will be judged by the GSA’s or an administrator in the DCGE office.
5. At the end of the semester, the winner will be announced on instagram and notified via email.
6. The prize will be a \$25 gift card they can claim upon their return to QU.

B. Mini Contests

1. Throughout the semester, there will also be mini contests open to both alumni and students who are currently abroad. The rules will be similar to those above except that the winner will be announced at the end of the week and there will be specifications for whom the

contest is for (alumnis or current abroad students). These are meant to engage students as well as provide more content for this platform.

2. The prize for these will be a \$5 Dunkin Donuts giftcard.
3. Each contest will have a theme, such as:
 - a) Favorite Study Spot
 - b) Best Scenic Image
 - c) Favorite Moment Abroad
 - d) Favorite Trip
 - e) Reason for Going Abroad

II. Post Content

- A. Due to the cross-promotional nature of these platforms, the content from other platforms can also be utilized in this platform, including:
 1. Student Spotlights
 2. Events
 - a) Images from events can be used to show what the DCGE is doing or remind students of what event is happening that day
- B. Additional Content may include:
 1. Images of locations where Quinnipiac has programs available
 2. Inspiring Travel Quotes

III. Posting Schedule

- A. This platform should be updated bi-weekly at least, although it can be updated more frequently if there is a surplus of content available
- B. Content should be posted by a DCGE intern or GSA

Pinterest

Purpose

The Pinterest platform is an excellent way to combine a multitude of resources into one location that may not necessarily fit into the study abroad portal itself. For example, multiple resources on topics such as packing tips, trip planning, country information, and how to budget can be centered into “boards” for students to peruse. This is a valuable way to provide information to students in a simple way. It is also relatively low maintenance as it does not require constant posting.

Operation

The operation of the Pinterest platform is also relatively low maintenance as it does not require constant posting. The operation of the Pinterest page can be run by a current GSA or study abroad intern. It does not have a specific posting schedule so content can be added as needed. As a general rule of thumb, the account should be updated on a monthly basis to ensure that the resources are up to date and relevant. New boards can be added as needed but should be approved by an administrator first to ensure that is in line with the values of the Department of Cultural and Global Engagement.

I. Board Options

- A. QU Abroad
 - 1. Student Experiences from abroad
- B. Budgeting
- C. Packing
- D. Health & Safety
- E. Word's of Wisdom
- F. Documenting your time abroad
- G. Pre-departure
- H. When you arrive
- I. Coming home