

The Miami Student

Social Media Content Strategy Plan

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Editor-in-Chief
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Dear Mr. Vinel and The Miami Student,

The purpose of this report is to present research-based recommendations for The Miami Student's social media content strategy. Through close examination of the current approach, as well as extensive interviews and a mini social media campaign, I've found areas where The Miami Student (TMS) can tailor their social media presence to appeal to all audience demographics on all social media platforms. These recommendations include what sort of content to post, when to post it, and how content on different social media channels should be tweaked in order to better suit the affordances of the platforms.

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this content strategy is to be sure that TMS is taking advantage of its social media accounts in order to best promote the online and print content that is published weekly, as well as inform students about the experience they will have, should they choose to join TMS.

This plan lays out detailed recommendations to help TMS play to the strengths of each social media platform, as well as scheduling online content in a meaningful way. The plan overall will further encourage followers to read TMS stories online, pick up copies of the print newspaper, and to join TMS as writers, photographers, designers, or editors.

METHODS

In order to completely understand TMS's approach, and whether or not its current online presence meets the needs of its users, I conducted research through multiple methods. First, I

conducted a deep rhetorical analysis of their current posts. Then, I created a social media campaign built around my new recommendations. I conducted usability research on both the current content and the new campaign with a diverse group of TMS followers. I supplemented this with research with literature and articles on rhetorical velocity, and multimodal composition, such as Melanie Gagich's *An Introduction to and Strategies for Multimodal Composing*, and "COMPOSING FOR RECOMPOSITION: RHETORICAL VELOCITY AND DELIVERY," by Jim Ridolfo and Dànielle Nicole DeVoss

Rhetorical analysis

In my rhetorical analysis, I looked at TMS's current online content through the lens of current literature on multimodal composition, and online rhetorical velocity. I was able to pinpoint spots where TMS is doing well, and also where they seem to be lacking, and could use some improvement. Examining how they used different social media platforms, and how the audience members are more likely to engage on some platforms than others was key to my findings and recommendations.

Social media campaign

My social media campaign took the key recommendations from my rhetorical analysis, and put them into practice. In six posts across three different social media platforms, I looked at what affordances each social media platform had, and then tailored the content being posted to each platform so that it would encourage interaction and re-sharing as much as possible.

Usability research

My usability research focused around first finding what real TMS followers like about their current social media presence, then showing them the campaign I had created for them, in order to see what they liked, and what wasn't as interesting to them. My research group consisted of three 20 year-old male Miami students, one 19 year-old female Miami student, and one 59 year-old Miami faculty member. Two of the Miami students currently work for The Miami Student, while two of them have not ever been involved with TMS. The faculty member is an Oxford resident, has been teaching at Miami for over 20 years, and is the parent of two Miami alumni and one current student (who also works for TMS).

My main research questions were:

1. Is our social media presence informative and interesting to members of the Oxford community?
2. Is the content posted on each social media account should be tailored to best fit the features and affordances of the respective platform? Is commenting, discussion, and resharing encouraged and easy to do?
3. What do our current followers feel is missing from our social media presence?

FINDINGS

From the research I conducted this semester, I have made a few key findings.

Is our current social media presence informative and interesting to members of the Oxford community?

- According to my findings, yes, but the posts could be better and more interesting and informative. All research subjects said that they go to TMS to find and read Miami University news. Most of them said they also go to find Oxford news and read student opinions as well. Only two said that they are interested in the visuals that we post, going on our social media pages for the week's photos or graphics. Most subjects considered the Twitter thread to be the most useful, as the thread appeared that it could be updated with new info at any time. However, others liked the single tweet with photos more, citing that they preferred being linked to content rather than seeing it in tweet form. They found the single tweet with photos of pumpkins to be most visually appealing, because of the multiple photos as well.

Is the content posted on each social media account should be tailored to best fit the features and affordances of the respective platform? Is commenting, discussion, and resharing encouraged and easy to do?

- Users felt most compelled to comment on posts on Twitter, because of how the platform encourages discussion. One user said "I would probably quote the thread and give my take on the story." Those who felt compelled to reshare posts on other platforms only said so because they didn't use Twitter as much.

What do our current followers feel is missing from our social media presence?

- Users commented that there wasn't much opportunity for engagement (comments, reshares) across the platforms. The tweets that I mocked up, which have many avenues

for resharing and discussion, seemed to be the most popular despite not being so different from the current content already being posted on the TMS Twitter account. Making a few differences, like a thread or posting photos with the link, did seem to help. Another user commented that they'd like a more comprehensive way to view what stories each section came out with each week.

RECOMMENDATIONS

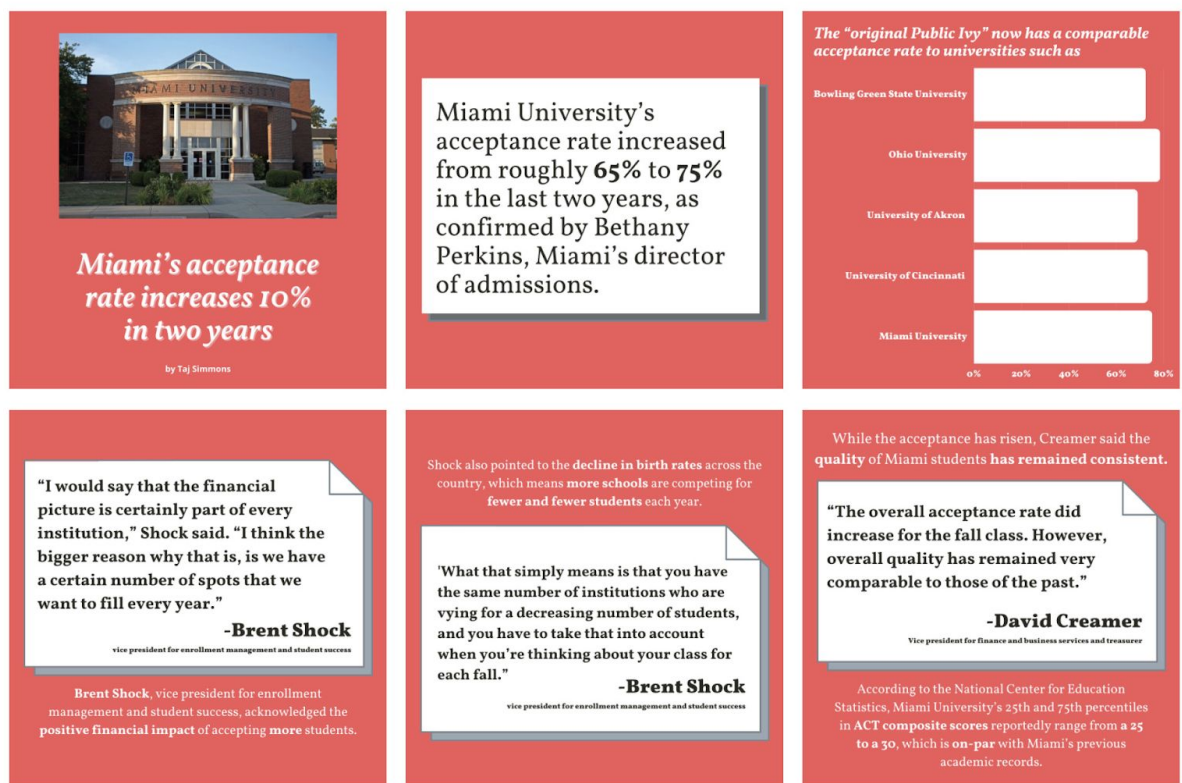
Substance:

1. **Audience:** The current audience of TMS can be categorized into two groups: students, and non-students. There are different ratios of these two groups in the followings of different TMS social media accounts. For example, the Instagram page is mostly followed by Miami students, while the Facebook sees more traffic from alumni, and Oxford locals who are interested in seeing more local news coverage. These two groups will be interested in different types of posts. Students will be interested in on-campus news and event coverage, as well as posts with information about how to get involved as a member of TMS, while Oxford locals will be more interested in breaking local news and city council coverage.
2. **Messaging:** My core strategy statement states: The Miami Student aims to inform the Miami University and Oxford communities about local news, as well as to hone the skills and amplify the voices of student writers, photographers, and designers. Our content will notify our followers about breaking news, promote articles as they are posted, and show the opportunities and experiences that students will have should they decide to join the TMS community, all in a consistent (but not monotonous) way. To do this, TMS will need to make use of their three social media accounts in different ways that take advantage of each platform's affordances, and follower demographics.

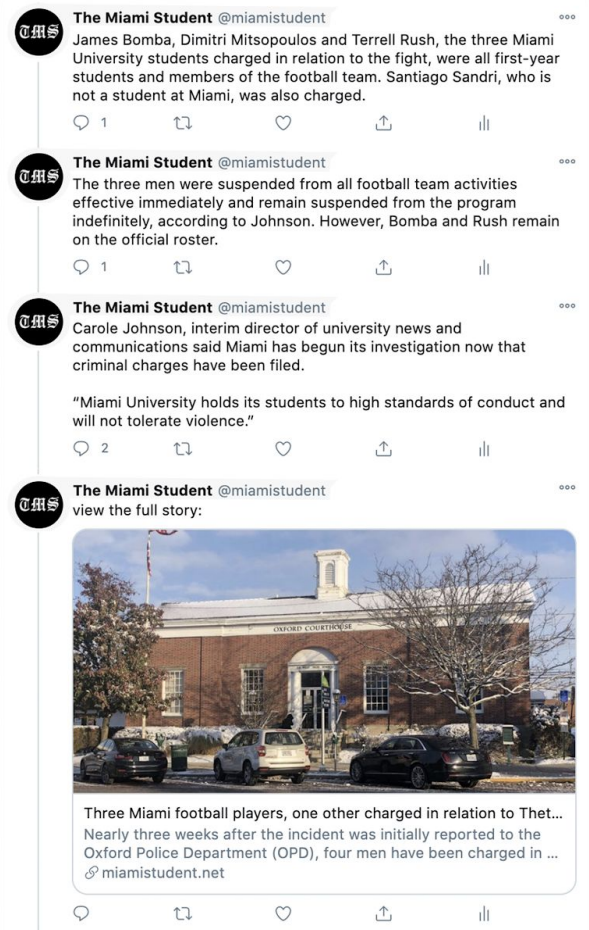
Our messaging framework states:

- a. Audience members should think: "As a media/journalism student, joining The Miami Student will allow me to apply what I am learning in class to the real world, and also to join a tightly knit community of like-minded students. I know this because I see their consistent stream of accurate, trustworthy reporting and interesting columns alongside photos about their core editorial board members, who seem like they have similar backgrounds to me."

- b. Or: “As a news reader, I can trust The Miami Student to report local news fairly, and to publish stimulating culture and opinion writing as well. I know this because they quote from reliable university sources, and post visually appealing photos and illustrations to accompany their work. Furthermore, seeing content about the individual students behind the paper shows me that their writing really represents the young, powerful voice of the Miami University student body.”
3. **Topics/types of posts:** My posts focused around making sure that the affordances and audiences of the different social media platforms complimented the content being posted:



- a. This post reformats information from news stories into a format that is readable and reshareable on Instagram. Because links cannot be posted into Instagram captions, this format allows for the content of the story to be shared directly into the Instagram feed. It also allows for more discussion, as the increased amount of information on the post allows for more things for users to comment on.



b. This post differs from the typical TMS tweet, formatting the information as a thread. This allows TMS to post more information from the stories in the tweet, and also allows for more interaction, as audience members can quote tweet individual tweets from the thread with their takes.

4. **Purpose:** Content will serve three main purposes

- a. News: Promoting recently published stories, live coverage of sports games and other events.
- b. Issues: Promoting the weekly print issue, and the email newsletter.
- c. Organization: encouraging students to join TMS.

5. **Voice and tone:** The tone should be kept professional and trustworthy, as many Oxford residents rely on the social media accounts for breaking news. However, a more personal tone can be taken on in posts promoting the newspaper as a student organization to

other students. This would be most appropriate on Instagram, where the follower base is mostly students.

6. **Sources:** Content is created by writers and section editors. For example, news writers will write social media captions for their stories (they already do this), editors will schedule the posts throughout the week. Graphic instagram posts will be created in collaboration between section editors and designers. For example, for the Instagram Slide post above, a news editor would select the quotes and data points, and a designer would make graphs of the data and lay out the quotes into the 6 slide post.

Structure

1. Content will be formatted as Tweets with images, Twitter threads, Facebook posts with images, Instagram stories, Instagram slide posts.
 - a. Tweets, Twitter threads, and Facebook posts will be most effective for posting breaking news coverage. This is due to the audience base on these platforms being more non-students than students, and due to the fact that links can be posted directly in the captions of these posts, allowing quick access to the full story on miamistudent.net.
 - b. Instagram slides will be used to create simplified versions of the news stories, presented in short quotes and infographics, as they can be re-shared and reappropriated by users on their Instagram stories, improving rhetorical velocity.
 - c. Instagram story stills will be used to promote the print issues and newsletters. This is best on stories because the content only stays up for 24 hours, reflecting the time-sensitive nature of the weekly issue and weekly newsletter.
 - d. Instagram story videos will be used to promote TMS as a student organization, featuring takeovers from staff members, providing a casual, personal idea of what it is like to work at TMS. This works best on the Instagram due to its mostly student follower base.

Workflow & Governance: (guidelines for ensuring your story and content and structure are maintained)

1. **Branding & style guide** Consistency matters to make sure TMS keeps its image as trustworthy and reliable. Keeping a consistent style for each type of post will make

reading and interacting with posts overall easier and not confusing. To keep consistent with TMS’s main print presence, infographic posts will use the same font (Vollkorn) and color scheme (red, white, and black), to keep the branding consistent while not being overbearing.

2. Weekly social media calendar:

SUN	MON	TUES	WEDS	THURS	FRI	SAT
IG:	IG: - Video from newspaper production (stories)	IG: - Print issue release post (stories)	IG: - News story infographic (slides)	IG: - Friday’s newsletter promotion (stories)	IG: Culture photo story (slides)	IG: - Staff member takeover (stories)
TWT:	TWT:	TWT: 2 news stories (one thread, one photo story) 2 culture photo story editorial	TWT 2 news stories 2 culture photo story 1 Special story	TWT 2 news stories 1 culture story 1 opinion	TWT 1 news stories 1 Special story	TWT 1 Special story
FB	FB 2 news stories (one thread, one photo story) 2 culture photo story	FB: 2 news stories (one thread, one photo story) 2 culture photo story 1 special story editorial	FB: 2 news stories 2 culture photo story 1 Special story	FB: 2 news stories 1 culture story 1 opinion	FB 1 news stories 1 Special story	FB

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this content strategy report is to create a sustainable and meaningful plan of action for TMS’s social media content, all while taking the users needs and expectations, and our platforms’ affordances and disaffordances into consideration to provide maximum value to our readers, as well as encourage engagement, circulation, and re-sharing of our content.

Below, please view the example social media posts that were created for TMS, each with a caption explaining how and why they work best on each platform, based on usability research I conducted.

CITATIONS

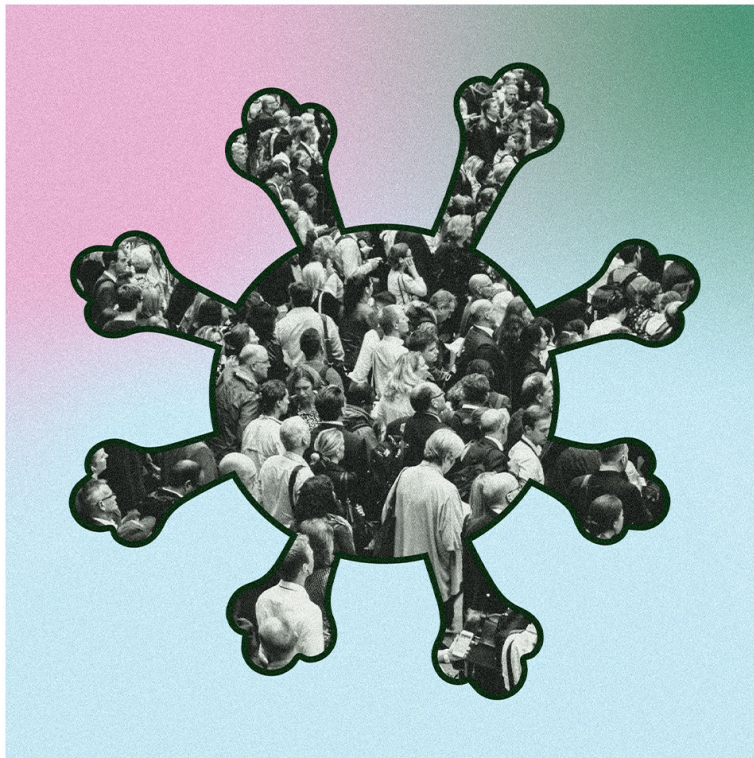
Ridolfo, J., & DeVoss, D. N. (2009, January 15). Composing for Recomposition: Rhetorical Velocity and Delivery. Retrieved December 09, 2020, from http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/13.2/topoi/ridolfo_devoss/intro.html

Gagich, M. (2020). An Introduction to and Strategies for Multimodal Composing. In *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing* (Vol. 3, pp. 65-85). Anderson, SC: Parlor Press LLC.

TMS The Miami Student

Today at 19:33 · 🌐

Students joke about intentionally getting infected in the name of herd immunity, but potential risks to students and the community make this a dangerous idea. www.miamistudent.net/article/2020/10/what-is-...



👍 Like

💬 Comment

➦ Share

👍❤️👹 1.035

Write something...



Post 1

Platform: Facebook

Rationale: This post features a link to a The Miami Student story, with its respective graphic. However, the post differs from how stories are currently posted on the TMS Facebook page, as it attaches the graphic to the story as a photo, which will make it appear in the photos tab on Facebook. This will allow visitors to the page to search through content by seeing the visual aspect first, and also scroll through photos that have been posted in the past.



The Miami Student
@miamistudent

...

Nearly 3 weeks after the incident was initially reported to the Oxford Police Department, 4 men have been charged in relation to the fight outside the Theta Chi house that resulted in multiple injuries.



10:58 AM · Oct 29, 2020 · Twitter Web App

||| View Tweet activity



The Miami Student @miamistudent

...

Replying to

Theta Chi members report getting beaten with their own golf clubs – some members even sustaining bruised ribs, mild concussions and eye injuries. Four Theta Chi fraternity members were taken to McCullough-Hyde Memorial Hospital following the incident.



The Miami Student @miamistudent

...

James Bomba, Dimitri Mitsopoulos and Terrell Rush, the three Miami University students charged in relation to the fight, were all first-year students and members of the football team. Santiago Sandri, who is not a student at Miami, was also charged.



The Miami Student @miamistudent

...

The three men were suspended from all football team activities effective immediately and remain suspended from the program indefinitely, according to Johnson. However, Bomba and Rush remain on the official roster.



The Miami Student @miamistudent

...

Carole Johnson, interim director of university news and communications said Miami has begun its investigation now that criminal charges have been filed.

"Miami University holds its students to high standards of conduct and will not tolerate violence."



The Miami Student @miamistudent

...

view the full story:



Three Miami football players, one other charged in relation to Thet...
Nearly three weeks after the incident was initially reported to the Oxford Police Department (OPD), four men have been charged in ...
miamistudent.net



Post 2

Platform: Twitter

Rationale: This post differs from the typical TMS tweet format because it presents bites of information from the story as a thread of multiple posts. This allows users to comment on more specific pieces of information from the story, and have a more detailed and engaged discussion of the story content on Twitter. This increased discussion will promote resharing of TMS related content



The Miami Student

@miamistudent



"One Halloween tradition stands strong in the face of the coronavirus. One activity can be safely and enjoyably undertaken, no matter the conditions of the outside world: pumpkin carving."

Read more:

miamistudent.net/article/2020/1...

(photos and story by Duard Headley)



Post 3

Platform: Twitter

Rationale: Similar to the Facebook post, this tweet posts the photos from the story as attachments to the tweet, rather than using the visual that would be created by posting the link to the story. Because of this, the photos will appear in the "Media" tab on the TMS Twitter, allowing users to scroll through our history of photos that have been run with stories, and for our Media tab to stay up to date with what is being posted.

The Miami Student

Tuesday, October 6

Post 4

Platform: Instagram story

Rationale: Instagram is the best place to post content related to the print newspaper, because students are more likely to use Instagram, and also more likely to be on campus, where the newspaper can be picked up. This post would be posted on the same morning that the newspaper is released, encouraging students to go get it while it is hot off the presses.

The Miami Student
ESTABLISHED 1866 • OLDEST COLLEGE NEWSPAPER WEST OF THE ALLEGHENIES
VOLUME 149 No. 3 TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2020 MIAMI UNIVERSITY — OXFORD, OHIO

What is herd immunity, and what would it mean at Miami?

SEAN SCOTT
THE MIAMI STUDENT

More than 1,500 Miami University students have tested positive for COVID-19 since Aug. 27 — nearly 10% of the total student population. As infections continue to rise, many students have joked about getting infected intentionally in the name of herd immunity. But for the health professionals informing Miami's response to the pandemic, this trend has dangerous implications for the Oxford community.

Herd immunity occurs when a large majority of a population becomes resistant to an infectious disease, significantly slowing the disease's spread. Resistance can come in the form of a vaccination or antibodies from a previous infection.

Generally, anywhere from 90 to 95% of a population needs to be resistant to a disease to achieve herd immunity. The exact percentage changes from disease to disease based on factors like rate of infection and how long immunity lasts.

Jennifer Baller, health commissioner for Butler County, said this metric can be hard to nail down for new diseases like COVID-19.

"Immunity to COVID by having had the disease seems to last only about 3 months," Baller wrote in an email to *The Miami Student*. "Getting an entire population immune is fleeting and needs to be re-established over and over again. Indeed, it may never be adequately established via disease only and would require vaccination in addition to disease."

Eileen Bridge, an associate professor of microbiology at Miami, explained that any potential vaccine for the coronavirus will first have to make it through Phase 3 testing for safety and effectiveness before it can be approved by the FDA.

"Normally, this is a process of years rather than months," Bridge said. "I don't necessarily think that

fast-tracking the vaccine is wrong, but I do think it needs to be done cautiously."

For Grace Connors, a sophomore public health major, whether or not to take the vaccine is an open question.

"That's a very fast turnaround," Connors said. "Vaccines are known to have some complications from time to time. But also from the perspective of looking out for everyone else, I would feel rather inclined to get it, especially if there's enough push toward the concept that it would get the nation back to some sort of normalcy or reduce deaths and cases."

Despite potential complications associated with the eventual COVID-19 vaccine, Bridge and Baller agree that intentionally getting infected with COVID-19 for temporary immunity is unnecessarily dangerous for students.

"While most young adults get mild cases, immuno-compromising or getting a disease can be dangerous

MIAMI WILL FOLLOW THE LEAD OF UNIVERSITIES LIKE OHIO STATE IN THE DECISION TO ELIMINATE THE TRADITIONAL, WEEK-LONG SPRING BREAK AND REPLACE IT WITH FIVE 'READING DAYS' THROUGHOUT THE 2021 SPRING SEMESTER.

Just as the fall calendar was rearranged around Thanksgiving to reduce potential travel and prevent the spread of coronavirus, the same is being done to the spring semester schedule.

In an email to the Miami community, Provost Jason Osborne said this new plan allows the university to continue with the same winter and summer terms, but it is still subject to change.

"It is to try to keep this Oxford bubble as tight as we can for as long as we can to reduce risk," said Joyce Rowland, vice president for student affairs.

But spring semester is a long semester with very few breaks, even in a traditional academic year. To mitigate this, five "reading days" will be substituted in each of different weeks, all on different days of the week.

Students are getting the same amount of time off, just dispersed. By spreading the days out like this, Miami is still meeting the state's instructional hour requirements while attempting to keep students safe.

"I just wish [the reading days] weren't sporadically placed and instead [were] random Fridays so we could get a three-day weekend," said Sydney Cain, a sophomore psychology and theatre double major.

According to Rowland, this is exactly what is trying to be avoided, as long weekends might leave students more likely to have campus or have social events. But some students

AN NEARLY 10% OF MIAMI STUDENTS TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 SINCE AUGUST 27, BUT HEALTH OFFICIALS SAY THAT IS A DANGEROUS TRENDS TO WATCH WITH URGENT ACTION OVER HERE

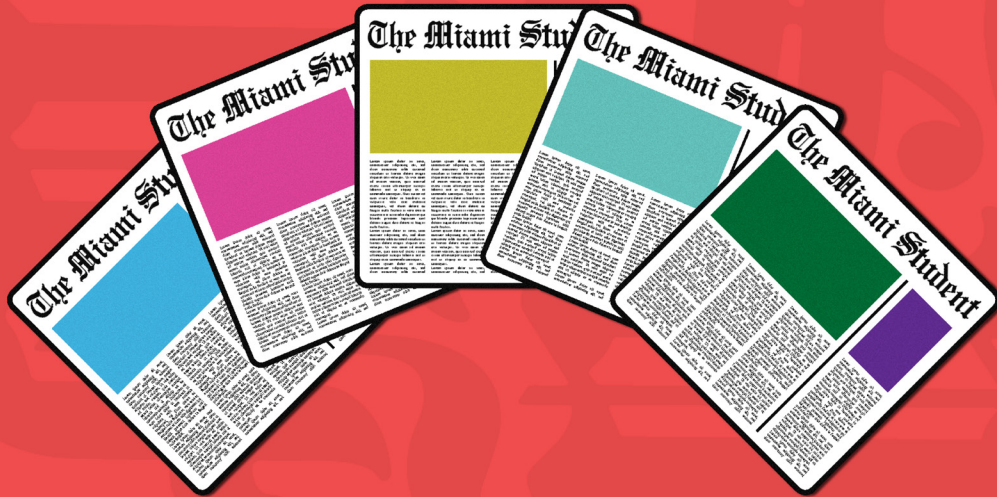
Miami replaces spring break with scattered "reading days"

JENNA CALDERÓN
ASST. CULTURE EDITOR

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

this week's issue, on newstands now!

The Miami Student



**Our top 5 stories,
in your inbox every week!**

Sign up for The Miami Student's
newsletter at miamistudent.net

Post 4

Platform: Instagram main feed

Rationale: This post promotes the student's weekly newsletter, which aggregates the top most important stories of the week, and sends them into the mailbox of the user. This graphic is visually interesting, and because it is not related to any specific articles, will stand out to those who are scrolling. It is also a main feed post, which users are able to reshare onto their stories, increasing the post's rhetorical velocity.

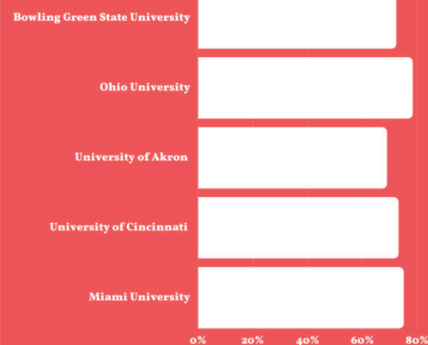


Miami's acceptance rate increases 10% in two years

by Taj Simmons

Miami University's acceptance rate increased from roughly 65% to 75% in the last two years, as confirmed by Bethany Perkins, Miami's director of admissions.

The "original Public Ivy" now has a comparable acceptance rate to universities such as



"I would say that the financial picture is certainly part of every institution," Shock said. "I think the bigger reason why that is, is we have a certain number of spots that we want to fill every year."

-Brent Shock

vice president for enrollment management and student success

Brent Shock, vice president for enrollment management and student success, acknowledged the positive financial impact of accepting more students.

Shock also pointed to the decline in birth rates across the country, which means more schools are competing for fewer and fewer students each year.

"What that simply means is that you have the same number of institutions who are vying for a decreasing number of students, and you have to take that into account when you're thinking about your class for each fall."

-Brent Shock

vice president for enrollment management and student success

While the acceptance has risen, Creamer said the quality of Miami students has remained consistent.

"The overall acceptance rate did increase for the fall class. However, overall quality has remained very comparable to those of the past."

-David Creamer

Vice president for finance and business services and treasurer

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, Miami University's 25th and 75th percentiles in ACT composite scores reportedly range from a 25 to a 30, which is on-par with Miami's previous academic records.

Post 6

Platform: Instagram slides

Rationale: This post reformats information from news stories into a format that is readable and reshareable on Instagram. Because links cannot be posted into Instagram captions, this format allows for the content of the story to be viewed directly into the Instagram feed. It also allows for more discussion, as the increased amount of information on the post allows for more things for users to comment on.