



LET'S TALK equality

Celebrating Diversity

Using Your Social Media Profile Image to Start a Conversation about Diversity

To help start conversations about diversity, organizations use their social media profile images to generate awareness. They encourage members of their communities to change their profile image to promote the cause to a wider network. Advertising students were asked to create a proposed image to support Diversity Week at University of Tampa. The goal is to celebrate diversity and increase awareness. Students were also asked to reflect on their own privilege and what diversity means to them. The proposed images were presented to the organization hosting Diversity Week later in the semester. Students will be asked to change their profile and encourage their friends to do the same during Diversity Week.

Course:	COM 283 - Principles of Advertising Spring 2015
Learning Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand how companies adopt causes and issues as part of their corporate social responsibility initiatives• Examine how social media is used to promote social causes• Apply basic principles of logo design, brand image and creative advertising to a social media profile image• Examine what diversity and privilege means to them as a student at University of Tampa
Assignment:	<p>The general topic for the week was brand image and management as it relates to advertising. Prior sections in class discussed corporate social responsibility initiatives and how some companies are promoting their support of these causes in their advertising. The class watched the film <i>The Naked Brand</i> and was assigned various readings associated with the use of social media to promote causes.</p> <p>For this assignment, the "client" was Diversity Fellowship, a student organization that hosts Diversity Week on campus each Spring. Students were asked to develop an image that could be used as a social media profile image that reflected their ideas of diversity and privilege at UT. The image would be something that could potentially go viral by having multiple students adopt it for the week. This is similar to the HRC campaign converting their logo red leading up to the U.S. Supreme Court decision in 2013. Additionally, students were asked to write up a reflection about what diversity and privilege means to them and how that influenced their design.</p> <p>This class is not a design class specifically and students may not have taken a course on design or digital arts, therefore, they were allowed to provide a sketch or whatever they were comfortable in doing.</p>
Assessments:	Completion of assignment requirements - image was proper size, used template and featured the reflection write up.
Instructor:	Jennie O'Leary, Visiting Assistant Professor Department: Communication, Advertising / Public Relations School: University of Tampa Brief bio

Comments:

My biggest challenge was how to incorporate the topics of privilege, discrimination and social justice into my Principles of Advertising course. The scope of this course is an introduction to the field of advertising and is often the first course taken by prospective advertising and public relations majors. However, the assignment seemed to fit into the discussions on corporate social responsibility and brand management.

While we watched a film on the topic and there were assigned readings, I did struggle to get students to open up in a class discussion. Unlike the other instructors, I unfortunately could not dedicate multiple days to the topic. However, when reviewing their work, it was nice to see some students approach the topic of diversity differently. Over 17% of University of Tampa students are considered international students. And, many of the assignments reflected this area of diversity.

I would like to try this assignment again in the future. It might be more appropriate for public relations students. And, it can be incorporated into a mini-campaign assignment, which will allow for more time for discussion that I feel is needed.