

Overview

CSU Social has requested a social media communications plan for CSU's Homecoming and Family Weekend, October 6th to 9th, 2021 that includes at least 3-5 creative tactics to be shared on CSU social media platforms that will be meaningful for their students, families and alums.

The “who, what, when, where, why and how”:

Team involved: Kimberly Stern, Director; Ashley Schroeder, Asst. Director; CSU Social & Digital Team

Key issues: COVID-19's impact on public gatherings and constantly changing public health information and plans for Homecoming could potentially change. Public health requirements: masks are required indoors. The content needs to be engaging for all of CSU's audiences.

Communications systems aspects to consider: The three major platforms. There should be one creative tactic for CSU's three main platforms for Homecoming week (Instagram, Facebook and Twitter), re-contextualized for each audience.

The problem:

Creating original, engaging social media content that captures the theme of “Moving Forward in Tradition” and the importance of the first in-person Homecoming weekend since 2019 for a wide audience. Creating this content requires significant time and labor investment over a three-month period for CSU Social's team members to ensure that the content is high quality, engaging for each audience sector, and that the release of the content is timely with the events.

The goals:

The four goals for this content: Determine and plan four different types of original content for three social platforms; create high-level timeline for content creation planning; and research and determine metrics for successful engagement; create video content and copy for social media platforms.

The analysis:

CSU's Facebook reaches women, alumni, and parents/families. Given that women are more likely to like, share, and comment on content than men, it is appropriate to include feature content evoking feelings of nostalgia, togetherness, and home. Introducing new traditions also serves as a conversation starter.

CSU's Twitter targets dedicated sports fans, media, current and prospective students, and young alumni; however, this platform remains the most inconsistent in expected engagement. Given CSU's following of 64.9k followers, highest engagement is gained through video. In fact, Tweets with videos are 6x more likely to be Retweeted than Tweets with photos and 3x more than Tweets with GIFs ([Twitter Business Blog](#)).

CSU's Instagram speaks to current students, prospective students, and young alumni (25-34); women are 62% of the audience. Two-thirds of the audience is younger than 35 years of age, and approximately 80% of the audience is younger than 45 years old. CSU's Instagram stands as the most consistent platform for audience engagement in terms of likes, comments, and views, exceeding metrics and

engagement of Twitter and Facebook. Highly visual, short-form posts, in combination with highlighting user-generated content, make Instagram the choice platform.

Diagnosis:

After 18 months of social distancing with the COVID pandemic, CSU's challenge is to reengage students, alumni, and the general public back to in-person events and ease them into accepting new Homecoming traditions. With a relatively short prep period of three months, immediate, the short-term, and long-term goals are rolled into one: prepare and film a series of short videos and preview trailers for the coming events; create/follow a video release schedule on social media; and prepare and implement an Instagram takeover by students on Homecoming weekend – all designed to grab the attention of the target audiences. Filming and photography can be accomplished with the current department staff; CSU students, alumni, members of the Fort Collins community, and Cam the Ram can be accessed locally. Budget should be minimal.

Action Steps:

To promote Homecoming weekend and the new traditions that come with it, CSU will create a series of videos, targeting different audiences across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, respectively. They will also empower a selection of students to engage in an Instagram Takeover on Homecoming weekend, taking social media followers on a live tour of the events, from a first-person perspective.

The Instagram Takeover requires the cooperation of CSU students who can be trusted with the task, livestreaming from their own phones. Budget should be minimal, covering food and beverages for the students selected.

Inspired by Autonomous Sensor Meridian Response (ASMR) videos where sounds are captured up close, the videos include a series of tone poems that are behind-the-scenes looks and interviews that suggest preparation for, and nostalgia of, Homecoming. The videos are aimed at their target audiences, as outlined below. Footage would be captured by following around the subjects and getting access to their environment. Ideally, they will be short videos, with footage from each interview/behind-the-scenes/etc. divided into four videos per film subject – with three subjects, across four weeks, that would be twelve short videos, total. Videos will be released across the four weeks leading up to Homecoming (one per week on each platform), giving viewers time to make plans, and giving videos an opportunity to gain viewers. The ultimate point is to build up excitement, build up followers, and allow the videos enough time to build buzz for the events.

Current filming staff at CSU, plus any willing volunteers from the student, staff, alumni, and community, should be adequate to complete the task. Budget should be minimal, though it is recommended to at least buy lunch for those willing to participate in the videos on-camera.

The CSU Social & Digital Media team will need to spread out tasks amongst the staff, and possibly students in majors that can support any other needs of the department, to complete the videos, photos, postings, and Instagram Takeover. They will also need to reach out to alumni, donors, community members, and students, to find video subjects.

General social media metrics of past CSU Homecoming content helps determine the success of this campaign. From Homecoming 2021, CSU Social should average engagement from 2019 and 2020 content or, ideally, exceed past metrics by 10%. The Instagram student takeover should also succeed in viewership, replies, and swipe ups.

Proposed Videos:

- **Overarching theme: CHARGING FORWARD**
 - Emotion + Connection + Nostalgia + New Traditions
 - Build up excitement for getting back together, establishing new traditions
 - Aesthetically, videos follow CSU VBL guidelines and should look similar to images on CSU's Instagram page and previously made videos, for consistency.
 - Capturing the sounds of Homecoming and voices of those involved through short interviews
- **Tone Poem 1: Alumni (Facebook)**
 - Character: early- to mid-40s female alumni with kids
 - At home, photos/video of campus interspersed
 - Interview Topic: Discuss CSU memories, challenges of last 18 months, excitement for new traditions
 - Shot Suggestions: Images of CSU gear being pulled out of closet; framed photos from CSU; walking with kids; printing of photos at the Lory Student Center
 - Sample Caption: "That time of the year we celebrate our #CSUHomecoming & Family Weekend. 🐾 ❤️ Click the link for the full event list"
- **Tone Poem 2: Athletes (Twitter)**
 - Characters: Student Athletes, Cheerleaders, Community Members, Staff, Cam the Ram
 - Shot Suggestions: CSU fight song practice with marching band; pulling on football gear; running out onto field; painting lines on the field; tying shoes; rustling pompoms; whistle blows
 - Interview Topic: Discuss CSU sports/events experiences, challenges of the last 18 months, excitement for new traditions
 - Sample Caption: "Calling all RAMS, it's GAME DAY! 🏈 ❤️ #CSUHomecoming"
- **Tone Poem 3: Current Students (Instagram)**
 - Characters: 2-3 groups of current students who live and hang out together
 - Shot suggestions: Getting ready for game; painting faces; putting on their green; looking around as they walk towards stadium; Cam the Ram walking with student handlers on textured concrete near stadium
 - Interview topic: Discuss CSU social life experience, challenges of last 18 months, excitement for new traditions
 - Sample Captions: "Let the good times roll! 🐾 ❤️ #ColoradoState #CSUHomecoming"