**Discussion on Facebook as Part of the Communications Strategy**

**U of L Faculty of Education**

**Introduction**

This brief report presented to the Communications Technology in Teaching and Learning Committee serves to open up preliminary discussion about establishing a Facebook page for the U of L Faculty of Education.

*(the purpose of the committee is to assist and advise the Faculty towards achieving its goal of preparing students who are competent, confident and discriminating in the use of appropriate communications technology in teaching and learning)*

Craig had requested that I prepare a Facebook report for CTiTL last fall. In January 2013, Marlo, Rick and Ken agree that I should continue to prepare a report as well.

At this time, Tanya Jacobson-Gundlock, U of L Communications Director is spearheading a plan to centralize social media. At present there are over 50 Facebook pages with the U of L logo. There are plans to develop a **U of L social media policy by Fall 2013**.

**Research for this report includes:**

* correspondence with Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University Facebook manager (Melissa Hudson, Communications Assistant – with consent of Kris Magnusson, Dean, Faculty of Education SFU)
* meetings with key Facebook users for areas across campus (Maureen Schwartz, Brett Humphreys, Jaimie Morasch of Alumni Relations; Kelly Morris of Faculty of Fine Arts; Katie Young of Health Sciences, Tanya Jacobson-Gundlock of Advancement, and Michael Warf, IT Manager)
* meetings with Facebook managers of school districts (Brad Young of Lethbridge School District #51 and Rose-Marie Nyberg of Holy Spirit Roman Catholic School Division – with consent of superintendent, Chris Smeaton) Note: it was particularly interesting meeting with Brad Young as his previous job was as public affairs officer for the Canadian military with a focus on social media, **policy is the first thing that needs to be established before engaging in institutional social media**
* attending a Chamber of Commerce Social Media workshop this month called, “Breakfast and Learn: The Power of Email & Social Media Marketing” (Guy Steeves, Regional Development for B.C. and Alberta)
* social media information gathered from regular bi-monthly meetings/workshops/webinars with U of L Advancement team, and cross-campus communicators group
* readings that include an excerpt from ”The Use of Facebook as a Marketing Tool by Private Institutions in Singapore” from the International Journal of Technology and Educational Marketing; Defining appropriate professional behavior for faculty and university students on social networking websites <http://0-www.jstor.org.darius.uleth.ca/stable/41343610?&Search=yes&searchText=facebook&searchText=educational&searchText=institution&list=hide&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoAdvancedSearch%3Fq0%3Dfacebook%2Band%2Beducational%2Binstitution%26f0%3Dall%26c1%3DAND%26q1%3D%26f1%3Dall%26acc%3Don%26wc%3Don%26fc%3Doff%26Search%3DSearch%26sd%3D%26ed%3D%26la%3D%26pt%3D%26isbn%3D&prevSearch=&item=9&ttl=358&returnArticleService=showFullText>); “Web 2.0 Social Networks: The Role of Trust” Sonya Grabner-Krauter from the Journal of Business Ethics <http://0-www.jstor.org.darius.uleth.ca/stable/40863684?&Search=yes&searchText=networking&searchText=marketing&searchText=social&searchText=educational&searchText=institution&list=hide&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3D%2528social%2Bnetworking%2BAND%2Beducational%2Binstitution%2Bmarketing%2529%26Search%3DSearch%26gw%3Djtx%26prq%3D%2528social%2Bmedia%2BAND%2Beducational%2Binstitution%2Bmarketing%2529%26hp%3D25%26acc%3Don%26aori%3Da%26wc%3Don%26fc%3Doff&prevSearch=&item=16&ttl=2405&returnArticleService=showFullText>
* online research includes: “Social Media in Higher Education: The Top 10 U.S. Colleges, <http://www.askingsmarterquestions.com/social-media-in-higher-education-the-top-10-u-s-colleges/>; Williams College, <https://www.facebook.com/williamscollege>; Amherst College, <https://www.facebook.com/amherstcollege>; York University Faculty of Education, <https://www.facebook.com/YorkUeducation>; University of Auckland Faculty of Education, <https://www.facebook.com/AklUniEducation>; UBC Faculty of Education, <https://www.facebook.com/UBCFacultyofEducation>; The National Association for the Education of Young Children <https://www.facebook.com/NAEYC>; ASCD Learn Teach Lead <https://www.facebook.com/ascd.org>; Edutopia <https://www.facebook.com/edutopia>; <http://www.emergingedtech.com>

<http://www.centerdigitaled.com>

**Note: take a look at the Williams and Amherst Facebook pages…**

**Williams has a great friendly voice with photos and video, Amherst has an approachable educational component to it.**

* on-going discussions with Marlo Steed and Ken Heidebrecht
* established my own Facebook page for research purposes

**Advantages and Overall Evaluation of Being on Facebook**

Out of all our social media, Facebook drives the most traffic to the Faculty's website. (We definitely have more conversations through Twitter, though.)

It allows future and current students to contact us in a way that is perhaps easier and more timely than traditional outlets (eg. phone, email, in person, etc.).

Facebook also provides an easy, cost-effective way to advertise events and programs.

*~ Melissa Hudson, Communications Assistant, Simon Fraser University Faculty of Education* [*https://www.facebook.com/SFUFoE*](https://www.facebook.com/SFUFoE)

U of L Alumni Relations has been on Facebook for four years undergoing a revamp about a year and a half ago. One of the key advantages to Facebook is having a direct connection to communicate announcements, events, contests, alumni congratulations, upcoming lectures, etc. You have to have a Facebook presence now. Social media is the way we are communicating now.

*~ Maureen Schwartz, Director of Alumni Relations*

U of L Alumni Relations embarked upon a Social Media Audit with IT manager, Michael Warf and found that Alumni Relations was absent from the Social Media discussion that existed. For example: there were different U of L Alumni groups that had formed communities on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Discussions about U of L Alumni matters were happening and the U of L Alumni Relations department wasn’t joining in. Alumni Relations is on Facebook, and now part of the conversation.

*~ Brett Humphreys, Social Media for Alumni Relations*

The combination of FACEBOOK (blogging, posts, events) and email are the best forms of getting the message across in social media.

*~ Guy Steeves, Constant Contact, Regional Development for B.C. and Alberta (presenter of the Chamber of Commerce workshop, “Breakfast and Learn: The Power of Email and Social Media Marketing”, February, 2012)*

News fed through social media has the opportunity to become viral because it can be ‘liked’ and re-posted, making your audience potentially wider (however, it can have a negative effect because of this as well)

Social media connects you to an audience that is used to receiving information, or communicating in this manner. Social media can get information out in a way that this generation prefers and not the way that you prefer.

*~ Brad Young, Communications Officer, Lethbridge School District 51*

Use as communication tool to invite, to have community outreach. Community and staff outreach is main purpose. Used as output primarily. Not so much back and forth communication. Not an option for exchange…only Like, not Comment.

Prevents negative from happening.

*~ Rose-Marie Nyberg, Executive Assistant to Superintendent Holy Spirit Roman Catholic School Division, Chris Smeaton*

**Risks and Challenges of Being on Facebook**

I wouldn't necessarily call these "risks" so much as "cons" or "things to consider".

Updating the page with our own internal events and news is easy, but we find it's becoming increasingly important to spend a little time curating additional content; however, this can quickly go by the wayside when other more pressing tasks come up. And nothing is worse than a stagnant, boring Facebook page. If there isn't a dedicated person with dedicated time to keep on top of a Facebook page especially when followers are starting conversations or contacting the Faculty through it, it can become more "risky".

*~ Melissa Hudson, Communications Assistant, Simon Fraser University Faculty of Education* [*https://www.facebook.com/SFUFoE*](https://www.facebook.com/SFUFoE)

Hard to monitor 24/7 on Facebook especially a business or school.

Maximum 20 minutes per week on Facebook on average.

Look at it every morning, and before going home.

Notification of every Facebook message directly to her, and she addresses them.

Twitter: I am constantly looking at Chris Smeaton’s Twitter account: 20 minutes a day of surveillance and doing work…Twitter is way busier than Facebook.

There isn’t anything posted that hasn’t been approved by FOIP.

No children photos or videos on Facebook.

*~ Rose-Marie Nyberg, Executive Assistant to Superintendent Holy Spirit Roman Catholic School Division, Chris Smeaton*

I think people are afraid of social media because what if I say the wrong thing. But a lot of it just comes down to common sense. You don’t need to know everything and don’t have to be able to recite the brand guidelines or Mike’s pillars. You have to be knowledgeable about them. It’s a simple conversation. It’s like having a conversation on the street and someone asks about ‘who should I talk to in the Faculty of Education about this?’. I’ll get back to you and find out. Then, search out a resource. A lot of people are afraid “I’m going to say the wrong thing”. Well just think about a basic conversation. It’s in a social space but don’t say anything there that you wouldn’t say to a regular person you meet. The risk is letting it drop.

*~ Trevor Kenney, Editor U of L Legend, Social Media (at the time of interview in summer of 2012, Advancement has now been restructured)*

**Human Resources and Process**

At moment, I am the only one who updates our Facebook page, although Lori McNulty, the Communications Manager helps with curating outside content. We also try to encourage program areas to send us posts related to their areas. We are also in the midst of setting up a Hootsuite account to help streamline updating our social media ... being able to set up future posts will be a big time saver.

*~ Melissa Hudson, Communications Assistant, Simon Fraser University Faculty of Education* [*https://www.facebook.com/SFUFoE*](https://www.facebook.com/SFUFoE)

Chris Smeaton puts up a weekly blog on his Twitter and I send it to Twitter and Facebook. We use this method for invitations, newsletter of employment opportunities within Holy Spirit. Policy. On the last Wednesday of every month is a public board meeting: I paste the Board Agenda Package link from website to Facebook to show summary of all minutes. Our reach: Teachers, principals, community members. We have 14,152 Friends of Fans with a weekly total of Likes between 95 to 105.

*~ Rose-Marie Nyberg, Executive Assistant to Superintendent Holy Spirit Roman Catholic School Division, Chris Smeaton*

I Twitter out a 140 character story link. Expand it more on Facebook. Both forms of social media lead to the news centre, the website (the news hub). This is the CNN and BBC social media process.

*~ Brad Young, Communications Officer for Lethbridge School District 51*

We are going to create a Faculty Facebook page. We feel it will be better to attend our own page rather than being embedded in the University Facebook. There are two administrators proposed for Faculty of Health Sciences.

*~ Katie Young, Recruitment and Communications U of L Faculty of Health Sciences*

I usually start my day with a blog, I monitor Twitter, see the traffic on Twitter and see if the University is mentioned in the news on Twitter.” He goes to Facebook. Figures out what stories from Social Media may need to be integrated into the web homepage, and UNews. One of the goals of U of L Social Media is to show the vibrant community on campus. That is what Student Services and Athletics are trying to work towards. Through Social Media, he believes more people can be encouraged to attend the games, lectures, etc. A sense of Mike’s ‘destination Lethbridge’ can be achieved through Social Media.

*~ Trevor Kenney, editor Legend, Social Media, U of L Department of Public Affairs and Government Relations*

**Conclusion**

I personally believe Facebook is an essential communications tool at this time and would serve to benefit the Faculty of Education communications strategy. We continue to produce material in print (Legacy) and video formats (A Public Education and various in-house productions) that can be uploaded to Facebook. It appears Facebook would work effectively in a transmedia communciations strategy alongside our traditional mediums of print, website, video/television, internal monitors, and public relations.

Facebook for the Faculty of Education could:

* shape an alumni community, announce information to prospective undergrad (parents of prospectives) and grad students
* announce upcoming events and lectures, or congratulate Faculty members, students and alumni
* bolster other communications tools such as the website and Legacy Magazine
* effectively compliment other forms of communication that we currently use
* educate (examples of educational Facebook pages below)

The National Association for the Education of Young Children <https://www.facebook.com/NAEYC>; ASCD Learn Teach Lead <https://www.facebook.com/ascd.org>; Edutopia <https://www.facebook.com/edutopia>; http://www.emergingedtech.com

A concern, however, is the time commitment (or reallocation of time commitment) and content management – this needs some further thought and discussion. Marlo has mentioned (in brainstorming session) perhaps ‘pilot for a year’ with regards to Facebook. Communications Director Tanya Jacobson-Gundlock would like us to wait on Facebook until the U of L social media policy and centralization plan is established – Fall 2013.

Prepared by Darcy Novakowski, Faculty of Education Communications Officer

CTiTLC presentation on February 25, 2013