

# **2019** YEAR END REPORT

## UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA **OVERVIEW**

#### January 2020

Increasing the national and international awareness of the University of Georgia's world-class research, student success and extensive outreach is our priority at the Division of Marketing & Communications.

As communications channels continued to evolve in 2019, so did we. With a strong brand platform in place, we have built coordinated and responsive experiences across multiple platforms as we tell the story of this institution's upward trajectory to a variety of audiences.

Three key strategies have guided our continued transformation:

- Develop content aligned with our brand positioning, key messages and points of distinction. In 2019, we focused on our status as a top R1 institution with stories about our world-class research, and we launched the Innovation District's communications efforts to highlight the extensive entrepreneurial activity across the institution.
- Build an infrastructure for success. This year we continued to roll out tools, systems and best practices that improve efficiency and bring stories to life on an array of platforms. Improved partnerships (both internally and externally) amplified our message and increased the reach of our earned media.
- Support the craft of marketing and communications in the university community. Investing in professional development is critical at a time when our audiences seek information in new and different ways. We have extended our support to the university community through ongoing education programs, campus-wide communicator meetings, formal onboarding for administrators, and a blueprint for immersing students through experiential learning.

This year we committed to making our toolbox more powerful and generating a greater return on our investment. So we are constantly measuring and evaluating our programs. The following report highlights the outcomes of some of the key initiatives. No single statistic can tell the story of the university's success in 2019, but taken as a whole there is much to celebrate our progress.

I invite you to visit our refreshed website at mc.uga.edu and our brand resource center at brand.uga.edu, where you will find important links to communications resources.

Thank you for your continued partnership,

Lani

Karri Hobson-Pape Vice President **Division of Marketing & Communications** 

### INVESTMENTS IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA





ATTENDEES TO ANNUAL TABLETOP EXERCISE





When talking about the university's commitment to human-centered research. we focused on impact, telling stories about lifesaving discoveries and sharing the rankings and awards that prove our researchers get results.





Our students and their accomplishments have always been a top priority. To illustrate their achievements, we lean into measures of success such as completion and placement rates as well as rankings and student awards. And then we highlight the programs that build on and showcase that success.



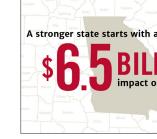
VALUE

A key part of being an accessible university is to prepare students for their professional path after graduation. We spotlight the aspects that make a UGA education attainable and the programs that continue to strengthen the educational experience.





Since the signing of our charter, UGA's commitment to the state of Georgia has been strong, and it's only getting stronger. We sought out the most compelling stories to showcase our impact—both big and small on communities statewide.



## STRATEGIC MESSAGING **CONTENT**

We concentrated marketing and media messaging on the university's key differentiators, which are outlined in our Strategic Messaging Framework. This focused approach led to increased traffic, engagements and followers in 2019. Here are some





## STRATEGIC MESSAGING | GREAT COMMITMENTS

Promoting University of Georgia research is a key priority for Marketing & Communications. With the goal of strengthening the awareness of UGA research and its impact on communities throughout the state, nation and world, the division disseminates information via all platforms, including through UGA Today, the Great Commitments website, and news releases and pitches to media organizations. Our focus is on life-changing research that is making a difference — helping people live longer, healthier lives, ensuring a more secure future and building stronger communities.

Best practices utilized on the site include:

- Immersive storytelling using visuals (video, graphics and photos) to draw people in and keep them engaged with the content.
- Specific calls-to-action on each story to allow people to participate in the cause by donating to university research funds.
- New content promoted every two weeks to keep audiences updated on UGA research.
- Story promotion aligned with key calendar or news events to connect research to relevant, trending topics.

### greatcommitments.uga.edu







27,965

**TOTAL PAGEVIEWS** 

**SCHOLARS** 

HIGHLIGHTED

## STRATEGIC MESSAGING | INNOVATION

The Innovation District initiative aims to build an ecosystem that fosters innovation, entrepreneurship and experiential learning. Our team worked with administrators and communicators across campus to create key messages and assets that advanced this initiative. In addition to producing stories announcing Innovation District updates and priorities, we developed a new logo, a website and a portfolio of photo assets to provide the tools for telling this important story.

### innovation.uga.edu





## STRATEGIC MESSAGING | GEORGIA GROUNDBREAKERS

Profound, enduring impact. This is the core message of the Georgia Groundbreakers, a multimedia series that celebrates the heroic lives and historic accomplishments of the University of Georgia's most visionary and innovative students, faculty, alumni and leaders since UGA was founded in 1785. The stories of these extraordinary men and women demonstrate UGA's ongoing commitment to leadership, innovation and excellence and will serve as a source of inspiration for generations to come.

### news.uga.edu/groundbreakers





### Cori Bargmann

From research that led to an important breast cancer drug to deep, broad discoveries about how nervous systems work, this alumna is reshaping science to save lives.

#### Marion Bradford This alumnus developed a process used in laboratories around the world to detect proteins in tissue samples and his

in tissue samples, and his research on this process is one of the most cited papers in history.

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## STRATEGIC MESSAGING | IT STARTS WITH

# What starts with Georgia starts

The It Starts With Georgia campaign focuses on the university's economic impact on the state of Georgia, which reached \$6.5 billion in 2019. This figure includes increases in the earnings of graduates, the economic impact of externally funded research and the creation of jobs and businesses through UGA's public service and outreach units. The campaign highlights programs and resources impacting Georgia communities, engaging businesses and encouraging partnerships across the state. The tagline "It Starts With Georgia" recognizes UGA as the catalyst of ideas and programs with wide-reaching impact.

### itstartswith.uga.edu

**69** Stories Produced





Holmes & Hunter-Gault These alumni made history as the first two African American students to attend the University of Georgia. Holmes went on to be an educator and doctor and Hunter-Gault became an award-winning journalist. GROUNDBREAKERS











## STRATEGIC MESSAGING | **STUDENT SUCCESS**

Celebrating our students success and accomplishments is a key priority for our internal and external audiences. Throughout the year, we find opportunities to highlight trends happening with incoming and current students as well as recent graduates. And in 2019, we started a series of narratives on UGA Today that features the journeys and accomplishments of individual students, including a graduate student working on a veteran's oral history project or an international affairs major advocating for disability awareness.

**CAREER OUTCOMES** 

An important measure of UGA's success is what graduates are able to achieve after they leave campus. Our Career Outcomes Rate continues to highlight the success our students have in finding employment and continuing on to graduate school. The Class of 2018 had a 96% career outcomes rate, which is 11.7% higher than the national average. Our team works with Development and Alumni Relations to promote this important figure.



Opening new doors for students is a priority at the University of Georgia, which is why the university has adopted several strategic programs aimed to attract and support first-generation college students. This year, Marketing & Communications worked with the Division of Student Affairs and the Office of Instruction to celebrate our firstgeneration college students, highlighting the national recognition that UGA is receiving in this area.



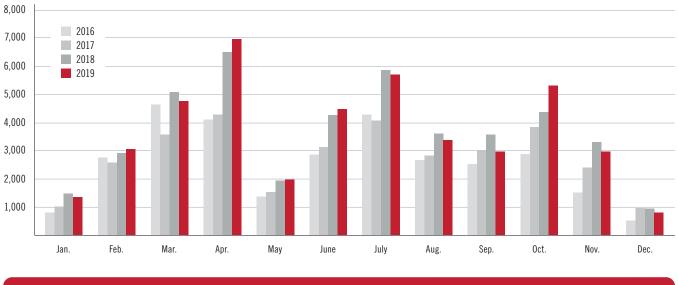
**EARLY-ACTION ADMISSION** 

This year in partnership with Admissions, Marketing & Communications played a key role in congratulating the students selected through early-action applications. We worked with the Office of the President, Development and Alumni Relations, the Athletic Association and others on campus to create an exciting video congratulating the students admitted to the Class of 2024 and welcoming them to the Bulldog family.



The UGA Visitors Center is the gateway to campus for prospective students, returning alumni and visitors. Last year, the Visitors Center welcomed 43,766 guests for the student-led tour experience, a number enhanced by the streamlining of services and collaboration with Undergraduate Admissions. 47 knowledgeable tour leaders provided personalized welcomes to students, families and those new to campus.

### VISITORS CENTER TOUR GUESTS BY MONTH, 2016–2019



Our trademarks process continues to support institutional and brand usage of marks and brand, bringing a cohesive voice to internal and external promotions and communications. In 2019, approvals experienced another year of double-digit growth, increasing 11.1% over 2018. Annual approval trends show a consistent pattern of activity, peaking in May/June and August/September.

The success of the Merch&MARKS pilot event in 2018 has encouraged a second annual event to take place in January 2020. Vendors and on-campus attendees of the original event requested continued opportunities to better understand the workings of the visual identity system, promotional implementation of brand and marks, as well as the trademarks approval process. We expect another successful event.



11% **INCREASE IN APPROVALS** IN 2019 OVER 2018



43,766 **TOTAL VISITORS** IN 2019

## OVERVIEW | TRADEMARKS





## CONTENT ANALYSIS | MEDIA

Earned news media remains a valuable opportunity to reach a wide and diverse audience. In 2019, we continued our priority of maximizing media coverage of UGA research. We developed multimedia assets for high-priority research stories, and then pitched these stories to targeted media outlets. The work paid off with widely distributed stories on a diverse range of UGA research topics, including plastic pollution, farmer suicide and ecological challenges. We continue to monitor the success of these stories and other media coverage of the university through our robust tracking and reporting system. Using these tools, we determined that 95 percent of media coverage of UGA this past year has been neutral or positive.

### **TOP RESEARCH STORIES**

Fighting the Flu

**Plastic Pollution** 

Identifying Factors Associated with Farmer Suicide

How Fathers, Children Should Spend Time Together

Wildlife is Abundant in Chernobyl

World's First Gene-Edited Lizard

Benefits of Daily Self-Weighing

Treating Brain Cancer

### PROMOTIONAL INITIATIVES

Honoring Mary Frances Early

Commit to Georgia Campaign Innovation District

'Moon Rocks!' Marks Apollo 11 Anniversary

USNWR Rankings

Commencement

Terry Economic Outlook

Electric Buses





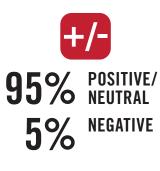














## WEBSITE ANALYSIS | NEWS.UGA.EDU

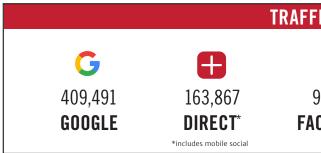
With more than 1 million pageviews a year, the UGA Today news center has established itself as the primary source for university news from our campus faculty, staff and students to our global readers we have who have a connection to UGA. In 2019, UGA Today placed a greater emphasis on research news and telling the stories of the students who make our campus thrive. Total traffic on UGA Today topped a record 1.2 million pageviews in 2019–an 11 percent increase over 2018. In the second half of 2019, the UGA Today team tripled the number of research stories reaching regional, national and international audiences through the news media. Updated daily, the content includes news releases, feature stories, strategic content and news from around the university, as well as news or media content from outside organizations. As the largest news operation in Athens-Clarke County, our approach to UGA news provides a comprehensive look at the university's operations while providing a public facing space for information.



### TOP STORIES

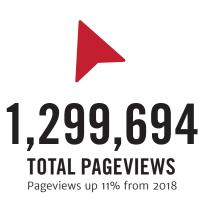
How Fathers, Children Should Spend Time Together UGA Welcomes Outstanding Class of 2023 UGA Ranked 16th by U.S. News & World Report Bromethalin is Poisoning the Parrots of Telegraph Hill Deborah Roberts to Deliver Commencement Address

\*Top Stories reflect stories launched in 2019



f Marketing & Communications 👂
Great Commitments
OLUIMINS online newspaper for the
rsity of Georgia community
ts by @universityofga ()
VEA. © V bunversity/cigs e of John Morrisf favorite places on Vilaching the sun rise over 5 sandrod from Belon Oning Commons. Iring Luga.edu/Swi
20,256
17,290
9,256
8,141







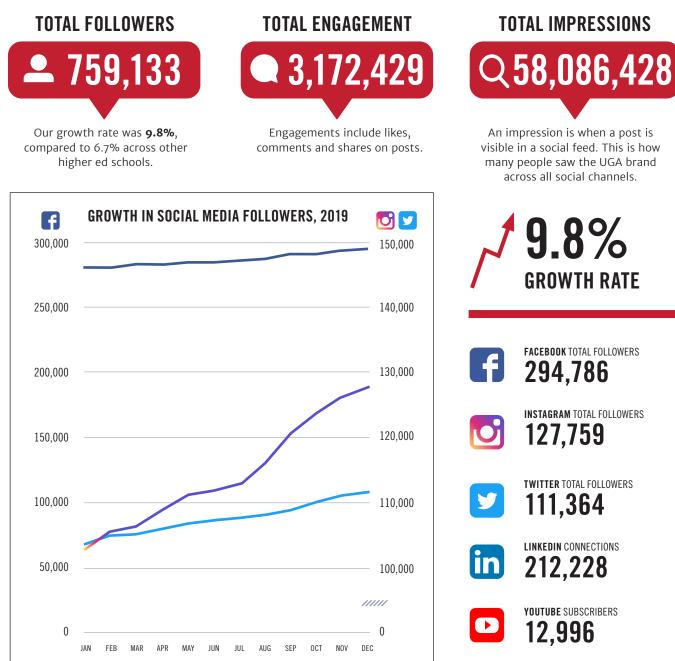
# TRAFFIC SOURCES

95,511 **FACEBOOK**  65,8137 **UGA.EDU** 



## ANALYSIS OVERVIEW **@UNIVERSITYOFGA**

In 2019, UGA focused on refining our social media footprint as a brand while continuing to grow and reach new audiences. The growth and popularity of private social groups has led to a decline in organic reach and intensified the use of peer-to-peer sharing and influencer marketing. To keep the UGA brand ahead of these trends, we turned to innovative engagement tactics that we laid the groundwork for in 2018 — from leveraging user-generated content to activating our Digital Dawgs to public exchanges with other large national brands.

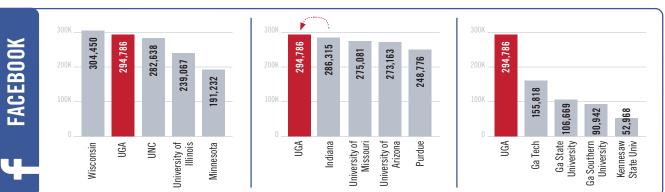


For the second year in a row, Instagram stood out as the clear leader this year with unprecedented growth. It outpaced Twitter and Facebook throughout 2019, adding about 71 followers a day. By the end of 2019, we had 533,909 followers across our three largest social media platforms.

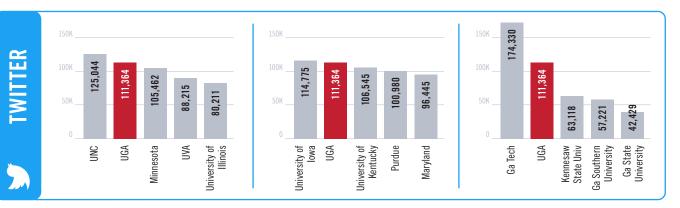
## •

**ASPIRANT INSTITUTIONS** 





In 2019, UGA's Facebook following grew by 4.9%, which was above average compared to 2.8% growth across aspirant schools and 1.9% growth across comparator schools. We surpassed Indiana University in Facebook followers.



and 5.2% growth across comparator schools.



UGA's Instagram following grew by 25.6% compared to 26.6% growth across aspirant schools and 26.1% growth across comparator schools. We surpassed Indiana University in Instagram followers.

### **GROWING OUR SOCIAL AUDIENCES**

### **COMPARATOR INSTITUTIONS**

### **GEORGIA INSTITUTIONS**

UGA's Twitter following grew by 7.4%, which was above average compared to 7.1% growth across aspirant schools

## PLATFORM ANALYSIS | FACEBOOK

A post's average organic reach on Facebook is only around 6.4%. So when Facebook changed its algorithm in 2018 to favor human interactions and private group content, we adjusted our strategy to ignite more conversation on our threads. In 2019, we used more conversational posts to motivate response from our followers - like asking a question or giving them a statement to complete. We also adjusted our post text and video styles to offer more fun facts or takeaways that would get people talking and sharing our content forward.



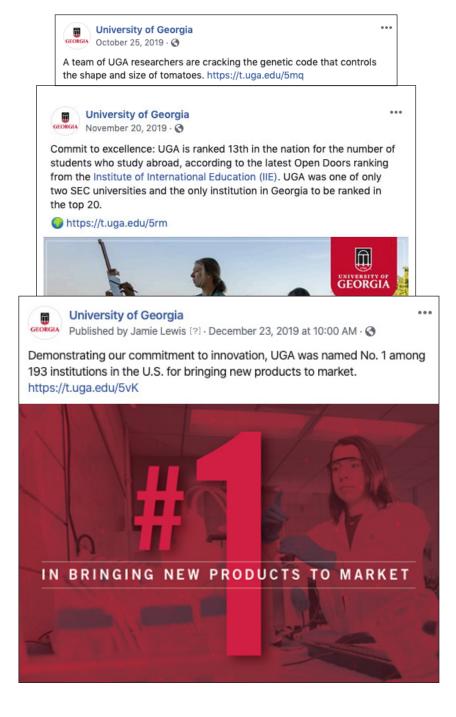
In 2019, we added 13,824 net followers, averaging **38** new followers per day. Our largest follower growth occurred in September.



UGA averaged 34,400 impressions per post. Our biggest month for impressions was January.



UGA averaged **2,064** engagements per post. We saw the most engagements in August.



With 321 million active monthly users, Twitter may not be the largest social channel, but its real-time news feed makes it the go-to social platform for emerging news and trends. We post our breaking research and major announcements to Twitter. In 2019, we continued to prioritize engagement posts that encouraged followers to answer a question or vote on a poll and identifying trending topics or memes we could participate in while staying on brand. These interactions, along with strategic messaging, helped us grow 7.4% year over year and surpass 110,000 followers in October.

📓 UGA 🥏



9:58 AM · Sep 20, 2019 · Twitter Web App

### PLATFORM ANALYSIS TWITTER













In 2019, we added 7,718 net followers, averaging 21 new followers per day. Our largest follower growth occurred in September.



UGA averaged 16,451 impressions per post. Our biggest month for impressions was September.



UGA averaged 768 engagements per post. We saw the most engagements in September.



## PLATFORM ANALYSIS INSTAGRAM

With 1 billion active monthly users—71% of whom are under 35 years old—Instagram is our fastest growing platform and the preferred platform for reaching current students and younger audiences. UGA posts typically feature campus life, behindthe-scenes stories and highly visual branding opportunities as the platform functions primarily on lifestyle photography. This year we focused on developing more strategic Instagram Highlights to help answer some of our most frequently asked questions and showcase strategic university initiatives.

In 2019, Instagram enabled crosspromotion of IGTV videos into the main Instagram feed and as a result, we saw a spike in IGTV views. To capitalize on this, we focused on telling "short doc" stories (2-3 minute videos) about our students, which resonated with our audience.











In 2019, we added **26,074** net followers, averaging **71** new followers per day. Our largest follower growth occurred in September.

UGA averaged 56,594 impressions per post. Our biggest month for impressions was August.



UGA averaged **4,159** engagements per post. We saw the most engagements in November.

YouTube is the new Google when it comes to prospective students and has replaced television for many Gen Z'ers. With more than 2 billion users every month, it became clear in 2019 that YouTube needed to become less of a repository for videos and more of an active social and advertising platform. This year, we continued to refine our playlist structure, video titles and descriptions, and strategically redesigned our video thumbnails to make our channel more aesthetically pleasing and most importantly branded. We also began diving into the world of paid advertising on YouTube and look forward to growing that initiative in 2020.

#### #CommitTo the University of Georgia PLAY ALL

A channel for featured commercials developed by the University of Georgia's division of marketing and communications.



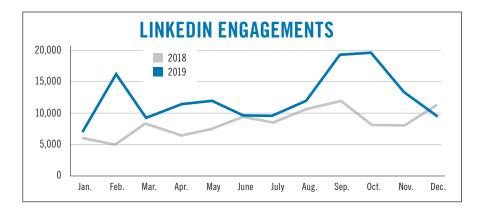
We are The University of Georgia University of Georgia 111K views · 2 years ago

The Birthplace of Public **Higher Education in America** University of Georgia 1.8K views · 2 years ago

CC

lin

A social network for working professionals, LinkedIn averages 303 million active monthly users. The basis of LinkedIn's networking requires all users to list their education and work history in profiles, so we see substantial activity with our alumni and faculty on this channel, adding 9,956 new followers this year. Given the professional focus of LinkedIn, we partner with the Alumni Association, Public Service and Outreach and the UGA Career Center to tailor our content programming for alumni. Research, service and alumni success stories resonate the most on LinkedIn, and we see a 2.54% engagement rate on our posts.



## YOUTUBE PLATFORM ANALYSIS 12,996 SUBSCRIBERS **UPLOADS**



Committed to Acaden Excellence University of Georgia 1.9K views • 1 year ago



### PLATFORM ANALYSIS



LINKEDIN

In 2019, we added 9,956 followers



## AMBASSADOR PROGRAM | DIGITAL DAWGS

In spring 2018, we launched a social media ambassador program for undergraduate students. These 30+ Digital Dawgs represent UGA and present an authentic behind-the-scenes look at the student experience on campus and in Athens from official UGA branded Instagram accounts. While their content is not dictated by the Division of Marketing & Communications, our team is in frequent communication with the students and offers suggestions of events on campus to cover or initiatives to highlight.

In 2019, we focused on refining our onboarding and exit process and worked with our graduating students to help identify their replacements to ensure a smoother transition for their followers.



### "((

Today I will be making my last post as uga.andrew, and handing this account over to Madison Drummond, one of the newest Digital Dawgs. It has been an honor to interact and engage with you all throughout this last year, from current students to future students, parents and alumni...We are choosing to hand over our pages to new students to show that even as one chapter might close, another Dawg will always step in to continue the journey and tradition that was started so long ago at UGA."

Andrew Gryder, Class of 2019

13,421 **DIGITAL DAWG FOLLOWERS** 

### **TESTIMONIALS**

(( Continuously inspired by the work **@universityofga** has done with the #DigitalDawgs program if you want to see a great example of influencer marketing in #hesm you need to check it out."

> Liz Harter Social Media Manager at University of Notre Dame

> > NOTRE DAME

(( @universityofga created a brand ambassador program with students who were already influential on campus, taking their love for the university from IRL to the digital space. Genius."

> Ellen Doepke Senior Social Media Manager at Michigan State University

> > MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

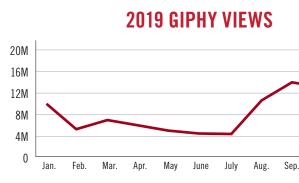
### #

Hashtags link posts and conversations together on Twitter and Instagram by topic and trends. In 2018, we launched the use of #CommitTo, a flexible and active brand hashtag that embraced the social equity of the previously used #CommitToTheG that had been used by Athletics. In 2019, we continued to encourage the use of #CommitTo and saw increased adoption by our campus partners.

After developing a new user-generated content campaign, which involved new social media swag (pins, stickers and T-shirts), we were able to make the hashtag more visible to students on campus. In 2019, we've seen 1,078 uses across Twitter and Instagram and look forward to watching that number continue to grow year over year. We were even able to get it used by several corporate partners on Twitter during a social media activation!



Giphy is an online database for short, looping videos—commonly known as GIFs—that can be used on social media and in text messages. We created a brand channel on Giphy to host UGA-themed GIFs. During 2019, we continued to focus on the importance of maintaining just one UGA parent channel and offered to host GIFs for a number of units across campus, including UGA Athletics. Keeping all the UGA GIFs under one account improves our visibility when users are searching for GIFs and keeps us from competing against ourselves in the search algorithm. Since creating our Giphy channel in 2018, we have uploaded a total of 545 GIFs which have garnered 154.4M views — with 222 GIFs uploaded and viewed 120.2M times in 2019 alone.





## HASHTAG STRATEGY **COMMIT TO**



## GIFS & STICKERS | GIPHY

	<b>222</b> UPLOADS IN 2019
p. Oct. Nov. Dec.	<b>120,212,821</b> VIEWS
GEORGIA	

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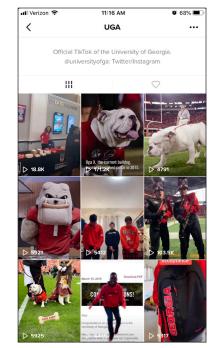
## EMERGING PLATFORM | TIKTOK

Incoming students favor diverse and hyper-personal social media experiences. While we're not trying to make clear conversions from all social media networks, it's important for UGA to have a presence in these spaces — to meet these new audiences where they are — and subtly build awareness of our brand.

TikTok, the fastest growing social media platform in 2019, is a videosharing social networking service popular with Gen Z, which makes it ideal for staying front-of-mind with high school students as they begin to research colleges. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, the audience for TikTok skews young, with most users falling between the ages of 16-24, which makes it particularly appealing to higher education. The University of Florida's Todd Sanders, who was an early adopter of TikTok among higher-ed peers, says that success on emerging platforms shows that your school is innovative and not resting on the standard platforms, like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Aside from in-app views, TikTok's unique video editing features make it the perfect place to create content and jump to Instagram Stories, another platform which skews toward a younger audience.





## E-MAIL ANALYSIS | UGATODAY

The UGA Today daily e-newspaper for the University of Georgia community is delivered to subscribers' email inboxes every weekday morning to keep them informed about Bulldog Nation. It includes In the News links to mentions about UGA in the news media — from breaking campus news to research and innovation to public service and outreach — and all the latest news from the UGA Today news center (news.uga.edu).



**4,652** subscribers

**36.5% OPEN RATE** 55% higher than education average







## **#CommitTo** Staying Connected

@universityofga