



Facebook for High School College Counselors: A Brief Guide

With over 500 million users, Facebook is the world's largest social network and an important form of communication for many people, including high school students. Still, you may not have considered how the site can help you in your work as a high school college counselor.

Here, Go See Campus presents details about the unique value Facebook can offer you and how it can support your students and parents in the college search.

What is Facebook?

An online "social network" is an Internet system that lets people stay in touch with one another. It also helps connect them to new people and resources. Because of the sensitivity of some personal communications, privacy can be a major concern, and so high-quality social networks will go to great lengths to give you control over what information you make public. Facebook lays out its privacy features at <http://www.facebook.com/help/?page=419>.

What are the benefits of a social network? Well, millions of people, organizations, and companies make information accessible to you in a way that can be faster and more flexible than searching for the same information online. In Facebook's case, it's all free.

How Might High School College Counselors Use Facebook?

There are two good reasons to start using Facebook professionally: to stay connected with trends in college admissions and to provide resources to students and parents.

Staying connected: What if you could easily follow the latest news from universities that your students target? Or, what if you could receive updates on application procedures and announcements of new financial aid programs from admissions offices? And, what if the above could be done without filling up your inbox and overwhelming you with email?

Those are some of the reasons that many universities have created Facebook Pages: mini-sites that share information publicly. You can connect to these



Pages with a single click (the button is labeled with a big thumbs-up and the word "Like", so when you connect to a Page, Facebook says that you "Like" that page.)

What does all this mean?

- When you log in to Facebook, information from these Pages will appear automatically. You can look for anything important and pass it along to colleagues, students, and parents. Providing valuable information on a consistent basis can help engage your students in the college selection process.
- You can encourage students who are already on Facebook to explore these university Pages for themselves. Some colleges make extra efforts to show their personalities through their posts, whether they are sharing pictures of campus, videos of recent school events, or answers to common questions. All of this can help in a student's search.

Providing Resources: Consider creating a presence for your high school or counseling office on Facebook. This will allow you to

- reach your audience of students and parents if they are using Facebook.
- share articles and other content you find online easily.
- post resources for students and parents to access.
- promote your content more widely (students and parents can forward it.)

Assuming you have the go-ahead from your high school and you already have a personal account on Facebook, it is very easy to create a presence for your school. You will either want to start a Facebook Page or a Facebook Group.

What's the difference? According to Facebook, "Pages can only be created to represent a real organization, business, celebrity, or band, and may only be created by an official representative of that entity. Groups can be created by any user and about any topic, as a space for users to share their opinions and interest in that subject. Groups can be kept closed or secret, whereas Pages are intended to help an entity communicate publicly." You can learn more at Facebook and decide which option is best for you at <http://www.facebook.com/help/?faq=13622>.

From there, you are ready to post links, add comments, and share ideas.



go see campus

Plan Campus Visits and Make the Most of the College Search at <http://goseecampus.com>



<http://facebook.com/goseecampus>



| <http://www.twitter.com/goseecampus>

Remember to promote the Facebook Page / Group to your students and parents so that you can build your audience.

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By using Facebook, you can stay up-to-date on university happenings and have greater engagement through the college selection process. If you are already on Facebook, let us know at <http://www.facebook.com/goseecampus> other ways you like to use the network!