

Delivering ‘just in time’ information written by students for students via the blog, “That’s what SHE said”.

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Abstract

The College of Science, Health & Engineering (SHE) student blog, “That’s what SHE said” was first piloted in 2016 to help students to build a sense of belonging to the college and engage with timely information around social, administrative and academic elements of university life. In 2016 the blog has seen over 16000 pageviews by nearly 6,000 users, with over 30% of users returning. The blog is managed and written by current SHE students, providing essential information in an informal and engaging manner.

Providing timely information in a dynamic and engaging format

Widening participation in the tertiary sector has led to more diverse student cohorts attending university. It is essential the college develops strategies to engage these students, providing sign posts to guide them through university and assist them to develop a sense of belonging to their course, campus and college. Increasing student’s sense of belonging and “fit” has been shown to increase persistence and graduation (Lizzio, 2006).

To assist students in the SHE College to build a sense of belonging to the SHE College and provide timely information, the Student Transition, Achievement and Retention (STAR) team developed the “That’s what SHE said” blog. The blog is aimed at current SHE students with a primary focus on undergraduate students. The blog is written by student interns and has enabled the college to engage with its students in a more targeted and coordinated manner. Content includes social, academic, administrative, enrichment and career related information and aligns with the student lifecycle.

To ensure representation from the different student cohorts in the college, three interns write and administer the blog. The current interns are informed by their life experiences and backgrounds (mature age, single parent; international, residential; NESB, residential). This increases the blogs reach and authenticity. “Guest bloggers” are encouraged from the regional campuses to share their experiences. From March 2016 – December 2016 there were more than 16,000 pageviews, with nearly 6,000 users accessing the blog and with 31% returning to the blog. Definite spikes were apparent, resulting from marketing campaigns at key times in the student life cycle (e.g. orientation, census, end of year exams).

References

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