

How Students Commonly Learn about Events – Research January and February 2017

Overview

We were interested in getting a feel for how students learned about events and activities on campus. We saw that similar approaches were being utilized to publicize most events but we didn't really know what approaches were the most effective. It was hoped that we would be able to identify which approaches worked better than others so we could advise clients of the design office where to best focus their efforts and resources. During January and February 2017, we identified relevant data in surveys conducted by Residential Living and Campus Activities, participated in student focus groups and received feedback from IT on the usage of the student activities calendar and through a poll conducted on the Residential Living Class of 20xx Facebook groups.

What we Learned

There is no magic bullet. Depending on their connections, students learn about events in a variety of ways. Facebook users learn about events on Facebook, students who are dialed in to Campus Activities or who work in the UC notice the banners and posters hung up in the facility and students who are contacted via email are more likely to state that they learn about events in email communication. We have included the results from the surveys and other feedback mechanisms below but will also include some take aways and possible next steps here.

- There has been a significant drop in the number of page views for the student activities calendar. Feedback from students indicates they don't know it exists either from wcu.edu or from mywcu.wcu.edu.
 - Next steps: The calendar is the 'low hanging fruit' for event promotion. It feeds Happenings and a vast majority of events are input to the calendar. We will create a shortcut url for the calendar on wcu.edu and begin promoting it as the place to go for a full listing of student events. We will also continue to work with IT to track page views for both the wcu.edu and mywcu.wcu.edu student event calendars.
- Digital signage seems to have no impact on students.
 - Next step: Consider slowing down how quickly the event slides cycle on digital signs. The slower cycle may make the individual slides more noticeable.
- In general, the EBI/SkyFactor survey results indicated that students are mildly satisfied with the way events are promoted on campus. Residents surveyed indicate that they are fairly satisfied with the events in the residence halls. When asked about the impact of student activities on their decision to enroll at WCU, students respond that they have a neutral impact.
 - Next steps: We can use the student satisfaction with event promotion as baseline data and seek to increase student satisfaction in the future.
- We began to touch on how students used social media to connect with campus and campus events in our second focus group. It will be important to learn more about this and build our social media capabilities as a division.
 - Next steps: The March 9th social media workshop is a positive first step. From there, we will continue to work with University Marketing to assess social media efforts, partner as appropriate and identify Student Affairs programs and events that align with University Marketing's priorities.

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- Guidebook, due to be rolled out during Orientation 2017, has the potential to boost our ability to push event notifications to students. The challenge will be to proactively identify the events with division prioritization that will be promoted and funneled through the Student Affairs programs channel of Guidebook.

Data

Spring 2016 – EBI/SkyFactor Survey of students who had attended a Campus Activities Event

How do you receive most of your information regarding campus activities?

35% email

26% posters/flyers

19% social media

15% word of mouth

How satisfied are you with the extent to which your college/university: Publicizes sponsored student activities? (1 – Not at all, 7 – extremely)

Mean: 4.7 (*mildly satisfied = 5*)

How satisfied are you with the extent to which your college/university: Promotes programs of interest to students? (1 – Not at all, 7 – extremely)

Mean: 4.9 (*mildly satisfied = 5*)

Prior to Enrollment – to what degree did the following impact your decision to attend this college/university: Types of student activities offered. (1 – Not at all, 7 – extremely)

Mean: 3.8 (*neutral = 4*)

Prior to Enrollment – to what degree did the following impact your decision to attend this college/university: Amount of student activities offered. (1 – Not at all, 7 – extremely)

Mean: 3.8 (*neutral = 4*)

Spring 2016 – EBI/SkyFactor Survey of Resident Students

How satisfied are you with programs/activities sponsored by your hall/apt. building regarding: Athletic/recreational activities? (1-very dissatisfied, 7-very satisfied)

Mean: 5.3 (*mildly satisfied = 5*)

How satisfied are you with programs/activities sponsored by your hall/apt. building regarding: Variety of programs? (1-very dissatisfied, 7-very satisfied)

Mean: 5.5 (*mildly satisfied = 5*)

How satisfied are you with programs/activities sponsored by your hall/apt. building regarding: Quality of programs? (1-very dissatisfied, 7-very satisfied)

Mean: 5.5 (*mildly satisfied = 5*)

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January 2017 Facebook Poll of Residential Living Class of 20xx Facebook Groups

Where do you find out about campus events?

Facebook overwhelmingly the top response; email a distant second for all but juniors; posters registered third (second for juniors with WCU calendar coming in third)

WCU calendar appeared on first year, sophomore and junior groups as a write in with low single digit responses (1, 1 and 3 respectively for each group).

Student Activities Calendar – Usage data from IT December 2016

December 16, 2014 – December 18, 2015: 19,609 page views 16,783 unique page views

December 19, 2015 – December 20, 2016: 7,112 page views 6,037 unique page views

Year to year decline of 64%

Student Focus Groups February 2017

Feedback is mixed regarding print and digital marketing. Students with a closer relationship to the UC or Campus Activities are more aware of the banners, a-frames and large posters posted near and in the UC building. When asked about how they interact with social media and the WCU website, specifically the student event calendar, students are social media natives with Instagram being their number one go to platform with Snapchat and Twitter tied for second and Facebook coming in third. Students' habits are mixed in terms of following official WCU social media groups. Some mentioned following ICA and Campus Activities but these were also students with close ties to Campus Activities and the UC. Students didn't realize there is a student events calendar on the WCU website. They also didn't realize they could access a similar events calendar via myWCU.