



2016 Executive Report

Twitter Rankings and Best Practices: University Edition

By Meltwater Executive Alerts



Where does your university rank on True Engagement Measure?

True Engagement Measure accounts for a university's inbound mentions and engagement on outbound posts, standardized across all universities, to hone in on a more accurate and fair measure of a university's Twitter engagement.

We studied the Twitter accounts of 150 of the top universities in the United States, collecting dozens of data points about their engagement rates, followers, posting activity, and frequent content types using our proprietary Executive Alerts tool.

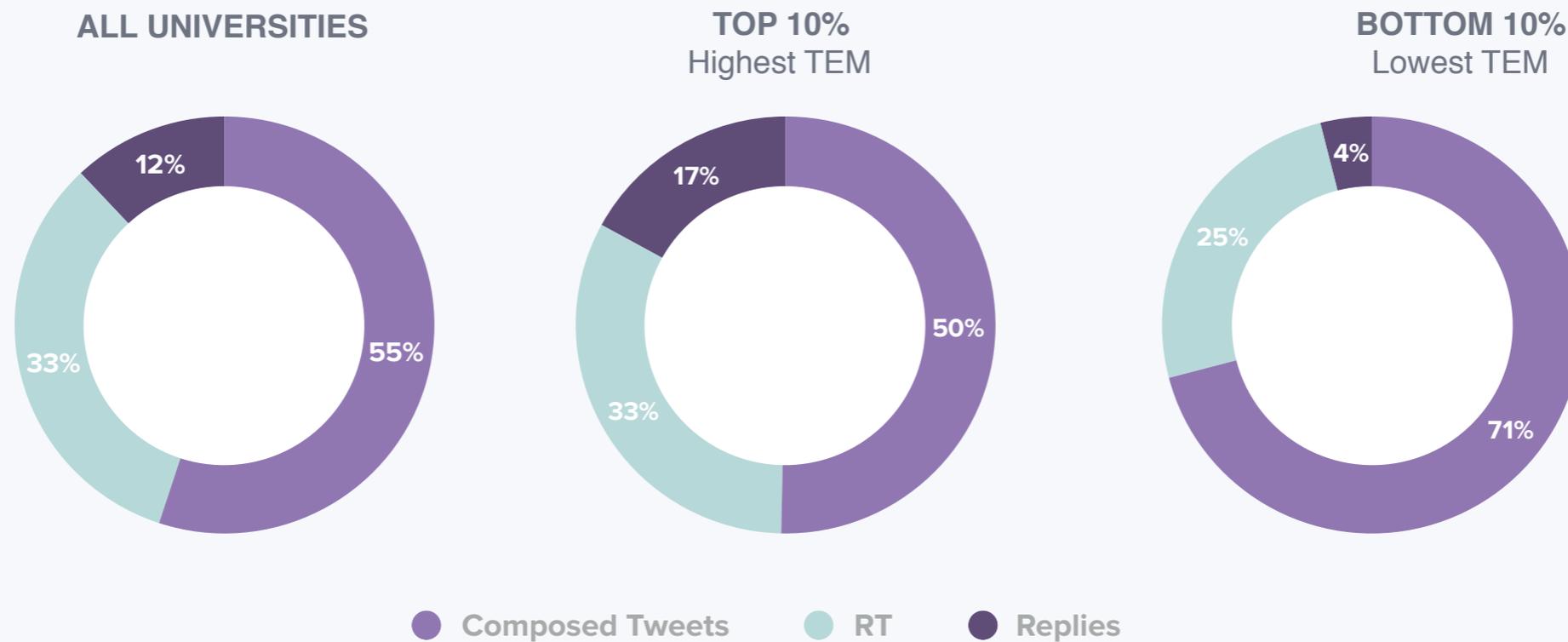
University Ranking on True Engagement Measure

1. University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
2. University of Wisconsin - Madison
3. Texas A&M University - College Station
4. University of Texas-Austin
5. Syracuse University
6. Howard University
7. University of Florida
8. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
9. University of California - Davis
10. Harvard University
11. Michigan State University
12. Oregon State University
13. Baylor University
14. University of Missouri
15. Emory University
16. University of Notre Dame
17. Georgetown University
18. Brigham Young University - Provo
19. Clemson University
20. Florida State University
21. The Catholic University of America
22. University of Washington (Seattle)
23. University of California - Los Angeles
24. Indiana University - Bloomington
25. Marquette University
26. University of Cincinnati
27. University of Southern California
28. Stanford University
29. University of Massachusetts-Amherst
30. Temple University
31. Colorado State University
32. George Washington University
33. Duke University
34. North Carolina State University - Raleigh
35. University of Arizona
36. American University
37. University of California - Berkeley
38. Georgia Institute of Technology
39. University of Virginia
40. University of Utah
41. Washington State University
42. University of Dayton
43. University of Oregon
44. University of South Carolina
45. University of California - Santa Barbara
46. University of California - Irvine
47. Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey - New Brunswick
48. University of Oklahoma
49. University of Connecticut
50. Iowa State University
51. New York University
52. Seton Hall University
53. University of Illinois - Urbana-Champaign
54. Texas Christian University
55. University of Georgia
56. Virginia Tech
57. University of Tennessee
58. Pennsylvania State University - University Park
59. Columbia University
60. Arizona State University - Tempe
61. University of Chicago
62. Yale University
63. University of California - San Diego
64. Boston College
65. Purdue University - West Lafayette
66. University at Buffalo - SUNY
67. Miami University - Oxford
68. Vanderbilt University
69. Boston University
70. College of William and Mary
71. University of Maryland - College Park
72. Wake Forest University
73. University of Delaware
74. Northeastern University
75. Case Western Reserve University
76. San Diego State University
77. Washington University in St. Louis
78. University of Pennsylvania
79. California Institute of Technology
80. University of Miami
81. Ohio State University - Columbus
82. University of Iowa
83. Worcester Polytechnic Institute
84. University of California - Riverside
85. University of California - Santa Cruz
86. University of Arkansas
87. Northwestern University
88. University of San Francisco
89. University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
90. George Mason University
91. University of St. Thomas
92. Brown University
93. Pepperdine University
94. Carnegie Mellon University
95. Cornell University
96. Drexel University
97. University of Nebraska - Lincoln
98. Binghamton University - SUNY
99. Auburn University
100. University of Pittsburgh
101. Hofstra University
102. Duquesne University
103. University of New Hampshire
104. St. John Fisher College
105. Southern Methodist University
106. University of Albany - SUNY
107. University of Kansas
108. University of Colorado - Boulder
109. Tufts University
110. Dartmouth College
111. Rice University
112. University of Vermont
113. Loyola University Chicago
114. Louisiana State University - Baton Rouge
115. Michigan Technological University
116. Illinois State University
117. New School
118. University of San Diego
119. University of Illinois-Chicago
120. Kansas State University
121. Princeton University
122. University of Minnesota - Twin Cities
123. University of Texas-Dallas
124. Lehigh University
125. Stony Brook University - SUNY
126. University of Rochester
127. Johns Hopkins University
128. Tulane University
129. New Jersey Institute of Technology
130. DePaul University
131. University of Denver
132. Clarkson University
133. Oklahoma State University
134. Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey - Newark
135. University of Mississippi
136. Brandeis University
137. University of Kentucky
138. Clark University
139. Colorado School of Mines
140. Missouri University of Science & Technology
141. Fordham University
142. University of the Pacific
143. Saint Louis University
144. Stevens Institute of Technology
145. University of Alabama
146. Ohio University
147. Illinois Institute of Technology
148. University of Tulsa
149. SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
150. Yeshiva University

How do the best universities tweet?

When comparing the compositions of tweets, you can see a noticeable difference between the top and bottom 10% of universities on the TEM.

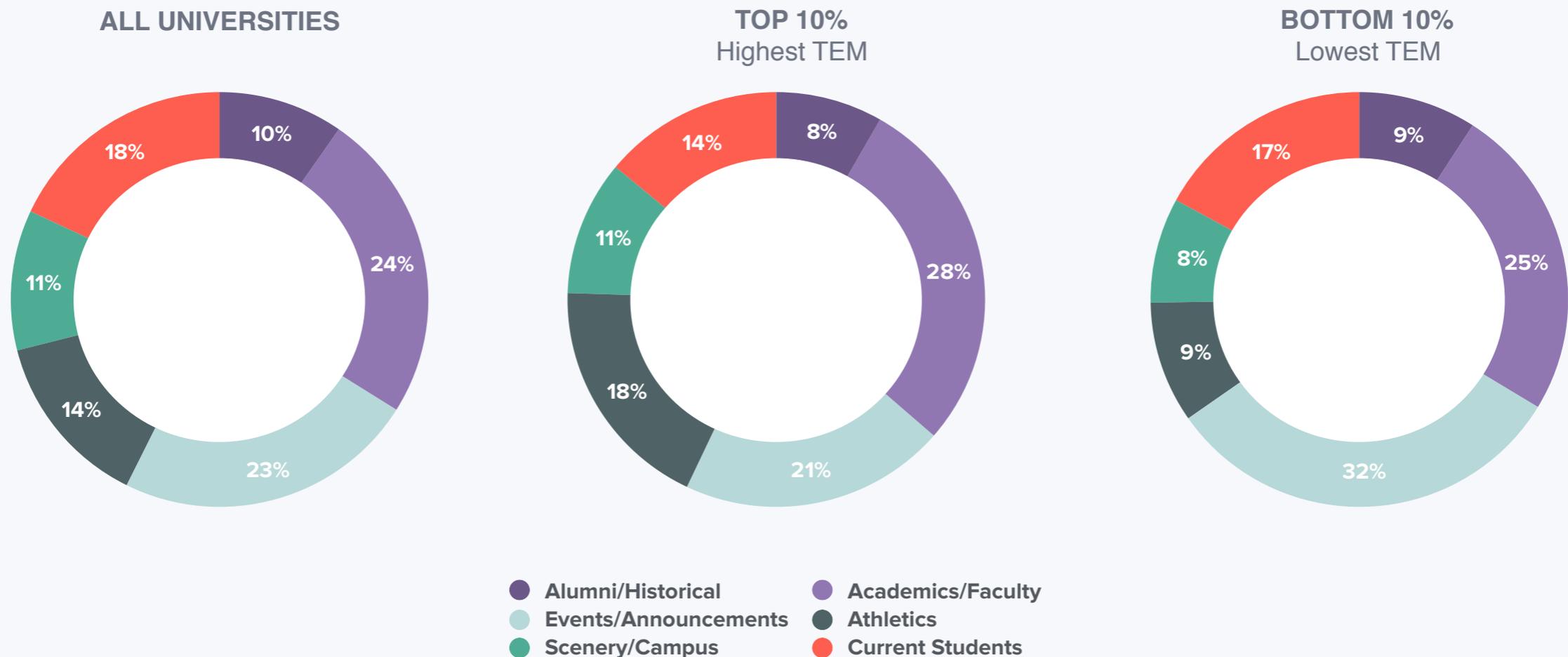
The bottom 10% rarely replies to tweets (4%) and composes a disproportionately large number of tweets (71%). The top 10%, however, replies to tweets more than four times more (17%).



Which types of content do top universities tweet about?

We broke down all the tweets into six different categories: Alumni/Historical, Events/Announcements, Scenery/Campus, Academics/Faculty, Athletics, and Current Students.

The universities who rank in the bottom 15 of TEM have a large percentage of event and announcement promotion, while lacking conversation about athletics and the campus itself.



How does TEM look across different time zones?

When we grouped schools together by time zone, the East Coast eked out a narrow victory against the West Coast on Twitter engagement. And while it looks like the schools in the Mountain time zone lag behind, there is a much smaller sample size than other regions.

PST

22
No. of Schools

13
Avg. TEM Score

26,571
Avg. School Size

UC Davis & OSU
Best Schools

MST

6
No. of Schools

1
Avg. TEM Score

23,855
Avg. School Size

BYU Provo & CSU
Best Schools

CST

38
No. of Schools

13
Avg. TEM Score

24,208
Avg. School Size

UW Madison & Texas
A&M
Best Schools

EST

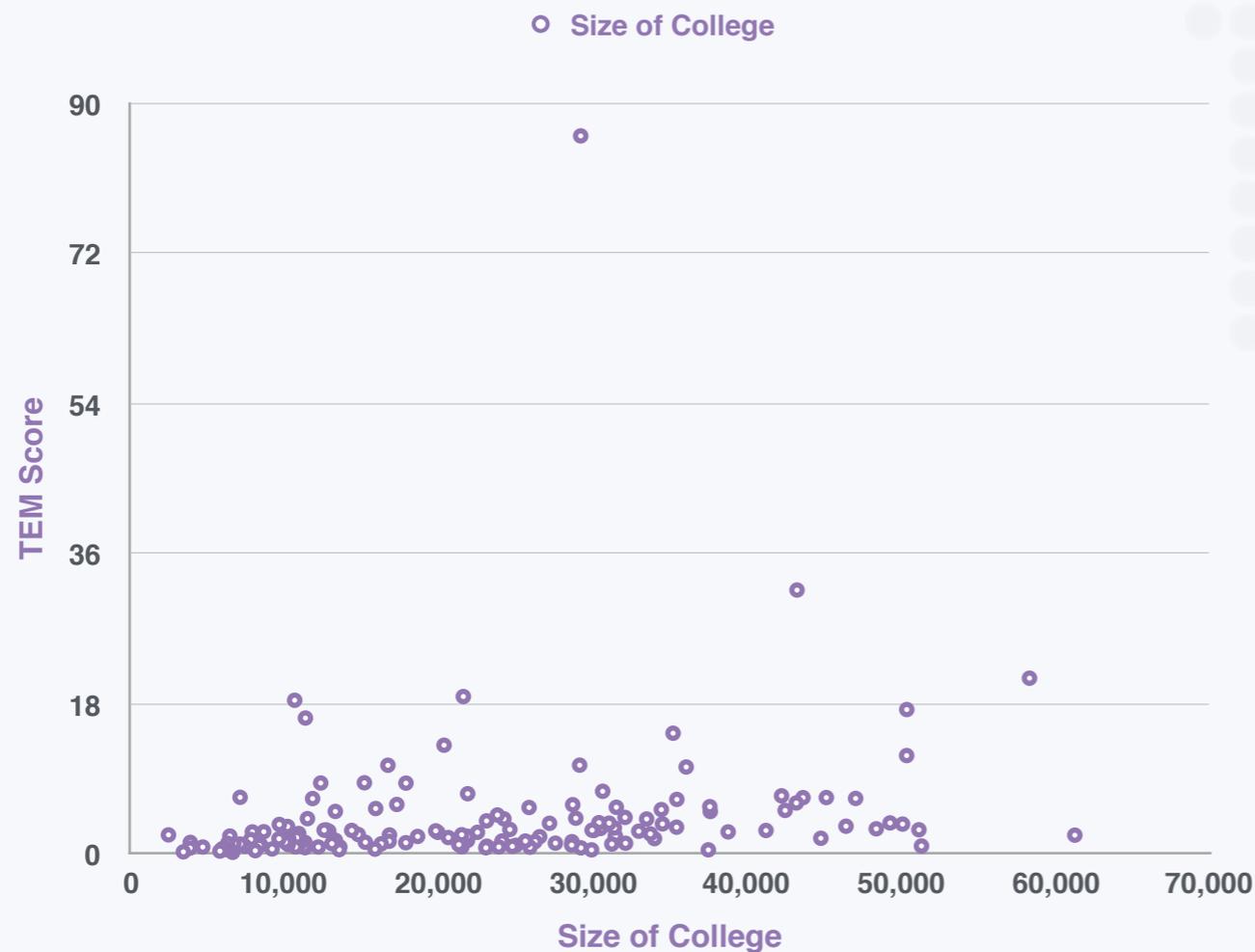
84
No. of Schools

15
Avg. TEM Score

21,141
Avg. School Size

UNC & Syracuse
Best Schools

Do universities with more students get more engagement?



The common assumption is that universities with more students should have more followers on Twitter. To our surprise, this was not necessarily true.

As the graph suggests, there is no relationship between the size of college and their respective TEM scores. This means that smaller colleges have the same opportunity to grow and engage their followers as larger universities.

Are high achieving universities more likely to have a high performing TEM?



We compared the 2016 U.S. News National Universities Rankings* list to our TEM Score rankings to determine whether or not the famed annual rankings of each university might affect their Twitter engagement. As you can see, there was no correlation at all - your ranking doesn't determine your Twitter destiny!

No. 1 in TEM Ranking

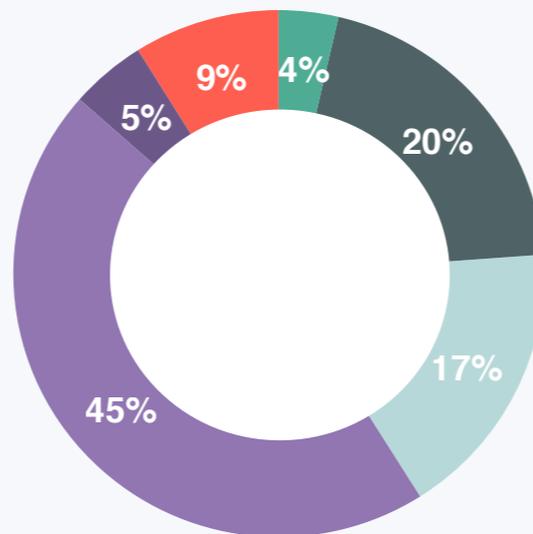
University of North Carolina (@UNC)

Case Study

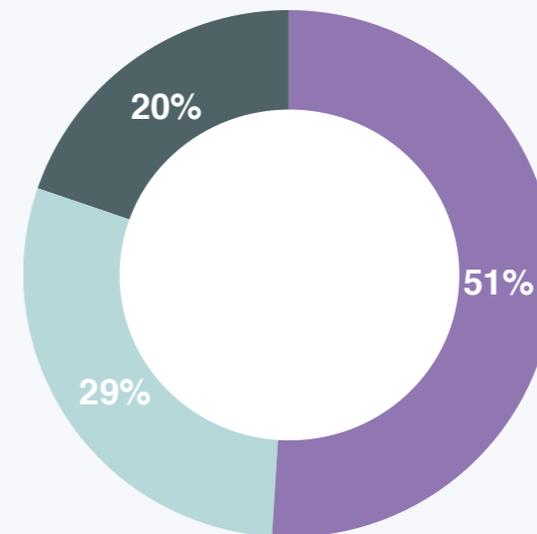
UNC's men's basketball team qualified to the NCAA Championship Game, allowing them to take over both basketball and the Twitter-verse by storm. March Madness gives 68 university teams a leg up on social media, including UNC. Although March Madness gave UNC a huge lift in engagement, they manage an overall great Twitter account that highlights their academics, campus, school spirit, and current students.

63.2K
FOLLOWERS

25.5K
MONTHLY
MENTIONS



- Alumni/Historical % of total
- Academics/Faculty % of total
- Event % of total
- Athletics % of total
- Scenery/Campus % of total
- Current Students % of total



- Composed
- RT
- Replies

UNC was 8x more engaging than the 10th place university.

Campus/School Spirit

UNC features its beautiful campus on various tweets. They created the hashtag #UNCSpring for students to engage, post, and tag photos of their campus and school spirit.

UNC-Chapel Hill @UNC

Happy Wednesday, Heels! Here's to another gorgeous #UNCSpring day 🍷 #UNC

RETWEETS 53 LIKES 164

8:33 AM - 20 Apr 2016

UNC-Chapel Hill @UNC

It may not be peanuts or Cracker Jacks, but ice cream at the ballgame is delicious — and today's #UNCSpring winner!

RETWEETS 23 LIKES 181

2:31 PM - 20 Apr 2016

UNC-Chapel Hill @UNC

As campus blooms, we want to see it through your eyes! Tag your pics this week #UNCSpring for a chance at prizes 🌸

RETWEETS 27 LIKES 130

1:09 PM - 18 Apr 2016

Current Students

UNC uses Twitter to recognize all the achievements, activities, and lives of the current students. Using colorful multimedia, UNC captures the liveliness of being a Tar Heel.



Athletics

UNC's men's basketball team dominated the conversations on Twitter after making it to the NCAA Championship Game this year. UNC had great videos, photos, and GIFs to highlight the successful basketball season.



UNC-Chapel Hill
@UNC

More than 3,000 people greeted the @UNC_Basketball team. "We are so proud of you!" #GoHeels #UNC



RETWEETS 114 LIKES 271



12:21 PM - 5 Apr 2016



UNC-Chapel Hill
@UNC

Follow

9,000+ Tar Heels are cheering on @UNC_Basketball from the Dean Smith Center. #nationalchampionship #UNC



RETWEETS 238 LIKES 593



7:18 PM - 4 Apr 2016



UNC-Chapel Hill
@UNC

Follow

Incredible game. Incredible season. Thank you, @UNC_Basketball, for all that and more. You make #UNC so incredibly proud #GoHeels

RETWEETS 286 LIKES 382



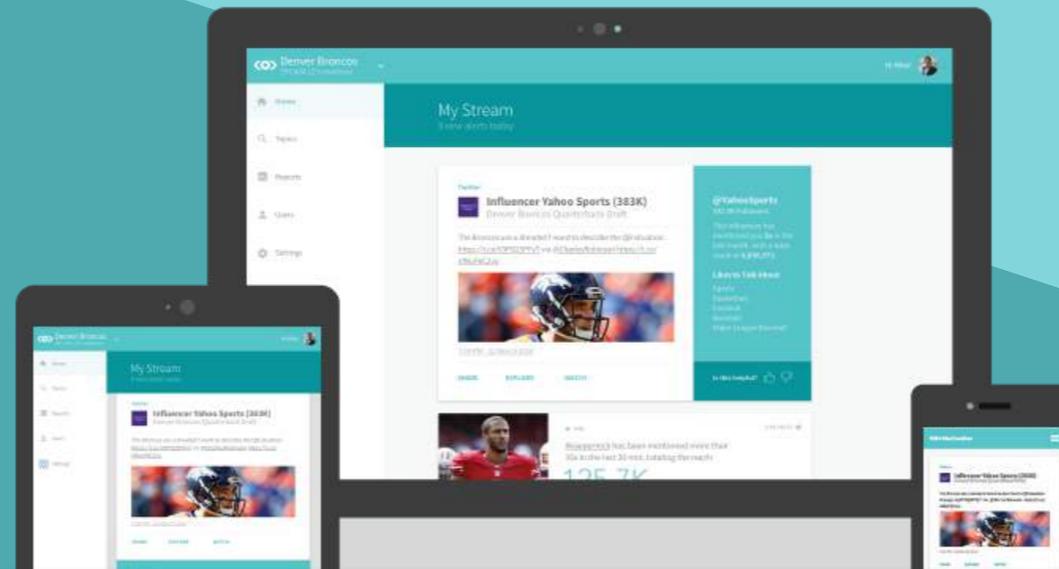
8:29 PM - 4 Apr 2016

Insights

Recommendations based on the most successful university Twitter accounts:

- Interacting with followers through retweets and replies is just as important as publishing original content - don't forget to constantly engage!
- Be sure to maintain a healthy balance between all of the different types of content. Some universities blast too many tweets about events while forgetting to profile current students, alumni, athletics, and the campus.
- Remember that your Twitter account is a brand extension of the university; avoid tweeting too often as to overwhelm your fans. Studies have shown that engagement on tweets begin to drop off after three per day.

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