# RoCk Connection

Social Media Campaign

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**Introduction**

With the demand for online public relations, advertising and marketing strategies, it is becoming necessary for Slippery Rock University to develop a social media strategy to keep up with competing universities. The use of social networks will allow SRU to engage in the online community, increasing visibility and awareness of the university. From researching previous social media case studies, we believe that taking the time and money to create a social media campaign now will be worth it in the long run by increasing student enrollment and participation in university activities.

When revamping a schools social media campaign, it is very important to have a strong cohesive team to work on it. In the first stages of the process, money is also very limited, so it is necessary to keep budget in mind. On our campaign we will start out with one hired public relations employee to basically run the entire program and be the go-to person in charge. To integrate Slippery Rock students into this campaign, we will use two interns to assist the public relations employee in charge. This internship will count for the credits public relations students need to acquire before graduation and it will be very competitive to apply for. These students and hired employee will need to work well with Slippery Rocks existing public relations and advertising campaign as well as the alumni groups to integrate everything together. In the first stages we are planning on spending around $30,000 for the hired employee, which sounds like a lot but would be covered by just a few students tuition per year. This public relation employee is significant to the process because they have the knowledge to make it professional and appropriate. Over the years we believe that the increased social media and advertising will also

increase the schools success so the program could gain employees or more interns after reviewing the results of the campaign.

## Research

Our research started with evaluating the social media that is currently used at the university. This is important to gauge what needs to be done to improve it. We found that as of now SRU has many different pages on Facebook. These pages are for many of the groups around campus such as SGA and UPB. The organization and clubs update their pages on a regular basis, but the Slippery Rock page is not updated. On Twitter, there are less organization and group pages than found on Facebook. The university has a Twitter page and it too is not updated regularly. These are issues that need to be addressed along with the lack of social media buttons on the university's website. Many other schools have buttons linked to their Facebook and Twitter pages, but Slippery Rock does not. This is a simple and free way to promote these pages and the university needs to utilize this.

We then moved to looking at other universities to see how they utilized social media. A good example is Harvard University. They use Facebook, Twitter, iTunes, and Four Square to post news, links, photos and videos (Harvard University, 2010). Clarion University has a share link that allows anyone who visits the website to share the website on social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, My Space, Google, etc. (Clarion University of Pennsylvania, 2010). These universities, whether Ivy League or public, have recognized the need for a social media strategy. Slippery Rock University has yet to follow their lead.

Another aspect of our campaign includes an application for mobile devices to make student life more convenient. Some universities are still working on having Wi-Fi on campus, while other universities, such as Stanford, already have mobile device applications. Stanford's

application allows students to register for classes, look up campus maps, and look up where their friends are on campus and IM them if need be (Stanford University, 2010).

Other research included researching the annual salary for a digital media strategist. The salary range for a strategist can be anywhere from $33,000 to $49,000 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010). We can hire a strategist for only part-time work to significantly cut the cost.

Another part of our research included analyzing the awareness of our current social networks by Slippery Rock students. We created a survey and distributed the survey randomly in a 100 level classroom to see if the students were aware of Slippery Rock University's Facebook, Twitter, and if they followed any of the sites (See Appendix A).

## Publics

1. *Future Students-* The social networks are intended to entice prospective students and give them more information about our campus. Through the networks they can also get opinions about the university through current students by seeing photos, comments and videos.

2. *Current Students-* Current students can use the university's social network to stay informed and involved. Here they can receive information about upcoming events, emergency alerts, previous events and awards. Also, they can become an active member of the university by following the "A Day in the Life Of...." videos and Four Square competition. Communication members have the opportunity to get internship experience by participating in the social media team.

3. *Faculty & Staff-* Like current students, faculty and staff can use Slippery Rock's social networks as a way to be informed of the university's events and news. Also, along with

the university calendar, they can get permission from the social media team to post and send events to students and alumni through SRU's Facebook & Twitter accounts.

4. *Alumni-* Alumni can use the social networks as a way to feel like they are still a part of the SRU community. They can use it to gain access to news and events.  Hopefully they will see the progress SRU is making and donate money, eventually leading to increased revenue.

5. *Community Members-* Within the community, social networks can be used for security alerts and promotion.  It is a good way for local residents and businesses to become aware of university activities.  Businesses could take part in the "A Day in the Life of..." campaign to increase publicity.  Businesses can also use SRU's online community as a type of database to reach out and link to potential customers.

## Objectives

1.  Hire a social media strategist to help oversee campaigns and create ideas.

2. Create a social media team.  This team will include a strategist, three Slippery Rock University interns (from any related major), a member from the public relations office and a member from the communication department on campus.

## Goals

1. Increase students' usage and interaction with the university's social media by 35%.

2. Transform social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) into the main way to navigate to the university's website (www.sru.edu).

3. Create Facebook and Twitter links on Slippery Rock University's homepage and allow students to share articles and videos posted on the website.

4. Create a mobile application created for students (targeting specifically freshmen) that includes GPS and Four Square. This will be a six month progress and will require terms of use.

5. Have 65% of students "like" the university's Facebook page.

6. Have "A Day in the Life of…" available on YouTube for students to view as well as links to the YouTube account through the university's website beginning Sept. 7, 2011.

7. Release weekly episodes of "A Day in the Life of..." every Wednesday.

8. Have 35% of students participate in the Four Square competition.

## "A Day in the Life of..."

This part of the campaign will utilize YouTube to inform students in an entertaining way. This will be done weekly through the creation of a short series called "A Day in the Life of." Every week we will showcase a different member of the campus community, such as President Smith, a communication student, or Scotty the Bus Driver. An episode will be made weekly where we follow one of these members and many others through their daily routine at Slippery Rock University. The key concept is to provide a fun way for members of our community to be more informed on what takes place on SRU's campus. Not only can current members view these episodes, but prospective students, alumni, and the surrounding community can as well. By utilizing YouTube to post these videos, viewers will be able to leave comments to give feedback on the videos as well as share the video on Facebook and Twitter, or in other words, re-tweet the video. This will allow our message to become interactive between our message and the viewers instead of just a one-way communication field. Our possible features for "A Day in the Life of..." could include the following:

- A faculty or student in each of the education departments (communication, computer science, criminology and criminal justice, military science, professional studies, safety management professor, gerontology, business, education, science, mathematics professor, nursing, psychology, public health and social work, art, dance, English, history, music, modern languages and cultures, philosophy, political science, theater and women's studies).

- Graduate students.

- President Smith

- Organization presidents (SGA, UPB, PRSSA, etc.)

- Athletes and coaches

- Rockie

- University staff (Scotty the bus driver, the ice cream scooper at Boozel, Linda from Cyberfresh, etc.)

- Business owners and workers within the community (Coffarro's delivery workers, Denny from Ginger Hill, a waitress at the Brewery, etc.)

Due to the informative nature of "A Day in the Life of..," a link would be created on the SRU page for easy access to previous episodes. This is important for prospective students to be able to search their desired field of study and life at Slippery Rock in general.

## Twitter and Facebook

Twitter and Facebook are an important aspect to our social media plan. These social media tools will be used to announce events, episodes, and important facts about SRU. They provide a simple way to keep everyone informed and involved in what's happening around

Slippery Rock University. Links to both of these sites will be featured on our SRU homepage to make it easier for everyone to navigate. Also, we will be including "sharing buttons" on different aspects of the SRU website, such as news articles, press releases, and "A Day in the Life of...", so that it is easy for members following us to re-tweet the articles. Also the sites provide a platform to access news and information from other universities. Facebook and Twitter can also be used to increase Slippery Rock University's search engine optimization.

### Facebook

Through Facebook, we will develop the page for Slippery Rock University. Anyone can have the ability to "Like" the page, including current students, potential students, families, faculty, staff, community members and alumni. As of November 29, 2010, Slippery Rock University has a page containing 1,570 "Likes" with absolutely no wall posts, blogs or photos (Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, 2010). The only related page is for Slippery Rock, Pa., and was derived from Wikipedia containing geographic and demographic information. We recognize opportunities for news distribution, press coverage, events, conversation and awareness that a developed Facebook page could provide.

Primarily, the page should include contact information. This includes the university's main office phone number, address and mission statement. Photo albums will be created through Facebook on a monthly basis to highlight campus activities. A section of our page will include a wall for blogging. The logo of the page should be changed to the public relations promotion logo.

Currently, different organizations within Slippery Rock University have their own pages, such as Slippery Rock Athletics, Slippery Rock Public Relations Promotions, Slippery Rock UPB, etc. We propose that Slippery Rock University's Facebook page links to these other

Slippery Rock University organizations. Other links should include the university's website, Twitter, YouTube and Foursquare.

By using Facebook as part of our campaign, it will give its followers a reason to "like" the page, as well as a reason to stay. Currently, the Slippery Rock Public Relations Facebook page does not post regularly. This provides no value to its followers. We would post something frequently, almost on a daily basis. The posts will include news releases, blogs, emergency alerts and information about events. Facebook will also be one of the ways we post updates of the "A Day in the Life of..." campaign.

### Twitter

Like Slippery Rock University's Facebook, their Twitter account has not received attention from the university. The Twitter page has only 186 followers. As of November 29, the last tweet was sent out on September 30. Not only was the tweet outdated, but it was a link about the sixth sexual assault in one month. The negative press still stands as Slippery Rock University's last post, bringing negative publicity if anyone would look at the Twitter page in the first page (Slippery Rock University, 2010).

We want to link Slippery Rock University's Twitter page to its Facebook page, making status updates easier. The Slippery Rock University logo will also be used to increase recognition and consistency. The background of the Twitter page will be a photo of Old Main rather than the generic template background. A sidebar will also be added including links to Slippery Rock University's website, contact information, Facebook page, YouTube account and Four Square.

## Foursquare

In our campaign we would like to use a rising social media outlet, Foursquare. Our goal is to get students to not only participate and interact with social media, but to also show overall support of Slippery Rock. We believe that a great way to do this is to have campus wide contests with the integration of Foursquare. The winners will be whoever can check-in at the most SRU events, including, but not limited to, concerts, sporting events and guest speakers. At the end of each month we will decide who has attended and checked in to the most events. The winner each month will be given a $50 dollar gift certificate to the bookstore. The winner will also be given a "shout out" on Twitter. The use of Foursquare will be directed at increasing student participation with university events. Also, we hope that local businesses in the Slippery Rock area will also adapt Foursquare as a marketing strategy after seeing the affect of Foursquare within SRU. Businesses will then be able to use Foursquare to run promotional contests.

## iTunes

Slippery Rock University can use iTunes to allow its students and faculty to view video and audio files of important meetings, educational speakers and concerts. SRU will first have to create an iTunes profile. After the University downloads the iTunes software and creates a Slippery Rock University profile it will be possible to download things that were previously mentioned above. By using iTunes as part of the University's social media, students will be able to better access events on campus. Many times professors give bonus points to students who attend guest speakers on campus and other university events, but it isn't always during a time that every student can attend. Being college students ourselves we understand that the life of a college student pertains to more than just going to a few classes a day; students not only have

class but most have at least one part time job, homework, organizations and semester projects that entail group meetings periodically throughout the semester. Because students are busy and may not always have the chance to attend campus events and speakers for extra credit, they should still have the opportunity to achieve the extra credit by viewing the event online through downloading files on iTunes.

## Evaluation

The Rock Connection campaign will be evaluated by comparing the differences in the amount of participants in the Slippery Rock University social media communities. In addition, the number of enrollment applications for the following year will be taken into account. The first evaluation of the campaign should occur one year after the first day the plan has been implemented in order to evaluate initial success. Although the campaign may take several years to reach its maximum effect, one year will be a good time to see where the campaign was successful in areas and where it failed in areas so that changes can be made as they are seen fit.

The evaluation should include a survey of the student body to ask how aware they are of the multiple segments of the campaign, such as Facebook, Twitter, and the Foursquare application. Not only should it measure a level of awareness, but it should also measure participation and interaction with these different mediums. After all, students' awareness of our Twitter page would serve no purpose unless we knew they interacted with it as well. By measuring both the awareness and interaction levels, the social media team can determine the best way to turn the segment of the student body having latent awareness into positive interaction.

The survey should be able to be accessed by the rest of the public that utilize the components of the social media campaign as well since students are not the only ones who the

campaign will be targeted towards. The team can attract parents of current students, alumni, prospective students, and visitors of the university by making links to the survey available through the Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube pages, as well as the mobile applications.

The survey should be analyzed and presented by the social media team to a number of university officials, from President Smith to Provost Williams. The presentation should be open to all members of the university so that there would be a greater chance of receiving feedback. Students and faculty would have the chance to voice their opinion on what they feel is being neglected or overly focused on in the campaign. By receiving feedback, the team would once again have the chance to target areas where the campaign failed and find the reasoning behind that failure.

**Timeline**

A timeline of what was described above is essential to the understanding of the Rock Connection social media campaign. Beginning the timeline would Slippery Rock University hiring a social media strategist during the spring semester and bringing together a social media team by the beginning of March. At this point in time we would have the rest of March and all of April up until finals week to study how the students currently interact with the social media now, as well as ask them what they might hope to see in the future. There will be bi-monthly meetings from March until July with the team to discuss the progress of the campaign.

The Twitter account would be up and running by the end of May. At this point, graduating seniors will be out of high school and those who are attending Slippery Rock in the fall will begin to follow trending topics about Slippery Rock. There will be an updated Tweet at a minimum of three to four times a week about on-goings on campus at Slippery Rock. This will likely be slow during the summer, but during the school year things will be quickly picking up

and multiple tweets will most likely be posted daily. There will also be an update after every Good News e-mail is sent to the students daily. Campus alerts will be posted as needed so that students actively following the university's Twitter account will have a better chance of seeing what is going on. There will also be highlights of The Rocket posted at 8 a.m. on Fridays so that more students will be likely to pick up The Rocket during the day.

The university Facebook account will need updates at a minimum of twice a week so that followers do not just join and forget. People tend to just 'like' a page and then forget about it. By updating the page about twice a week with important things going on across campus, the page will be popping up on followers' newsfeeds on the Facebook home page, and it will be difficult for them to just forget about. The page will be up and running by the end of May as well for the same reasons as the Twitter.

As soon as the university Facebook and Twitter accounts are updated, Slippery Rock University's webpage will add the links to the two media sites to the homepage so that alumni, prospective students, and parents of current students and prospective students will be able to easily find Slippery Rock's online presence. These will be added by June 1.

"A Day in the Life Of…" will be a very time-oriented project. While Twitter and Facebook can be updated at different times during the week, this will need to be something that is done the same time every week. They will be filmed on Monday during the day with the film crew and individual being featured. The process will be different with each person being featured. For example, if the individual being featured is a professor who teaches from 8 am to 4 pm and goes home afterwards, then the filming would take place in spurts during the timeframe of 8 to 4. If it was a student, however, who had class from 12 to 3 and then meetings from 5 to 8, then the filming would be accommodated to those times. On Tuesdays the film would be edited,

and on Wednesdays at 8 am the short film would be released on YouTube, as well as a link placed on Twitter and Facebook for the film right after.

The reason for the video being placed on YouTube on Wednesdays is that on Mondays usually students have a lot of catching up to do from their weekend procrastination, and on Fridays The Rocket comes out.  By spacing these different tactics out, there is a better chance that there will be more traffic to the different media.

On the last day of every month, there will be a tally made of which individuals checked into the most places on Slippery Rock's campus. On the first day of every month, the winner will be announced and contacted. After the winner has been contacted, there will be a congratulations post on Twitter and Facebook. By students seeing these posts about the winner, they will be more likely to participate in the contest as well.

The iTunes will take a little more time than the rest of the media to set up. Beginning in April, the team will be working with the social media strategist to determine how to set up the media. The process would take about a year to go through with the user rights with Apple. After the legal issues have been settled, organizations and professors will be notified about the abilities we have created with iTunes for them to allow the public to view their content. From then on, they will have the opportunity to notify the team of which events they would like us to cover. 24 hours after each event, the coverage will be posted on iTunes for one week for students to be able to take advantage of for educational purposes.

Exactly one year after the team has begun the campaign, June 1, an evaluation will be performed. An evaluation of the timeline will assess whether or not what the team has done so far is efficient enough. Things will then be able to be changed based upon the needs that are seen.

**Return On Investment**

Even though the actual networking sites are free, we recognize that using social media is not free.  It takes people, technology and a significant amount of time to develop a plan.  While our first phases of the social media plan will be focused on the non-financial impact, our focus as afterwards will be on the financial impact.  After the first year of the campaign, analysis and research can be done to evaluate the campaign's effectiveness.

Our initial non-financial focus will be online participation and conversation. Effectiveness will be measured by seeing a spike in the number of Facebook friends, Twitter followers, and Foursquare check-ins.  We will also hope to see how many more followers on Facebook and Twitter we received since updating the original sites that were active before the social media team took over.  We hope to also see online participation and conversation within the Slippery Rock University by microblogging, commenting, and re-tweeting.

The cost of the social media campaign includes paying a strategist.  This cost can be evaluated by the campaign's effectiveness.  First of all, part of the social media team consists of Slippery Rock University interns.  Internships are counted as college credit and are part of tuition cost.  Another way to increase ROI is by cutting advertisement costs.  The advertising shift is becoming focused more on online sources.  The social network sites are free to use, therefore they can be used as a form of free advertising.

We feel that our efforts to create a strong social media plan will display Slippery Rock as a great school to attend. Prospective students will have access to many of the aspects of our plan as well as our other publics. If we would attract five students to SRU, the costs of their tuition would easily pay for the strategists that we planned on hiring. Also, more revenue would be generated, so we would have more money to carry out the remainder of our plan.

## Crisis Communication

Even though our social media team is in charge of creating posts, we cannot control all online conversation within the sites. We felt that it was vital to have a plan of action to respond to any posts or negative comments posted about SRU. Our goal is to use social media to have a proactive crisis communication plan. This is where public relations staff members come into play. The public relations staff can use social media to engage in online conversation to prevent negative comments and address any posted. This will be done in a highly professional manner so that we do not put SRU in any negative light. We would also ask that any SRU organizations and clubs having a Facebook or Twitter account would register with our committee. This is a quick and simple way to monitor what is being said about SRU through these pages. If there would be any suspicious or controversial posts, we could contact the member of the organization that registered the group and have the post edited or removed. By addressing any problems, we hope to stop negative online publicity before it gets out of hand.

# Social Media Survey

This survey was created to gauge the use and awareness of social media on Slippery Rock's campus. Please circle answers to the questions as they pertain to you.

1. Do you have a Facebook account?

   Yes    No
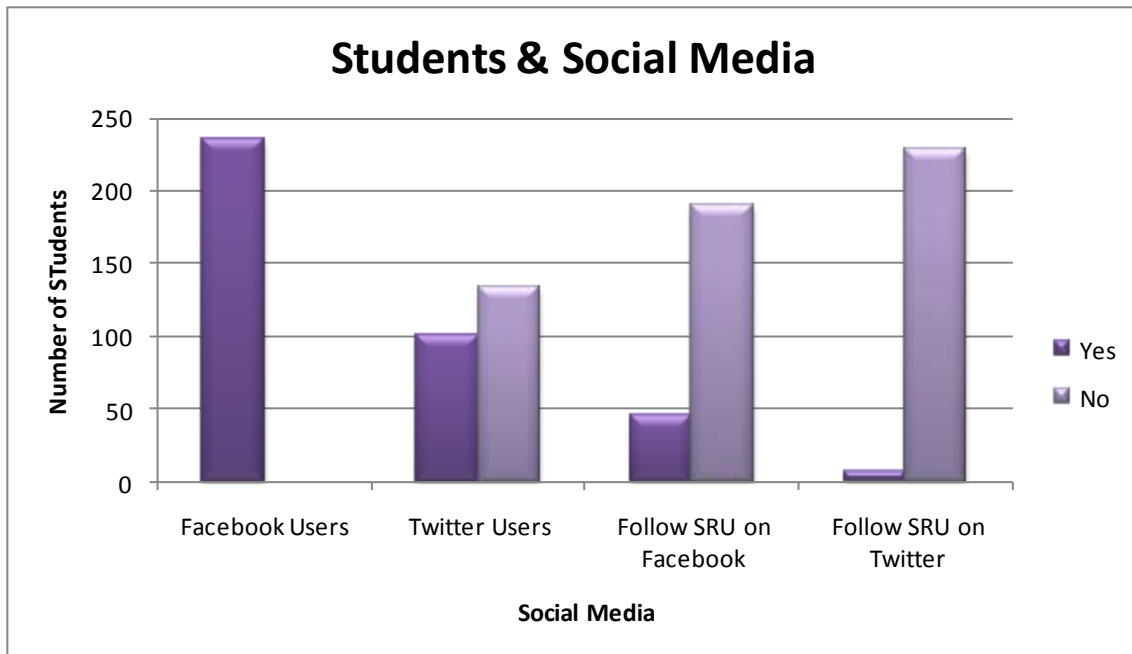
2. Do you have a Twitter account?

   Yes    No

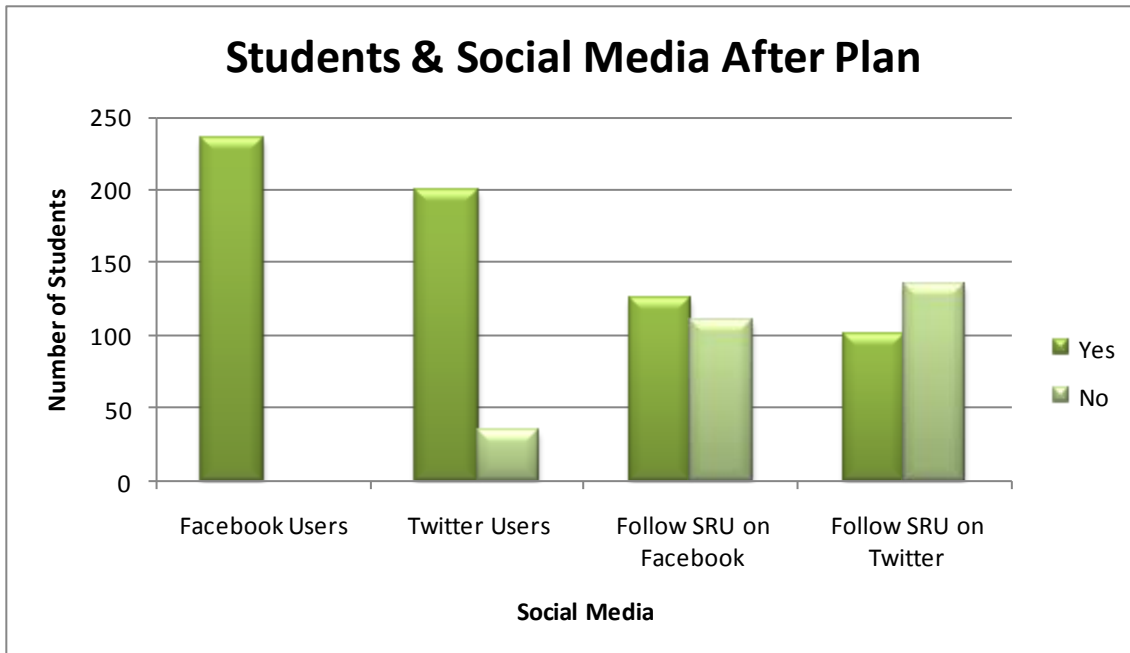3. Do you follow an SRU page on Facebook?

   Yes    No

4. Do you follow an SRU page on Twitter?

   Yes    No

**Students & Social Media**

After randomly surveying students from SRU on their social media use, we created the graph above to display our findings. Results show that Twitter is not widely used by students on our campus, but Facebook is. However, a large number of students on both sites do not follow SRU. This is a major problem that needs to be ratified. We feel that through the implementations of our plan and tactics, we can significantly increase the number of users on Twitter and following SRU.

## Students & Social Media After Plan



Once we implement our social media plan, we would like to see an increase in students using social media and following SRU pages. The initial survey shows a high use of Facebook, but a low membership for Twitter. Our goal after first implementing the place would be to have an increase in Twitter users. The graph about shows that we expect a significant student increase on Twitter after our plan is started. Once we increase the number of users, we hope to have an increase of users following both SRU Twitter and Facebook pages. We know that the number of users that are not following SRU on Twitter is still high. However, Twitter is a social media network that is not widely used or understood on campus, so we feel that it would be better to first attract users to the network and worry later about their following support. These numbers are only an example of the increase we would like to see, not an actual report of our progress.

**About Me**

**Kayla-** I helped the group with coming up with goals and objectives. My main components of the proposal included research, publics, Facebook, Twitter, ROI, crisis communication and the bibliography.

**Segan -** For this project I helped with the media write-ups to start with. After that, I created the logo, edited our work and created the graphs based off of our survey data.

**Justina Cerra-** is a junior at Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania with a major in Communications, focusing in public relations. She has declared an aquatics minor and plans to declare a non-profit leadership minor as well as a Spanish minor in the Spring of 2011. She currently holds the leadership positions of the Vice President of Programs of Alpha Xi Delta and the President of Junior Panhellenic Council, as well as a Student Ambassador position within the Green & White Society of Slippery Rock University. Rock Connection provided a great opportunity to showcase her knowledge about public relations and apply it to the social media campaign. She worked with the other group members to brainstorm the initial plan for the campaign, as well as understand the basics of the project so that when she completed the timeline, it could be as detailed as possible. She also helped with the ongoing editing of the work over the course of the project on Google Documents.

**Allie Schweiss-** I am a senior public relations student and I will be graduating in December. I am a part of Lamda Pi Eta and currently work at American Eagle Outfitters at the Grover City Outlets. Following graduation I will be working for the Preiss Company. For the most part we all collaborated with each section of the campaign but my main part included goals and objectives, researching other universities, Tunes, Foursquare, and putting together the final proposal.

**Cassandra-** She wrote part of the introduction.

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