

# Your Guide to Winning Higher Ed Social Media Engagement







A modern office interior featuring a long, dark conference table with several beige chairs. The room has large windows on the right side, offering a view of a landscape. The ceiling is high with exposed ductwork and a long light fixture. The floor is covered in a grey carpet.


**“ We need more engagement! ”**



A modern office interior with a long conference table, chairs, and large windows overlooking a cityscape. The room features a high ceiling with exposed ductwork and a large window on the right side. The text "How can we get more shares?" is overlaid in the center.


“How can we get more shares?”



A modern office interior with a long conference table, chairs, and large windows. The room is bright and spacious, with a high ceiling and large windows on the right side. A long conference table is in the center, surrounded by chairs. A large window on the right side provides a view of the outdoors. The text "Why aren't our posts getting likes?" is overlaid on the image in white, with orange quotation marks.

“ Why aren't our posts getting likes? ”



A modern office interior with a long conference table, chairs, and large windows overlooking a landscape. The room features a high ceiling with exposed ductwork and a large window on the right side. The text "How can we make our posts go viral?" is overlaid in the center.

“How can we make our posts go viral?”













745

Likes

45+

Shares

18

Comments

405k+

Page Likes









7,200

Likes

600+

Shares

250+

Comments

206k+

Page Likes





Was it the time of day?





A single image vs. multiple?





What was the difference?











## Methodology

340

Schools

600k

Social Posts



## Instagram Engagement Rates

**4.1%**

Higher Ed

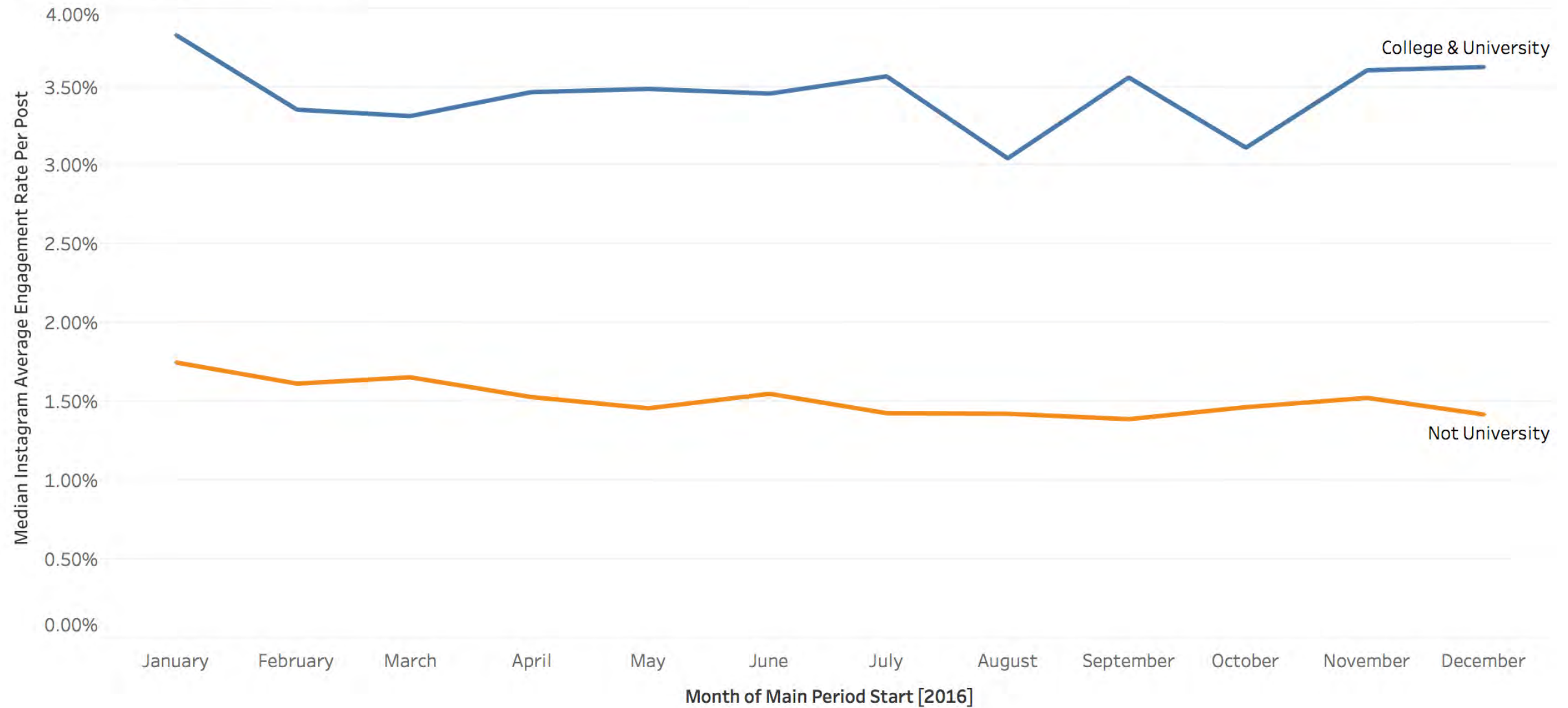
**1.0%**

Brands Overall



# 2017 Update: Instagram Engagement

Overall, Engagement Rate





A photograph of a campus path with wooden benches and trees in autumn, overlaid with a semi-transparent dark grey rectangle. The path is covered in fallen leaves, and the trees in the background have some autumn-colored foliage. The text "Seasons on Campus" is centered in white.

# Seasons on Campus



# Snow Daze



**lewisandclarkcollege**  
Lewis & Clark College

**lewisandclarkcollege** Think campus is pretty in the summer? Get a look at L&C now ❄️🌲❄️

Thanks to [@genevalaurel](#) for this night time view of the Manor House and reflecting pool literally covered in snow.

**lewisandclarkcollege** [#pdxsnow](#)  
[#lcphotostream](#) [#ourcampusdaily](#)



[@jeremiahdbarba](#)





lifeatusm

University School of Milwaukee

lifeatusm Campus is always a magical place, but the magic is raised to a new level when it becomes a winter wonderland. Thanks to [@lauriebw](#) for sharing with us! [#Winter](#) [#Tower](#) [#Milwaukee](#) [#MKE](#) [#Wisconsin](#) [#USMK12](#) [#LifeAtUSM](#) [#Snow](#)



@jeremiahdbarba



# Recognizable Vistas



uofwa

University of Washington

uofwa Winter scenes of Rainier Vista. #UW  
#UniversityOfWashington



@jeremiahdbarba



# Seasonal Memories



**wustl\_official**

Washington University in St. Louis

**wustl\_official** Early spring blossoms continue to make themselves known all over the [#WashU](#) campus. Photo courtesy of [@jamiekymn](#) 🌸🌸



[@jeremiahdbarba](#)



A photograph of two young women walking on a grassy campus lawn. The woman on the left is wearing a maroon short-sleeved shirt, dark shorts, glasses, and has her hair in a bun. She is holding a smartphone. The woman on the right is wearing a white t-shirt with 'KENTUCKY WILDCAT Athletic Dept' and a large 'UK' logo, and dark jeans. She is smiling and holding a blue and white patterned bag. In the background, other people are walking, and a building is visible. The text 'Small Changes Big Improvements' is overlaid in the center.

# Small Changes Big Improvements







In a competitive  
landscape of 8 schools...

2nd

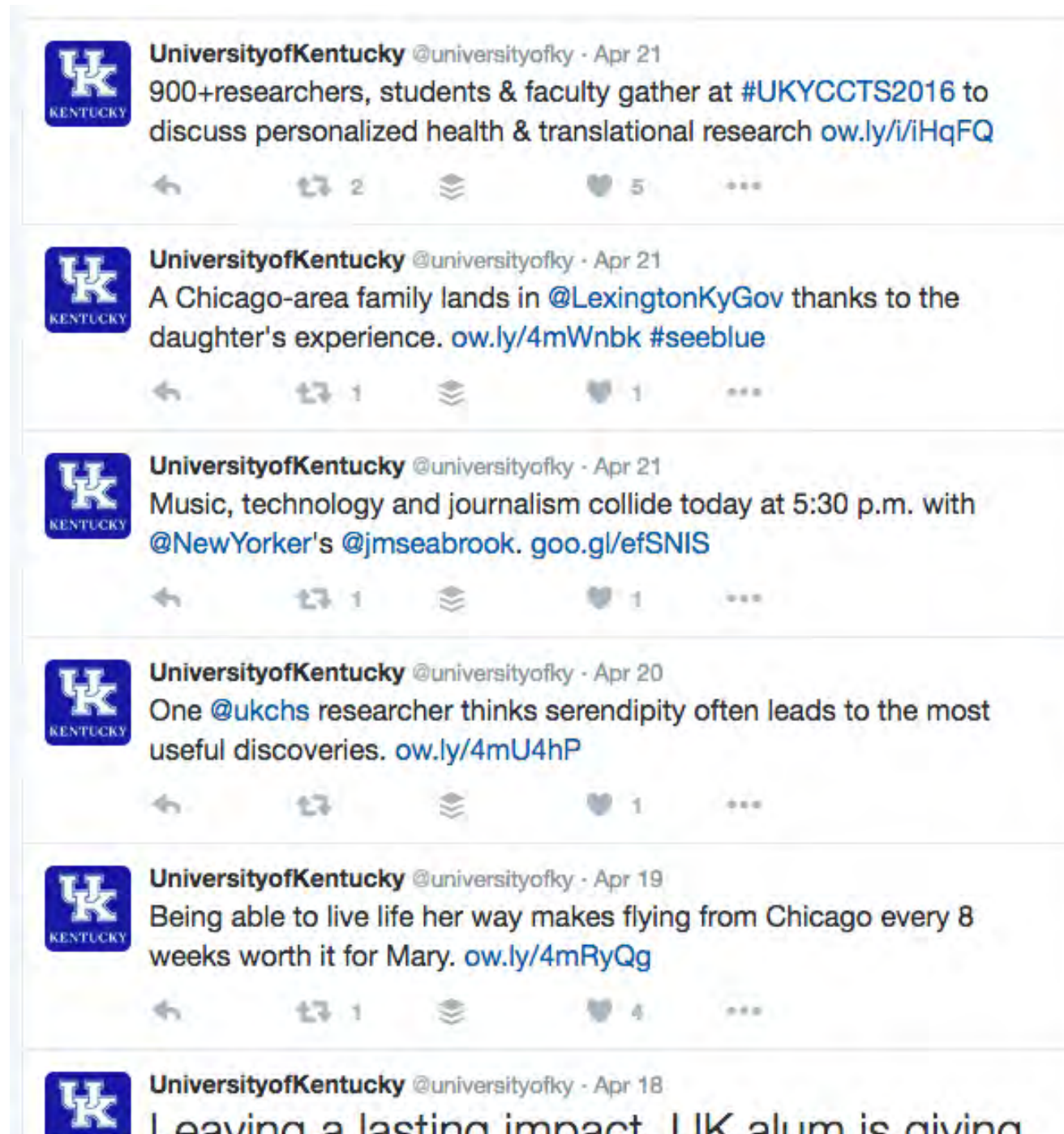
largest following

7th

in engagement



# We can do better.





# We can do better.





Use the image, Luke.





Use the image, Luke.





Use the image, Luke.



University of Kentucky  
@universityofky

Experience the fantastical at [@ArtMuseumatUK](https://www.artmuseumatuk.edu/Elm830078lo).  
[ow.ly/Elm830078lo](https://www.artmuseumatuk.edu/Elm830078lo)

RETWEETS  
4

LIKES  
6



2:04 PM - 11 May 2016



@jeremiahdbarba







A photograph of two young women walking outdoors on a grassy area. The woman on the left is wearing a red short-sleeved shirt, dark shorts, glasses, and has her hair in a bun. She is holding a red phone case. The woman on the right is wearing a white t-shirt with 'KENTUCKY WILDCAT Athletic Dept' and a large 'UK' logo, dark jeans, and is smiling. In the background, there are other people and a building. The text 'More images & videos with posts' is overlaid in white at the bottom.

More images & videos with posts



A background image showing two young women walking towards the camera on a grassy area. The woman on the left is wearing a red short-sleeved shirt, dark shorts, glasses, and has her hair in a bun. The woman on the right is wearing a white t-shirt with 'KENTUCKY WILDCAT Athletic Dept' and a large 'UK' logo, dark jeans, and is smiling. Other people are blurred in the background.

More images & videos with posts  
Don't hide the content



A background image of two young women walking outdoors. The woman on the left is wearing a red short-sleeved shirt, black shorts, glasses, and has her hair in a bun. The woman on the right is wearing a white t-shirt with 'KENTUCKY WILDCAT' and a large 'UK' logo, dark pants, and is smiling. They are walking on a grassy area with a building in the background.


More images & videos with posts  
Don't hide the content  
More engagement with students



A background image of two young women walking on a grassy campus path. The woman on the left is wearing a maroon short-sleeved shirt, black shorts, glasses, and has her hair in a bun. The woman on the right is wearing a white t-shirt with 'KENTUCKY WILDCATS Athletic Dept' printed on it, dark pants, and is smiling. Other students are blurred in the background.


More images & videos with posts  
Don't hide the content  
More engagement with students  
More humor and authenticity



The background image shows two young women walking towards the camera on a grassy area. The woman on the left is wearing a maroon short-sleeved shirt, black shorts, and glasses, and is holding a red smartphone. The woman on the right is wearing a white t-shirt with 'KENTUCKY' and a blue 'K' logo, and dark pants. They are both smiling. The text is overlaid in white on a semi-transparent dark background.

More images & videos with posts  
Don't hide the content  
More engagement with students  
More humor and authenticity  
Content is for them, not us



A background image of two young women walking outdoors on a grassy area. The woman on the left is wearing a maroon t-shirt and glasses, smiling. The woman on the right is wearing a white t-shirt with 'KENTUCKY' and 'Athletic Dept' printed on it, also smiling. The text is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

More images & videos with posts  
Don't hide the content  
More engagement with students  
More humor and authenticity  
Content is for them, not us  
Take advantage of real world  
(or internet) events





**UniversityofKentucky** @universityofky · Apr 21

900+researchers, students & faculty gather at #UKYCCTS2016 to discuss personalized health & translational research [ow.ly/i/iHqFQ](https://ow.ly/i/iHqFQ)

← ↻ 2 📌 ❤️ 5 ⋮



**UniversityofKentucky** @universityofky · Apr 21

A Chicago-area family lands in @LexingtonKyGov thanks to the daughter's experience. [ow.ly/4mWnbk](https://ow.ly/4mWnbk) #seeblue

← ↻ 1 📌 ❤️ 1 ⋮



**UniversityofKentucky** @universityofky · Apr 21

Music, technology and journalism collide today at 5:30 p.m. with @NewYorker's @jmseabrook. [goo.gl/efSNIS](https://goo.gl/efSNIS)

← ↻ 1 📌 ❤️ 1 ⋮



**UniversityofKentucky** @universityofky · Apr 20

One @ukchs researcher thinks serendipity often leads to the most useful discoveries. [ow.ly/4mU4hP](https://ow.ly/4mU4hP)

← ↻ 📌 ❤️ 1 ⋮



**UniversityofKentucky** @universityofky · Apr 19

Being able to live life her way makes flying from Chicago every 8 weeks worth it for Mary. [ow.ly/4mRyQg](https://ow.ly/4mRyQg)

← ↻ 1 📌 ❤️ 4 ⋮



**UniversityofKentucky** @universityofky · Apr 18

Leaving a lasting impact, UK alum is giving \$7M to @UKEngineering to transform biomedical engineering in KY



**UniversityofKentucky** @universityofky · Apr 18

#MotivationMonday [ow.ly/i/iAQTE](https://ow.ly/i/iAQTE)

← ↻ 3 📌 ❤️ 3 ⋮



**UniversityofKentucky** @universityofky · Apr 15

Take a trip with @UKTheatre down the rabbit hole. [ow.ly/4mJIAB](https://ow.ly/4mJIAB) @UKFineArts

← ↻ 1 📌 ❤️ 4 ⋮



**UniversityofKentucky** @universityofky · Apr 15

Thanks @RepThomasMassie for interest, support of scientific research. Great meeting @scicoalition w/ leading research universities. #uk4ky

← ↻ 3 📌 ❤️ 11 ⋮



**UniversityofKentucky** @universityofky · Apr 14

Can information technology help patients get better and stay healthy? @UK\_HealthCare says yes. Here's how: [ow.ly/10FnYf](https://ow.ly/10FnYf)

← ↻ 2 📌 ❤️ 3 ⋮



**UniversityofKentucky** @universityofky · Apr 13

Scholarship, service, sisterhood...the tenets of Theta Nu Xi — UK's first multicultural sorority. #seeblue [ow.ly/10CA9l](https://ow.ly/10CA9l)

← ↻ 5 📌 ❤️ 10 ⋮



@jeremiahdbarba





TWEETS 22.6K FOLLOWING 1,385 FOLLOWERS 77.5K LIKES 4,131 LISTS 1

Follow

UniversityofKentucky

@universityofky

The university for Kentucky. #seeblue

Lexington, Kentucky

uky.edu

Joined April 2009

2,307 Photos and videos



Tweets Tweets & replies Media

Pinned Tweet



UniversityofKentucky @universityofky · Feb 26

\$1,785,286.96 FOR THE KIDS!!!!!! 954 Wildcats. 24 hours. Countless dance moves. #FTK #DB17 #DBdontgettired #seeblue



New to Twitter?

Sign up now to get your own personalized timeline!

Sign up

You may also like · Refresh



Kentucky Athletics @UKAthletics



Eli Capilouto @UKYpres



Kentucky Football @UKFootball



UK Alumni @kentuckyalumni



John Calipari @UKCoachCalipari

Worldwide Trends

#RedNoseDay

46.6K Tweets





University of Kentucky  
@universityofky

TWEETS  
22.6K

FOLLOWING  
1,385

FOLLOWERS  
77.5K

LIKES  
4,131

LISTS  
1

Follow



City of Lexington Ky

3 61 256



University of Kentucky @universityofky · Mar 21

#BBN, you've got another team to root for this March! Three Wildcats are competing in the academic arena on ESPN2!!  
#MarchMadness 🏀 #seeblue 😡



Bracket Genius

8 31



University of Kentucky @universityofky

Of course Kentucky  
#BBN! 🤔 🐮 #NBA



Katie Beth  
@thekatiebeth

[University of Kentucky]

TWEETS  
6,907

FOLLOWING  
451

FOLLOWERS  
506



Katie Beth @thekatiebeth  
#bigmoonation @universityofky



# Instagram @Miles\_CCI



universityofky

William T. Young Library

1,885 likes

4w

universityofky Ruff day? Bet this pic of @miles\_cci will make you smile. 💙💙💙 #seeblue



@jeremiahdbarba



After 3 months of implementing  
these changes...

**344%**

improvement in  
engagement rate per post

**178 vs. 38**

engagements per post

**50% & 176%**

Growth for Texas A&M and IU, respectively



A photograph of a diverse group of people gathered outdoors, likely at a community event or festival. The scene is set during the "golden hour" of sunset, with warm, low light creating a soft, hazy atmosphere. In the foreground, a man with long dreadlocks is seen in profile, looking towards the right. Next to him, a woman with long blonde hair is also looking in the same direction. In the background, many other people are visible, some standing and talking, others walking. The setting appears to be a paved area near a body of water, with trees and foliage visible in the distance. The overall mood is one of community and celebration.

# Celebrating Community



# Students Doing Big Things



Haverford College

Feb 21 2017 6:16 PM UTC



Link

Excited to announce that Haverford College has been named one of the top Fulbright producers again this year! We currently have four Fords abroad on student awards in 2016/2017, and are one of only four undergrad liberal arts colleges with a 40 percent or higher success rate in applications!

<http://hav.to/26a>

Haverford College Named Top Fulbright Producer | Haverford College 

Four Fords from the Class of 2016 earned 2016/2017 Fulbright Student Awards.



 View on Facebook



@jeremiahdbarba



# Alumni Doing Big Things



stmarysca

796 likes

4w

stmarysca Mahershala Ali from SMC Class of 1996 has won an Oscar today! [#omgsmc](#) [#oscars](#)



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# Best Place to Be



miamiuniversity  
Oxford, Ohio

5,556 likes

14w

miamiuniversity Oxford, OH once again ranked as the best college town in the nation in a study conducted by WalletHub and cited by Forbes! [#LoveandHonor](#) [#MiamiOH](#) [#OxfordOH](#) [#college](#) [#collegetown](#) [#Publiclv](#)



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# School Milestones



Montana State University  
Montana State University

1,805 likes

5w

montanastateuniversity Happy 124th  
Birthday to us! [#MontanaState](#)



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# Traditions



setonhall  
Seton Hall University

1,379 likes

10w

setonhall Friday the 13th... You definitely don't want to step on the seal today! 🙄



@jeremiahdbarba



# Traditions



**pomonacollege**  
Mountain High

387 likes

3w

**pomonacollege** Today is the annual Ski-Beach day! Students woke up early this morning to hit the slopes!



@jeremiahdbarba








A large crowd of people is gathered outdoors, likely at a beach or festival, during the golden hour of sunset. The scene is filled with people of various ages and ethnicities, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. The lighting is warm and soft, creating a relaxed and social atmosphere. The text "Focus on unique experiences" is overlaid in the center of the image.


**Focus on unique experiences**



A large crowd of people is gathered outdoors, likely at a beach or festival, during the golden hour of sunset. The scene is filled with people of various ages and ethnicities, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. The background shows a body of water and a hazy sky. The overall mood is relaxed and social.

**Focus on unique experiences**  
**Acknowledge success**



A photograph of a group of people at a social gathering, possibly a festival or event, with a warm, golden-hour lighting. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark layer containing white text. The text is arranged in three lines, centered horizontally. The first line reads 'Focus on unique experiences', the second line reads 'Acknowledge success', and the third line reads 'Maintain connections with alumni'.

**Focus on unique experiences**  
**Acknowledge success**  
**Maintain connections with alumni**



A photograph of three female graduates in black gowns and caps, sitting on a stone ledge. They are all holding bottles of champagne and spraying it into the air. The scene is filled with white confetti. In the background, a large, modern university building with a grid-like facade is visible. The overall mood is celebratory and joyful.

Be Real. Be Funny.



# Why no personality?





# Why no personality?





A man with light brown, wavy hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and red tie, is looking down with a serious expression. The background is a solid dark blue.

**STRATEGY**



A man with light brown, wavy hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and red tie, is looking down with a serious expression. The background is a solid dark blue.

**STRATEGY**



I'd give up my  
parking spot for you

To:

From:



fiuinstagram

2,126 likes

5w

fiuinstagram When you know it's real.  
Happy [#ValentinesDay](#), Panthers! 💙💛  
Congratulations to our Valentine's Day  
giveaway winner, [@albitaaa](#)!



@jeremiahdbarba





**Evangel University**

@EvangelUniv



Public safety will let us know as soon as they can. Hang tight. Eat snacks. Netflix (but no chill).

RETWEETS

36

LIKES

85



10:26 PM - 19 Jan 2016



@jeremiahdbarba



# Well played, Butler.



**Avery Woodson** @\_Subzzer0 · Oct 7

Is it just me or does Butler have the biggest squirrels in America?



18



**Butler University** ✓


@butleru

@\_Subzzer0 probably because they drink Muscle Milk



@jeremiahdbarba



A man with dark, curly hair, wearing a light-colored jacket, is shown from the chest up. He is looking back over his right shoulder with a serious, slightly worried expression. The background is a wall with vertical wood paneling. The lighting is somewhat dim, creating a moody atmosphere.

Baby steps  
to the hall.



**I'M NOT ALWAYS  
TRENDING...**

**WAIT, ACTUALLY,  
YES I AM.**




Keep an eye on  
what's #trending





UNC-Chapel Hill   
@UNC

\*Channeling our inner [@dog\\_rates](#)\*

This is Tucker. He has a thirst for knowledge & knows every day is a [#GDTBATH](#). 12/10 ( via [@plain\\_jane](#))



@jeremiahdbarba



When someone says they don't eat  
crawfish



what in tarnation



**UL Lafayette**  @ULLafayette · Jan 18  
The Ragin' Cajun Tarnation Doge, y'all.  
[pic.twitter.com/qqNE3zirU2](https://pic.twitter.com/qqNE3zirU2)  
– at University of Louisiana at Lafayette

 @jeremiahdbarba



# Start close to home.



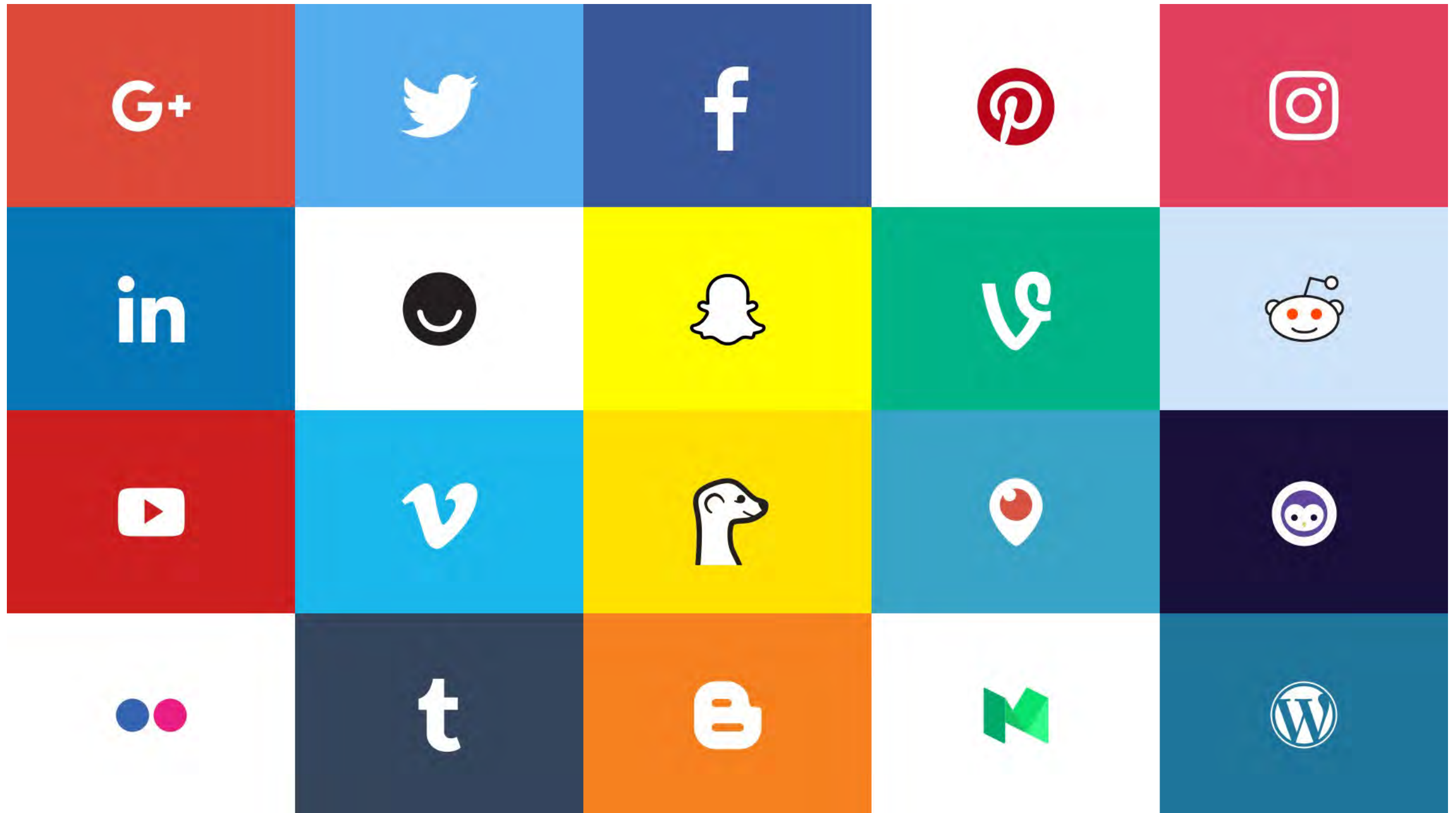
**EU** Evangel University  
@EvangelUniv

When the professor is about to change the PowerPoint slide and you're not finished taking notes #FridayFunny #EULife

 @jeremiahdbarba



# Know Your Medium





# Small School Big Engagement





#17

University  
*of* Portland



4,000 students





**22,000+**

Facebook Likes

**5,500+**

Twitter Followers

**9,000+**

Instagram Followers





uportland

3,885 views

6w

uportland Twila wishes you a very happy #nationalpizzaday. 🍕🍕🍕

joelbarrett13 @ezstrt @shame\_us

singmelovely @derubino1985 it's our girl! Well, your girl.

annabanazz @erinedonovan TWILA❤️

charlee49 @ratchmeifyoucan

morganmc92 Haha! Twila is the best! And Austen dancing in the background! I miss being a student worker in the Commons!

jcecilio22 🙌

shame\_us #twila rocks!! Miss her so much...

caranalagan 💜

keeeeeeels\_ Oh my goodness, this is too cute! 💜

alyssa\_sc @coltycolt @samigirlhi TWILA!!



Add a comment...

...





uportland

1,178 likes

5w

**uportland** Since Twila almost broke the UP internet last week, we thought you would all enjoy this Snapchat picture as well. Wish Twila a Happy Valentine's Day or tag your Valentine below. ❤️

**colindorwart** 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

**singmelovely** Happy Valentine's Day, Twila, you wonderful woman!!!

**sierra\_savage\_** ❤️❤️❤️

**swimmergrl15** Happy vday Heartbreaker!

**adria.aaa** ❤️❤️❤️



Add a comment...

...





# #39

SAINT  
MARY'S  
COLLEGE  
*of* CALIFORNIA

4,250 students





**19,000+**

Facebook Likes

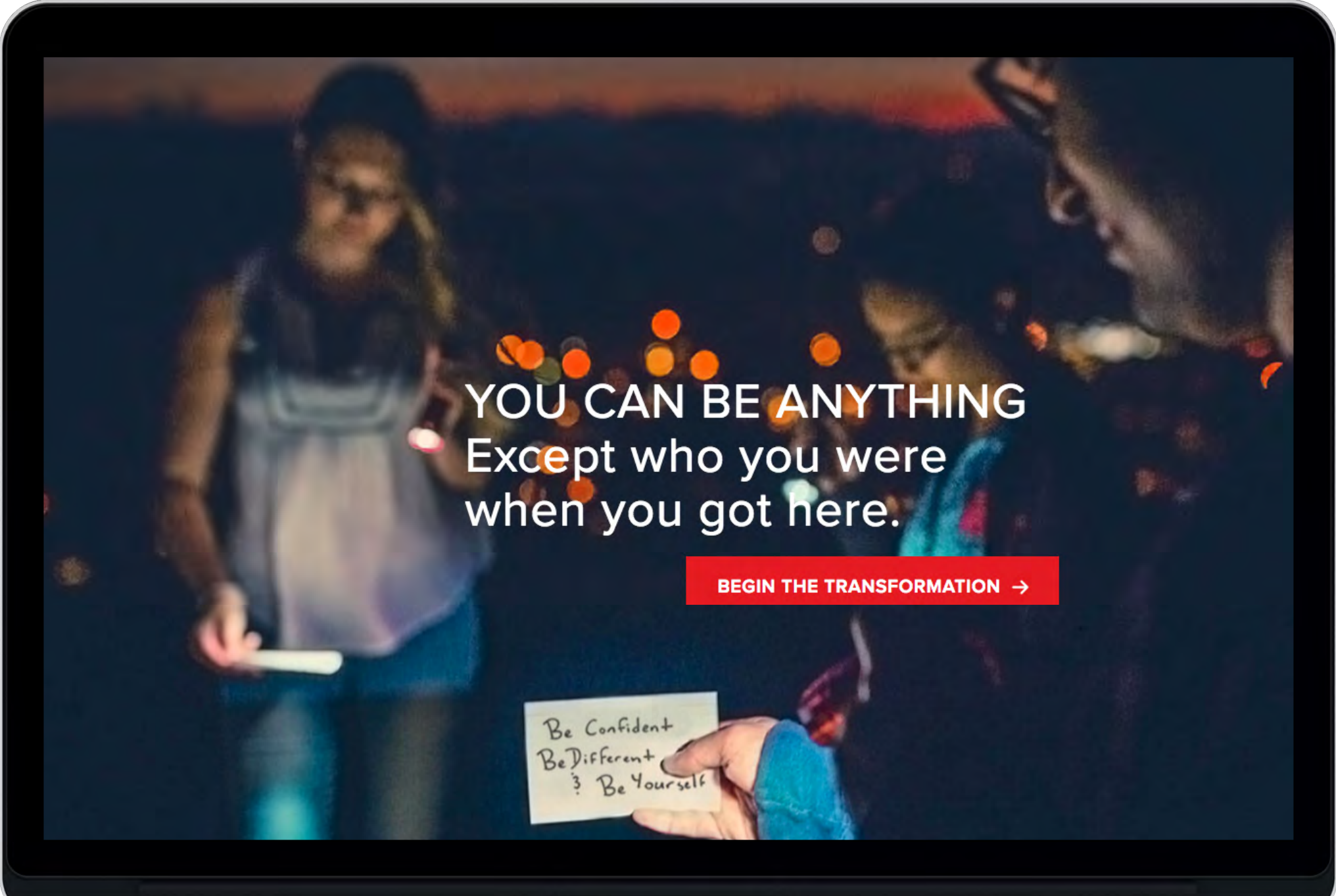
**5,500+**

Twitter Followers

**5,000+**

Instagram Followers





YOU CAN BE ANYTHING  
Except who you were  
when you got here.

BEGIN THE TRANSFORMATION →

Be Confident  
Be Different  
Be Yourself











# **1 Seize the opportunity of an engaged audience**



- 1** Seize the opportunity of an engaged audience
- 2** Highlight the seasons



- 1** Seize the opportunity of an engaged audience
- 2** Highlight the seasons
- 3** Small changes can lead to big improvements



- 1** Seize the opportunity of an engaged audience
- 2** Highlight the seasons
- 3** Small changes can lead to big improvements
- 4** Celebrate community



- 1** Seize the opportunity of an engaged audience
- 2** Highlight the seasons
- 3** Small changes can lead to big improvements
- 4** Celebrate community
- 5** Be real & laugh a little



- 1** Seize the opportunity of an engaged audience
- 2** Highlight the seasons
- 3** Small changes can lead to big improvements
- 4** Celebrate community
- 5** Be real & laugh a little
- 6** Small school? No problem



Download the higher ed social media report

[upandup.agency/engage](https://upandup.agency/engage)



Learn about Up&Up social media workshops

[upandup.agency/workshop](http://upandup.agency/workshop)





Questions?





