

Mika Neuparth
JOU3101

To most students, Facebook has a mere site to socially interact with their peers. However, on the Groups at Florida Facebook group pages, “it’s almost become like a Craigslist or eBay.”

Erika Canfijn, a sophomore at the University of Florida who is studying public relations, said she has recently become interested in following the trends of the group and what students specifically post about.

“I have seen just about everything being posted on the Groups at Florida group and subgroups that have broken off from it. Students have traded textbooks, instead of having to spend so much money on purchasing textbooks for every class from Florida bookstores,” Canfijn said. “There are actually entire groups dedicated to textbook selling and trading, called UF Undergrad Textbook Exchange and UF Textbook Exchange.”

Students also use the pages to sell their belongings, such as mini-refrigerators, scooters, bicycles, and more expensive things like iPods and iPhones. There have even been posts about selling their cars.

More recently, students have been preoccupied with subleasing their apartments for the summer sessions. Many students advertise on their Class Page, such as the Class of 2015 Group.

Brittnie Marhue often visits the UF pages.

“I have already paid a subleasing fee to the apartment complex to have them help me look for someone to sublease, and it has not been successful,” the UF student said. “So, instead, I decided to try posting on the UF pages and have gotten a lot more feedback. Hopefully, somebody will sublease my apartment, even if I have to pay a portion of the rent monthly, at least I won’t have to pay the whole thing.”

Other students have been seen using the UF pages for not-so-noble negotiations. Apartment office complexes have caught students exploiting the group pages by making under-the-table deals about apartment prices. They have also found that students have rented out rooms without the consent of the apartment complex offices to avoid the dreadful overpriced subleasing fees, which, most of the time, amount to about an extra month's rent for each person.

Not all students feel this way, though.

"There are a couple reasons that I'm subleasing for less than I pay," said Andrea Perez, a UF undergraduate student. "Every place is offering subleases for the summer for around the same price, so I started off at less than other prices just to stand out. I would only do it through the office, though – that's the only way I feel that it's trustworthy."

Local businesses and apartment complexes have also picked up on the trend. Apts Near UF on Facebook has made multiple posts on the Class Groups webpages about advertisements for their business.

Apts Near UF is not the only business that has begun promotions through Facebook.

Recent University of Florida graduate from the College of Journalism and Communications, Brianti Downing, launched her online publication of Feather Magazine last October.

Since then, Downing has needed to fill positions for staff writers, interns, bloggers, photographers, editors, and directors.

To do this, she has used the Facebook groups to her advantage. Under Groups at Florida is a subgroup of Journalism, where Downing made the posts announcing the positions to be filled.

“I advertised summer internships on the Facebook group a few months ago and got a pretty good response,” Downing said. “Also, I know firsthand how awesome the J-School is at UF, so I thought I’d find some talented journalists.”

Many UF journalism students have responded positively to the post, displaying interest either in the publication, or that actual position.

“I make sure my editors really make this a learning experience by treating it like a professional publication, which it is,” Downing said. “That means deadlines are strictly enforced, we have an editorial calendar we follow and AP Style is followed. The Journalism school at UF is renowned, and I’d love to have those incredible writers work for Feather Magazine as I build it up.”

Downing said she is always more than willing to take steps to ensure that the students can be compensated with credit hours if they’d like, because the internships and positions will both be unpaid until further notice.

“I always take whatever steps are necessary for them to obtain credit hours at their institution. It usually just involves me writing a letter or signing something,” Downing said. “Most of our interns actually never ask for credit. They do it for the experience.”

To Downing, the UF group pages have proved to be invaluable to the launch of her online magazine. For other businesses and students, the groups have provided more than a social outlet, and more of a collective page for all students’ needs throughout college.

Source List:

Brianti Downing
Editor-In-Chief, Feather Magazine
feathermagazine@gmail.com

Andrea Perez
aperez7@ufl.edu

Brittnie Marhue
Contacted through Facebook
Unwilling to give out any further information

Erika Canfijn
850-319-4857