

SoCal University Turns to ZeeMee as Gen Z Facebook Usage Declines

Overview

A private, Christian liberal arts college with its main campus on the beautiful Point Loma oceanfront in San Diego, California, Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU) enjoys a phenomenal brand affinity among students. Yet while it was continuing to hit its enrollment goals year-over-year, the school needed to find stronger engagement opportunities in order to increase yield and reduce melt.

Challenges

- While the admissions team had historically used Facebook to connect with students, it found that it needed a place to create a more active community, especially as Generation Z adoption and usage of Facebook continued to decline.
- Point Loma saw that students were melting at a high rate during the long transition months between deposit and enrollment.
- The university realized it needed a tool to foster real, consistent connection with students throughout the admissions funnel.

Solution

Point Loma turned to ZeeMee, drawn by the app's ability for students to create and share organic, authentic content—in real-time.

"With Generation Z students, they're not just wanting the pretty website with the info that they feel like is completely accurate because the admissions staff is posting it online—they're wanting the full 360-view of what the students actually think and say regarding the institution itself," said Wyatt Ehrlich, Assistant Director of Admissions at Point Loma Nazarene University.

10

STUDENT INFLUENCERS

Upload student-driven content and videos on ZeeMee to garner excitement and interaction

To kickstart the creation of student-driven content, the admissions team enlisted the help of 10 student influencers from all classes and a range of interest groups to create day-in-the-life video snapshots—from the most beautiful sunset, to a skateboarder's favorite skate spots, to a student laughing over their ice cream creations with friends in the dining hall. With ZeeMee's recent comment feature, influencer videos like these have garnered lots of excitement that has truly gotten prospective students involved—across interest groups.

"Some potential students just want to be career-focused, so they're saying I want to choose a school for me to get into the right grad program. Then there are those who are not as focused on academics and are more socially minded, and they're wanting those lifelong friends that they've seen in the movies and dreamt of having. And then there may be those who just want to do research," said Ehrlich. "So when we see them engaging on the app, we get more insight into what their interests are, and then we can target them via email or a counselor reaching out."

By looking at the custom reporting ZeeMee provides, the admissions team has also been able to create dashboards that compare data from campus visits with students' interaction on ZeeMee at different stages of the enrollment funnel. This allows PLNU to optimize its outreach efforts, including being able to now continually engage students through the typical summer melt period—helping students feel like they're part of the Point Loma community even before they step onto campus for orientation.

"In the summer, the bill is due in a couple months and angst sets in—and students can start to ask, 'Do I really want to move to San Diego for school?' By us continuing to have our students connect with each other on ZeeMee, that's a way for them to see, 'Oh yea, these are my people,'" said Ehrlich.

Results

78%

Full-time freshmen use ZeeMee

5x ↑

Increased yield rate for ZeeMee users

\$1M+

Saved in melt prevention

While PLNU initially turned to ZeeMee as a yield tool, the university quickly saw that the app also had the power to impact conversion at every stage of the funnel.

For the 2018–2019 cycle, admits who had joined the ZeeMee community yielded at 5x the rate of those who didn't join the app, and deposited students that were in the app melted at half the rate of those that were not. In contrast to Facebook, where PLNU was seeing 50% adoption from deposited students, 78% of full-time freshmen deposits were in the ZeeMee community. Based on melt prevention alone, PLNU saved over \$1M in one year.

"We have seen the benefit of students being on the app later in the funnel process, when they may say, 'Oh guys, I don't know if this is where I'm supposed to be because I can't figure out the finances,'" said Ehrlich. "And all these strangers who the prospective student has never met before rally around and give encouragement and support—and we've seen those potential students have an increase in then reaching out to the admissions team and saying, 'I wasn't sure I could make it work, but I want to give it one more shot.'"

One of the biggest values Ehrlich has found is ZeeMee's ability to provide prospective attendees the chance to see a day-in-the-life from a multiple-student perspective on campus.

"They're able to see the student that's really stressed before finals going to pet puppy dogs for stress relief, but they're also able to see the students after the final going to the cliffs and putting feet in the water and saying they're done for the weekend," Ehrlich said. "So I think they get a look at real life—and not through a three-minute, well-polished marketing video on the website."

