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Social Media: An Essential Element of Blended MSW Programs

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Program Overview

- Offer 2 hybrid programs:
 - Statewide Blended (80:20)
 - F2F – Summer Institute, monthly ITV sessions
 - Weekend (70:30)
 - F2F – Kick-Off, monthly weekend sessions
- Both programs are 3-years, part-time, year-round
- Typical student:
 - Nontraditional, many life demands, work FT/PT in the field, cannot attend traditional campus-based program

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Cohort Model

- Programs are lock-step
- Students must complete coursework according to schedule - each required course only offered 1x during 3 years of program
- Complete all required coursework together

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Team Building

- Main focus during 1st F2F meeting
 - Ice-breakers
 - Getting to know classmates
 - Group contracts
 - Discuss goals for the program & hopes for the future
 - Points of connection
 - Empathic learning

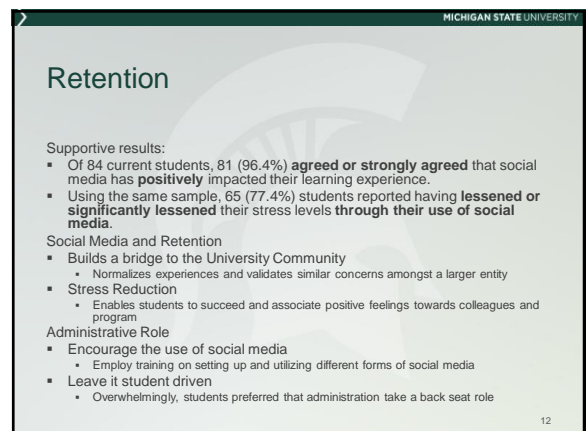
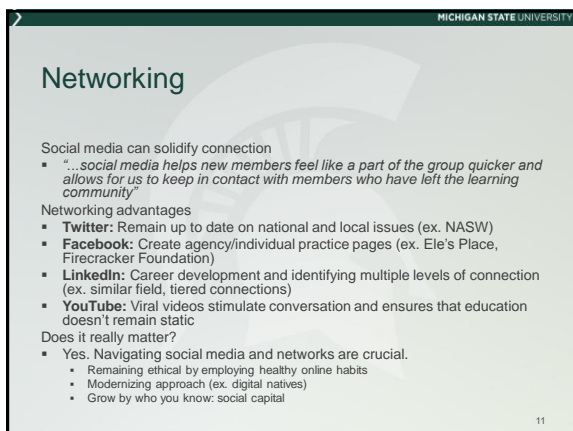
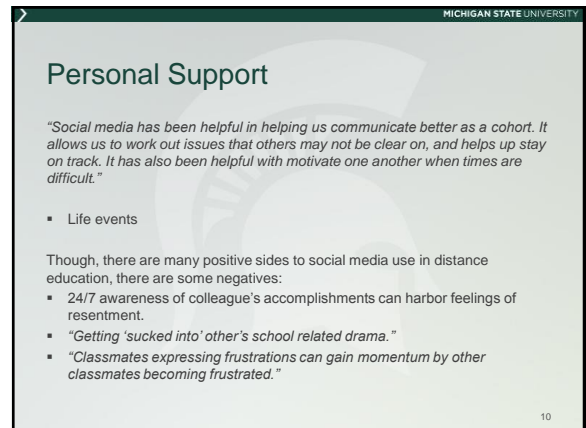
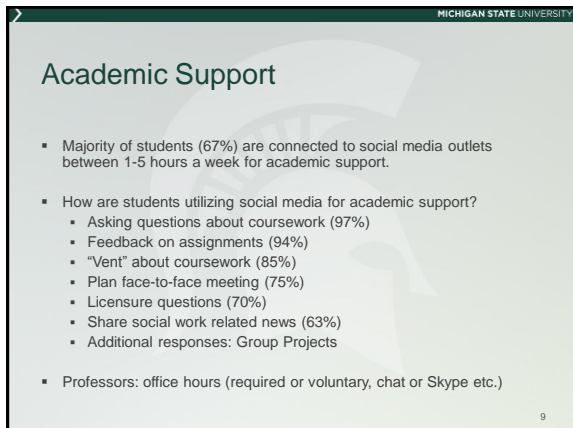
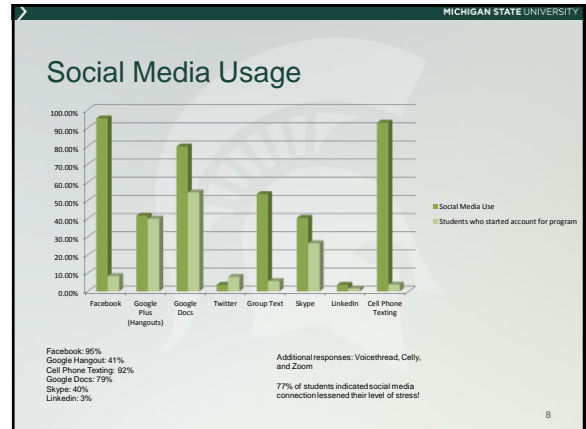
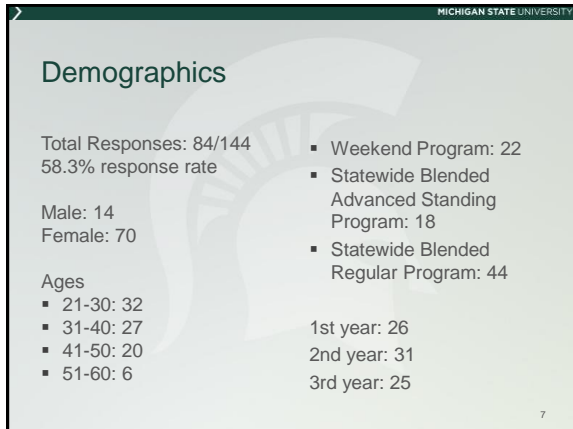
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Importance of the “Blend”

- Chose these programs for the “blend.”
- Not fully online – F2F helps decrease isolation
- F2F provides a nice overview of what’s to come until the next class session – opportunity to “check-in” with the instructor
- Promotes more communication (written & verbal)
- Provides an online “study group”
 - Students are reading, writing about and then discussing material
- But, is the “Blend” enough?

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Student Comments

- *"I think social media is imperative to help students feel connected."*
- *"Social media has assisted in feeling closer and connected to classmates who are really very far away in proximity. It is nice to have a sounding board, and a place to gain and share information as needed with peers."*
- *"Social media has been a large part of my graduate education. My learning community uses this resource to ask questions, organize face-to-face meetings, brainstorm for course assignments and to continually support one another through personal and academic struggles."*