Leveraging social media to improve online student recruitment and support
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As a result of the self-study process for an upcoming SACS accreditation review, the distance learning administrative unit at Coastal Carolina University identified numerous areas where significant improvement was needed to achieve compliance with articulated standards. Of these areas, online student support was one of the weakest, and after a year of strategic planning, external consultation, and active piloting, particularly in the college of education, several practices have emerged with tangible benefits. For example, as a result of integrating interactive media-rich branding strategies driven by popular social media technologies, graduate program enrollments have increased substantially. In addition, several key student support workflows have been significantly streamlined by using open-source tools to develop diagnostic services and online support communities.

This session will offer both conceptual and technical frameworks for implementing strategies that integrate YouTube, WordPress, Facebook, Twitter, Adobe Connect, and other tools that disintermediate various systems for student recruitment and support. Special emphasis will be placed on the challenges of bridging multiple platforms through a common web portal for faculty, staff and student stakeholders. The presenters will identify both success stories and lessons learned at Coastal, and will conclude with a showcase of practices at other institutions, including higher education and corporate.