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How Colleges Use Social Media to Promote Podcasts

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How Colleges Use Social Media to Promote Podcasts

Media Audit

Karlie Fromm

Elizabethtown College

Introduction

Six Instagram accounts and one accompanying Facebook account were examined to observe how other colleges promote podcasts and keynote speakers to their campus and alumni. The colleges observed include Drew University, Juniata College, Millersville University, Boston University, and Moravian University. First observed was Drew University's "@drew_alumni" page, and "@drewuniversity" was also observed to see how a keynote speaker was presented on the main page. The pages looked at from Moravian University include "@moravianalumni" on Instagram and the accompanying Facebook page "Moravian Alumni. Juniata's Instagram account "@juniata_college" was also examined. The last page's viewed were "@bualumni" and "@artdepartmentmu." These were selected for multiple reasons, few fell into the landmark Conference, others are nearby, or they have a stellar example of how to promote these events. The information gathered will allow for Elizabethtown College, and more specifically the School of Arts and Humanities to follow similar practices to ensure they reach the largest audience possible.

Boston University

Boston University's (BU) Instagram page "@bualumni" is a stellar example of promoting alumni podcasts. Boston University hosts alumni podcasts and promotes them on its alumni page. However, this will carry over onto the Elizabethtown College Arts and Humanities page. I chose to analyze Boston University's Instagram because I was familiar with their podcast. Boston University has over two seasons of podcasts and has been promoting them with the same template the entire time. Boston University incorporates the school colors into their template and has a tagline/title for their podcasts. This works well as their "ProudtoBU" series has grown.

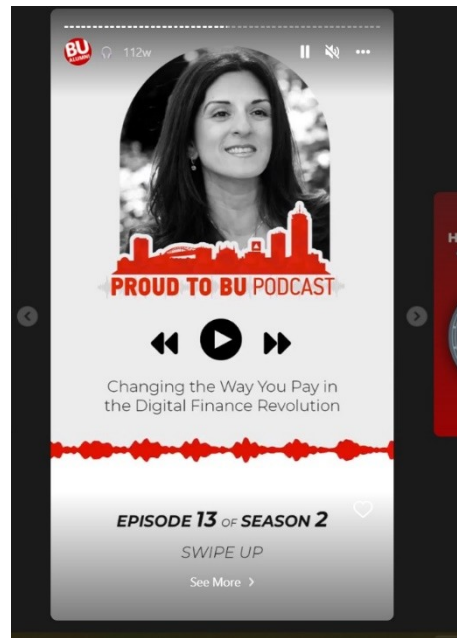
Additionally, @bualumni attaches a caption to each post which gives an overview of the speaker and where they are now. It is important to note BU does not use many hashtags which can have positive and negative effects. Hangtags allow the post to reach a greater audience but on the contrary, they can also take away from the information in the caption.



[\(https://www.instagram.com/p/CCwcju2gqDa/\)](https://www.instagram.com/p/CCwcju2gqDa/)

Furthermore, “@bualumni” posts a story highlight of the posts. The story highlight follows the same theme of the post; however, it includes the soundtrack of the podcast and the link to where the podcast can be found. Story highlights are a notable example of how to reach a wider audience, this is because Boston University’s other media accounts can repost the story. The story highlights also include a direct link instead of directing the viewer to a link in the biography of the social media account. Something which works well with these media posts and the story highlight is the usage of the grayscale photos. This allows the focus to be on the topic of the podcast and the text on the post instead of the speaker. A color photo can often be distracting if there is information on the post as well. A takeaway I will use from “@bualumni” is having grayscale photos of the speakers. Photographs of the speaker in action, for example,

while they are recording in the studio, are a wonderful way to highlight them as well as the material.



(<https://www.instagram.com/stories/highlights/18107351929005215/>)

Drew University

Drew University is within the Landmark Conference, and I chose to audit their social media to see how schools that Elizabethtown College associates with promote speakers and podcasts. Drew University hosts a series of talks called “Drew Talks” and they are posted on “@drew_alumni,” the university’s alumni page. While these are physical talks, not podcasts, they are promoted the same way. Drew University includes a photograph of the speaker, as well as who they are and when the talk is taking place. In the caption Drew then gives an overview of what the speaker will be presenting. The overview is lengthy and due to the length viewers may not read all of it, this could be shorted to achieve a greater number of views. Additionally, the caption does not include any hashtags, and while multiple hashtags are not ideal, 1-4 hashtags is a way to reach a larger audience. Another factor that does not work well is the inclusion of a link

in the caption. Links in the caption of Instagram posts are not clickable; this is why posts often direct viewers to the bio for a link.



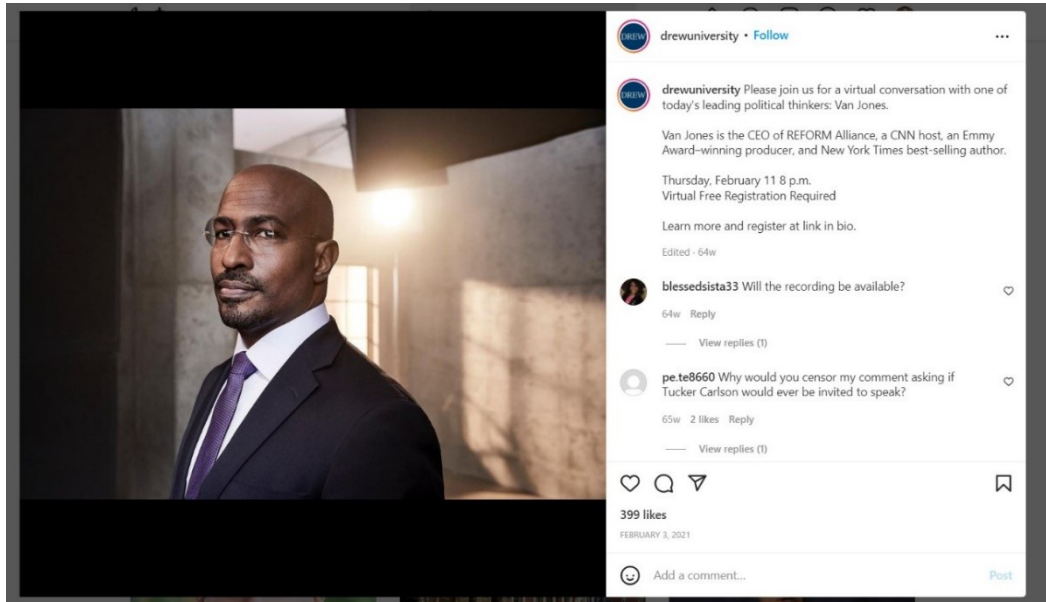
[\(https://www.instagram.com/p/CW86NXdPvqU/\)](https://www.instagram.com/p/CW86NXdPvqU/)

A key takeaway from “@drew_alumni” is their choice of coordinating colors. On “@drew_alumni” all the posts have coordinating colors and the viewer is easily able to tell all of the posts are a part of the same series, Drew Talks. This consistency is a great tactic to use and is why a template for creating these media posts will be incredibly helpful. Something which could be improved in these posts when creating and designing the ones for Elizabethtown College is the fonts that are used. The fonts are harsh, and a more delicate font could allow for a softer approach, this could also be achieved by using 1-3 different fonts. In addition, the font colors do not -always coordinate with the background color of the posts which causes dissonance in colors and makes the post less appealing to the viewer.



(https://www.instagram.com/drew_alumni/)

Drew University's official Instagram, "@drewuniversity" also promotes guest key speakers on campus and uses a similar approach to the alumni page; however, there are notable differences. The major difference is the official page does not have a post with any text. Having only a photograph does attract the viewer; although, the viewer will also not be interested in reading a lengthy caption. A takeaway here is to have a caption that the viewer will be able to learn from but not so long they do not want to read it. Having a post with words in the design is important. Something which works well is the use of directing the viewer to the bio for a link. There is also a story highlight, which works well with a clickable link included.



[\(https://www.instagram.com/p/CK2JltDjFAM/\)](https://www.instagram.com/p/CK2JltDjFAM/)

Juniata College

Juniata College is a part of the Landmark Conference; this is why I chose to view their social media pages. Additionally, they are smaller than Elizabethtown College which will allow for variation in what schools are being audited. Juniata College, like many other schools, does not have an Arts and Humanities, or a similar, Instagram page. Additionally, they do not host any sort of podcast. However, it was important to see how they promote key speakers as Elizabethtown College often associates with Juniata College. Juniata College promoted their key speaker by including a photograph and text on the post. Additionally, they included a logo. A logo is a great part of a post and is something I will be including in the posts I design. The image used in the post works well and the layout of the image is ideal as the focus is not on the center. From a graphic design perspective, the layout is great. The addition of the school colors using a side ribbon and a translucent box to add text was a terrific element to add. Furthermore, the caption is short, to the point, and still provides the necessary information. The use of hashtags could have been beneficial; however, not necessary since this was a guest speaker in person.

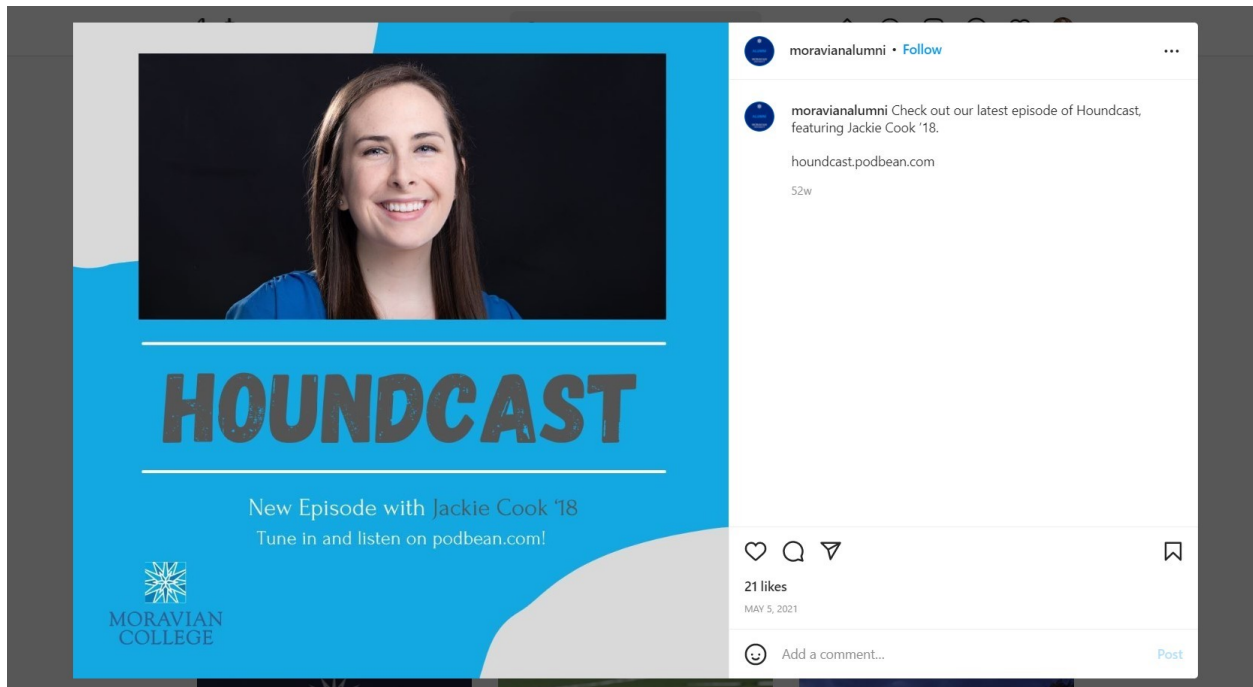
Overall, Juniata is a great school to audit as these posts mimic what will be completed for Elizabethtown College.



(<https://www.instagram.com/p/CbvO1j7t10B/>)

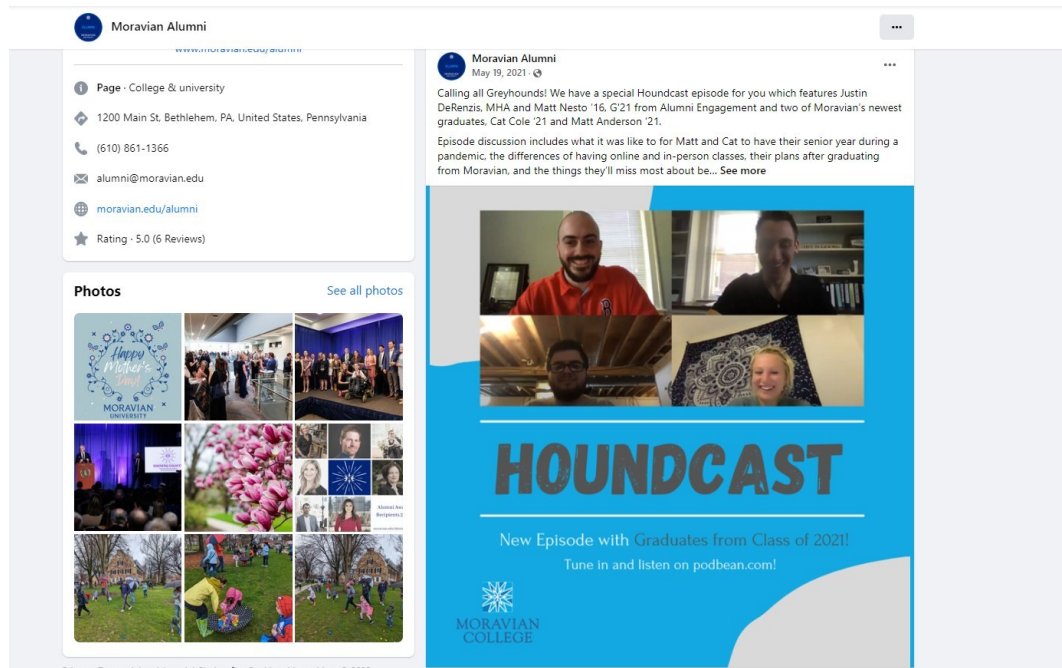
Moravian University

I chose to audit Moravian University because they have an alumni podcast that they promote on their Instagram page, “@moravianalumni” and a corresponding Facebook page, Moravian Alumni. Additionally, Moravian University falls within the Landmark Conference and Elizabethtown College interacts with Moravian. Moravian’s Instagram posts which advertise their podcast, Houndcast, are posted on the alumni Instagram page for the college, like many other schools. Features of Moravian’s post which work well include the use of the college colors, as well as the college logo on the post. These two factors also allow for consistency between all the posts. Other features which work well include the use of different fonts, having two fonts is a fantastic way to add variety while keeping a professional appearance. Furthermore, the caption is short and to the point.



(https://www.instagram.com/p/COgYBzorjT_/)

Moravian College also has a Facebook page titled, “Moravian Alumni.” The Facebook page uses the same posts which are posted on the Facebook page; however, they provide a longer caption in most cases. The reason for this could be because the Moravian Alumni Facebook page has more followers than the Instagram page. This is something to take into consideration when choosing captions for the Elizabethtown College Pages. Something important to take note of is how some of these posts the photographs of the speakers are photos from a Zoom meeting. It is important to have a professional photograph, if this is unable to be achieved due to the podcast recording taking place virtually, a headshot submitted by the individual would be acceptable. Overall, Moravian is a notable example of what to include and captions help capture what is taking place.



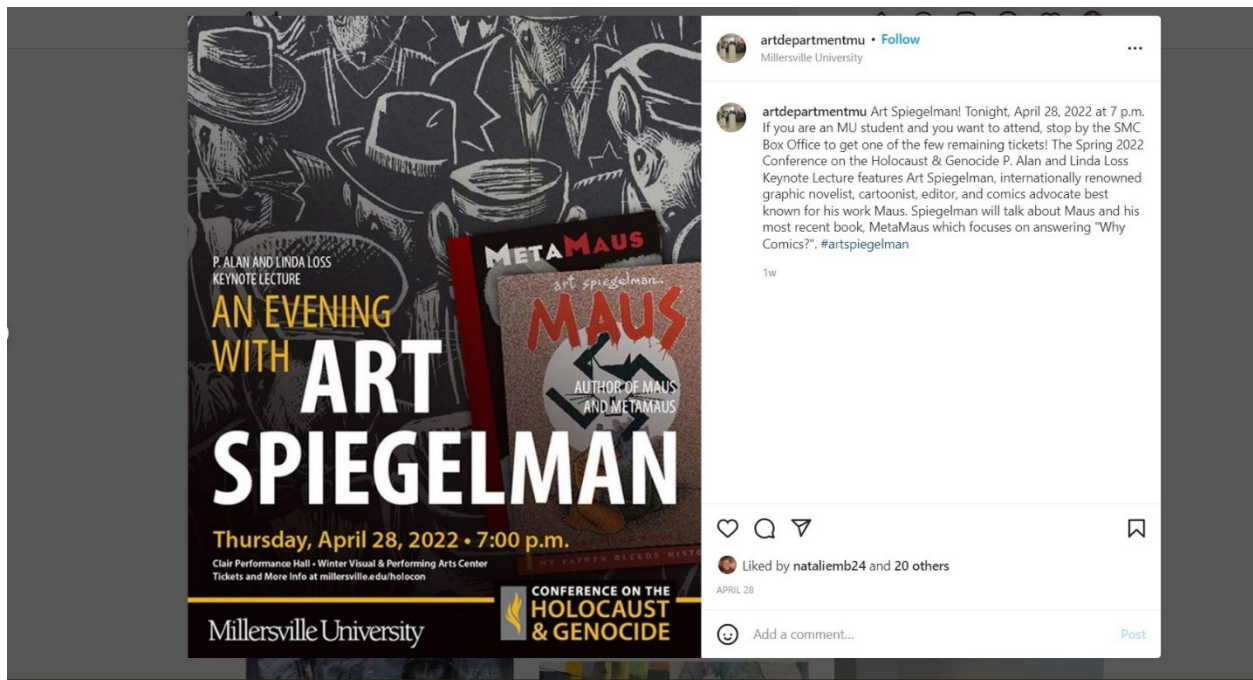
<https://www.facebook.com/MoravianAlumni>

Millersville College

While auditing Millersville University, I stumbled across a small Instagram page belonging to the Millersville University Art Department. Millersville University is not a part of the Landmark Conference; however, Millersville University is incredibly close to Elizabethtown College and is only approximately 20 miles away. I chose to then take a deeper dive into this page because it's not a popularly followed Instagram page, much like the Elizabethtown College Arts and Humanities Instagram page. I found it helpful to see how other small pages take to advertising speakers and events to help grow followers. The Elizabethtown College Arts and Humanities page receives approximately 12 likes per post and Millersville Art Department (@artdepartmentmu) receives about 25 likes.

Millersville University Art Department chose to advertise their speaker using a graphic. Key takeaways which work well for this post include the name of the college at the bottom, which could also be a logo, the information is represented on the graphic and in the caption.

Other factors which work well include the different fonts and colors used in the post. Other features which do not work well include the busy background of the graphic. The background is distracting, and while conveying art it is too opaque and takes away from the text. A fix for this could include turning down the opaqueness and allowing the background image to fade into the background of the graphic. Overall, this is a great graphic, and @artdepartmentmu resembles the Elizabethtown Arts and Humanities Instagram page which allows for an achievable goal of where the Arts and Humanities page can be one day.



[\(https://www.instagram.com/p/Cc5JwOau0il/\)](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cc5JwOau0il/)

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have learned what terrific ideas to include in the templates and graphics I design for the Arts and Humanities department. Key factors I will include or incorporate into the design are the school logo, school colors, varying fonts, varying text colors, grayscale photography, and a small amount of information. Information that will be present in the caption includes a brief description of the speaker, the topic of discussion, and either a link or instruction

on where to find the link, this will vary depending on the social media platform. The information I have learned has shown me what is needed to be included, what is nice to include, and what not to include. Overall, I am confident that what I have learned will allow me to create graphics to help promote the Blue Jays Journeys Podcast.

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CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content Analysis

Karlie Fromm

Elizabethtown College

May 27, 2022

Overview

Elizabethtown College's School of Arts and Humanities consists of five programs including arts, English, history, modern languages, and music. Each of these programs then consists of a variety of majors. Elizabethtown College restructured the schools within the college in 2021 and since January of 2021 the current dean of the school, Dr. Kevin Shorner-Johnson, has been conducting a series of podcasts titled *Blue Jays Journeys*. There is a great stigma surrounding a degree in arts and humanities and the possibility to have a career with that degree. The goal of the podcasts is to show prospective students, current students, and alumni where a degree in the field of Arts and Humanities can lead them later in life. Throughout the continuation of *Blue Jays Journeys*, new podcasts are being recorded. These podcasts will then additionally be advertised across the Elizabethtown College Arts and Humanities social media pages, as well as shared by Elizabethtown College. Designing the graphics for the podcast is a crucial step in the promotion and multiple different tactics will prove to be highly effective. To develop a successful graphic previous knowledge combined with research will guarantee a successful graphic is created.

Key Elements

To ensure the graphics reach a large audience it is vital to include certain elements in the design which have proven to be successful with other colleges and universities. These elements include the use of varying fonts, an effective color scheme, the use of photographs, and the use of captions and/or hashtags. The current Elizabethtown College Arts and Humanities Instagram page, @etowna_h does not include the use of multiple of these factors. By changing the graphics which are being posted surrounding the podcasts the Instagram page will ideally gain

more interaction, followers, and shares. This will be able to be measured using Instagram Analytics. Another key element that will be demonstrated is the varying captions between the Instagram page and the Facebook page. As mentioned above, the overall goal of increasing the promotion of the *Blue Jays Journeys* podcasts is to reach prospective students, current students, and alumni to enough pursuing a degree in Arts and Humanities. By incorporating these key elements into the graphics, which are being designed, the maximum number of audiences will be reached.

Template of Posts

The primary channel for promoting these graphics will be Instagram. This allows for the other Elizabethtown College Instagram pages to be tagged so the post can be shared amongst the college. The Instagram posts will measure 1080 x 1080 pixels and be exported as a Portable Network Graphic, or PNG file. This ensures optimum visual clarity and tone when viewing. The posts will have a dual-color background, the colors will be Etown Primary Blue (HEX #004B98) and Etown Secondary Blue (HEX #0A2240). These colors match the Elizabethtown College style guide but also provide a clean background for text. Color combinations are crucial in legibility and Won, Lee, et. al. explain there is a “positive linear correlation between color harmony and legibility” (Won, Lee, et.al., 2020) Additionally, there will be two fonts used throughout the posts titled, *Poppins*, and *Bebas Neue*. These are both serif fonts that provide a slight variation in design. Furthermore, the Etown College “E” logo is displayed in white. It is important to not according to the Brand Guideline “It [the E logo] is suitable to be used as an identifying brand mark in all communications” (Elizabethtown College Office of Marketing and Communication, 2020). In accordance with the brand style guide, the E logo will also say

Elizabethtown College instead of Educate for Service because it is being used alone. The graphic will also include a photograph of the interviewee in black in white. The choice of using the photograph is to be sure to not draw attention away from the information being shared. Additionally, black and white photos allow the viewer to connect with the image. “Black-and-white image allows viewers to project their individual feelings into the photo and, in their minds, supply their own emotional colors” (Lesser, J., 1999).

Following the Instagram graphic, there will also be a graphic posted to Facebook, this will be a similar graphic and will measure 940 X 788 pixels. The Facebook graphic will also be exported as PNG. This graphic will include the same information as the graphic made for Instagram and will only need slight resizing of the photograph and text to allow for optimum viewing. Resizing the font is a major step because “selecting proper fonts...is a challenging problem... covering many font properties, such as font face, color, and size” (Zhao, Cao, et.al., 2018)

Specific Design Considerations

Specific Design Considerations which had to be taken into account include the Style Guide from Elizabethtown College. The colors used had to be the correct shade of blue and match the HEX number, and the college logo had to be the correct dimension and fit the proper specifications. Additionally, specifics that were taken into consideration include the size of the text. This was to ensure a viewer could read the text whilst scrolling and not need to take time to read in-depth what is said. Kuhl explains that comments should be kept “concise, interesting, varied and authentic” (Kuhl, 2013). The current *Blue Jay Journeys* website was designed with the message of “Exploring journeys of Blue Jay alums, students, and professors at

Elizabethtown College. Hosted by the School of Arts and Humanities Digital Humanities Hub”

(The School of Arts and Humanities, 2021). This is a message which will remain at the forefront throughout this series of podcasts.

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Date	Timeline Expectation
5/24/2022	Meet with Dr. Shorner- Johnson to finalize dates
5/27/2022	Complete Treatment
5/27/2022	Complete Content Analysis
6/01/2022	Complete Instagram Graphic Template
6/03/2022	Complete Facebook Graphic Template
6/06-08/2022	Meet with Dr. Kevin Shorner- Johnson to review templates
6/08-10/2022	Make any edits to templates
6/10/2022	Have a completed conversation calendar with specific for posting graphics
6/17/2022	Have all posts completed and ready to be posted
6/24/2022	Work on Presentation for Landmark Conference

Project Timeline

Overview

The project being completed is titled *Blue Jay Journeys*. *Blue Jay Journeys* is a podcast released by Elizabethtown College School of Arts and Humanities. This newest series will consist of six podcasts featuring alumni from Elizabethtown College School of Arts and Humanities. These podcasts, once recorded, will then be released to the *Blue Jay Journeys*' website. Additionally, a large factor is the new promotion tactics. Graphics will be designed and then posts will be made to the school's social media pages. This will help reach a large audience and help grow the number of listeners.

Purpose/Objectives

The purpose of this project is to reach prospective students who are coming to Etown and show them where a degree in Arts and Humanities can lead them. There is often a stigma around a degree in arts and humanities and the difficulty in finding a job after graduation. The goal of the podcast is to show students where different majors can lead them and how they can get a job after graduation. The objective to help reach this goal is to advertise *Blue Jay Journeys* more so that prospective students, current students, and even alumni and community members can see where Etown graduates are.

Target Audience

17- 25

Prospective or Current Student

High School Diploma or higher

Project Description

The Blue Jays Journeys Podcast will consist of two parts, the recording of the podcast, and the promotion of the podcast. Focusing primarily on the promotion of the podcast there will be a series of graphics designed which will be posted to the Arts and Humanities Instagram page, @etowna_h, as well as the Facebook page, Elizabethtown College Arts and Humanities. These posts will also tag the college to promote the podcast across different pages. The graphics will be designed using Canva so if they need to be used in the future there is a straightforward way to access and edit them. The graphics will include the speaker's name, podcast title, school logo, brief description, and a photograph of the speaker. The photograph of the speaker will be taken in the studio if the speaker comes to campus otherwise a photograph be submitted by the speaker. Additionally, Instagram analytics will be utilized to measure how the new graphics affect the traffic on the Instagram page,

Equipment

The technical requirements for this project include access to the Arts and Humanities Instagram Page, access to the Facebook page as well as access to the website, Anchor by Spotify, to post the podcasts. Additionally, I will be using an iPhone 11 to take photographs of the

interviewee if they come to campus. To design the graphics Canva will be utilized to allow for easy editing access down the road where Adobe Programs may not be available.

Evaluation

Blue Jay Journeys has been an immensely fun project to work on and I have learned a tremendous amount of what it requires to act as a Public Relations Specialist. When I look back to evaluate the work, I have created I can measure the success using different variables. The first variable I was able to use to evaluate my work was individual feedback sessions. I met with six individuals in various departments around Etown. Each individual was shown the Facebook, Instagram, and Story post which was designed. Then feedback was collected, both criticism and praise. All of the feedback was compiled together to redesign and create the template for the posts which was then used for all six posts. These individual feedback sessions proved to be extremely helpful and allowed me to design a post that best served the audience I was attempting to reach. This feedback leads to the next variable which allows me to measure the success of these social media posts.

With every social media to Facebook and Instagram, analysts are given to view the interaction the posts are receiving. This allows me to view the analytics from before the posts were promoted and compare them to after the posts had been promoted. These analytics allow me to view the growth or shrinkage of the social media post, see how many interactions there way, which would be a like or a view, and allow me to see how many more people have followed the page since posting. The analytics will still prove helpful in the future and will allow measurements to be viewed in a few months. This will help aid in seeing how beneficial the posts were.

Overall, when evaluating the work I have completed I can see the growth the social media pages have gotten, as well as the personal growth I have made through all the research I have collected.