

Creating Eye-Catching Stories

1. Write in first-person narrative to boost the authenticity of the story and deepen audience engagement.

- Make stories about people, not numbers.
- Facts are necessary but stories move people.
- Don't get bogged down with data or rankings.
- Keep data simple – one or two points tied with a story are best.

2. Include a strong visual that captures a sense of place and the identity of the story subject – close-ups are OK!

3. Make posts relatable.

- How does the student or person you are featuring contribute to diversity on campus?
- How do they access resources available to them?
- Or, think about how prospective students want to recognize themselves in posts that they see.

Stories should profile relatable people on campus and depict a community that students can relate to.

4. Highlight relevant faculty stories. Share the experiences and trajectories of faculty from first-generation or low-income backgrounds in order to build a broader sense of community and help lower income students feel like they can relate to these stories.

5. Keep your eyes on your goal: Profile people rather than programs. Highlight how the subject's experiences have contributed to a richer experience for the campus community, not just the individual themselves.

6. Let the story subject speak for themselves. Share the subject's perspective in their own voice rather than losing their voice by over-editing.

7. Link stories to a call to action and support programs at your institution when appropriate. Include a call to action that prompts your audience to learn more about supportive resources.

Getting Started: Tips to Find a Great Story

Great stories are everyone just waiting to be told. Here are a few tips from your fellow ATI members on where to find them.

1

Wander around your campus and ask students and faculty to share compelling stories with you. It sounds simple, but it works —just meet, greet, and capture the story. Never be afraid to approach students to tell their stories; usually, they are flattered to be asked.

2

Reach out to campus partners for story leads, including academic departments, centers for civic engagement, alumni offices, programs that support low-income and diverse students, etc.

3

Engage students and student photographers who regularly share engaging content from campus events and ask for leads and help spreading the stories once posted.

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- 4 **Engage key influencers:** Start by asking your own social media managers about influential people in the community who are respected by students.
- 5 **Search for top posts** based on the school's location and by school hashtags and keywords.
- 6 **Use one story to find the next.** Ask your storytellers to share the names of individuals who they think should also share their story. Word of mouth is your best connector.
- 7 **Follow different campus groups across social media platforms:** (alumni, student groups, etc.) and mine their posts for stories. You may be surprised how many relevant stories are out there already being told.

You've got great stories, now broaden your reach...

- **Share broadly.** Think about the various platforms where your feed can be shared - college websites, program pages, other social media accounts, etc.
- **Cross post** on all of your institution's social media accounts (consider posting teasers prior to posting the story to build anticipation).
- **Use paid ads where appropriate.** Consider sharing stories through paid content/social media advertising.
- **Build followers and reach new audiences:**
 - Include relevant **hashtags** (e.g. #ActivateTalent, #firstgen)
 - Research hashtags and accounts that reach important audiences (e.g. guidance counselors or students from particular demographics)
 - **Tag** other relevant institutions (e.g. other ATI member institutions, community partners, external programs, etc. to extend your reach and let them know about these stories.
 - If you include an organization as part of a story, reach out directly to those organizations on phone or email and ask them to share via social media.
 - Find a **hook**. Tie posts to certain times of the year and themes (freshman orientation, holidays, finals, college application season, graduation, etc.).
- **Is this just the beginning?** Plan to post regularly (weekly, monthly, etc.) to keep your audience engaged and thinking about their own stories or relevant stories to share.

Learn from fellow ATI members on creating a campaign

- Princeton **#TellUsTigers** campaign: PowerPoint [slides](#) and presentation [excerpt](#)
- University of Washington **stories of opportunity**: PowerPoint [slides](#) and presentation [excerpt](#)