

CASE STUDY

**Alvernia University's
Media Placements
Rise 96% With the
Aid of Merit**



Alvernia University

Reading, Pennsylvania



Alvernia University

Institution

Alvernia University

Established

1958

Location

Reading, Pennsylvania

Merit Partner Since

2012



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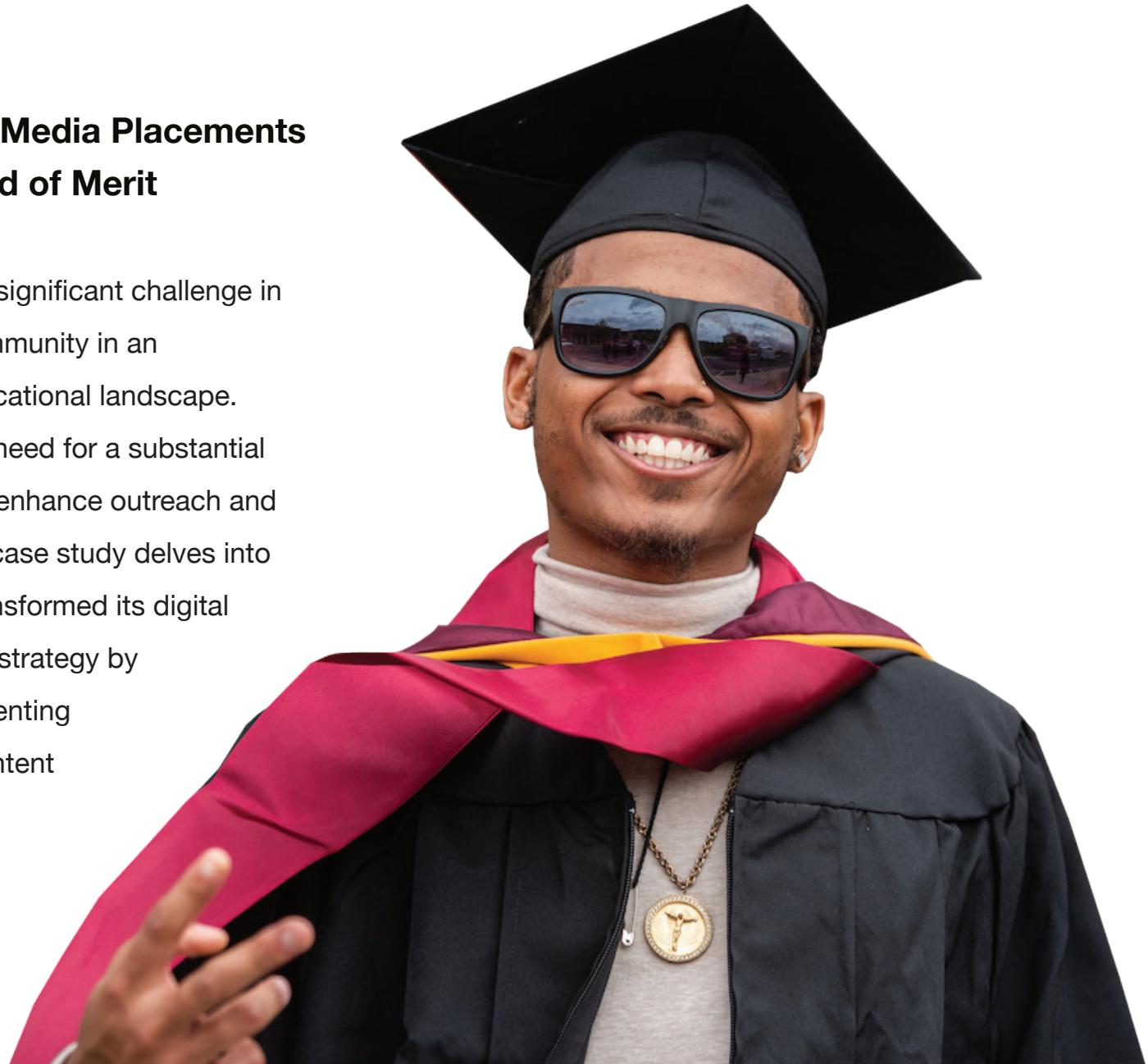
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Alvernia University

Alvernia University's Media Placements Rise 96% With the Aid of Merit

Alvernia University faced a significant challenge in effectively engaging its community in an increasingly digitalized educational landscape. The University realized the need for a substantial digital strategy overhaul to enhance outreach and student engagement. This case study delves into how Alvernia University transformed its digital presence and engagement strategy by adopting Merit and implementing sustainable avenues for content inception, distribution, and community engagement.





The Challenge

Prior to Merit's integration, Alvernia University's outreach efforts around student achievements were scattered and lacked cohesiveness. The University wanted to increase traffic to its website, establishing meaningful engagement with students and faculty, and effectively leverage social media. Due to high workloads and these challenges, the Office of Marketing and Communications missed opportunities to highlight student achievements as a means of promoting the University and attracting prospective students.





Merit

Alvernia University published 14 achievements

Category	Value	Percentage
885	885	87%
840	840	82%
450	450	44%
200	200	19%
1.7%	1.7%	1.7%

630

Alvernia University



A Multi-Faceted Integration

Alvernia University embarked on a journey of digital transformation with the further integration of Merit. The goal of which was to extend content production, distribution and engagement with students, stakeholders, media outlets and across social media platforms. Using a tool like Merit to fuel these priorities allowed Alvernia's small communication team to share substantially more stories and connect them with the right audiences with less internal lift and in less time. The University expanded its storytelling

capacity from a modest five stories from July 2021 to 2022 to an impressive 50 stories from July 2022 to December 2023.

A key player in their huge increase was involving staff in story inception. Using a contributor form provided by Merit, staff from various departments are able to submit stories to the communications department for review and publication. Taking advantage of the contributor form in this way generated a continuous funnel of content that, since implementation, has garnered them more stories than they ever had before!



JAKOB HOLLENBACH

Majoring in Nursing, Minorng in Bio

[Alvernia University](#), Class of 2025

From Topton, PA

Hey There :) My name is Jakob Hollenbach! I am hardworking, dedicated, and motivated to accomplish my goal of becoming a Nurse Practitioner. In my spare time, I enjoy playing video games, hanging out with my friends, and listening to music.



Follow Jakob

EDUCATION

[Alvernia University](#)

[Brandywine Heights High School](#)

JAKOB IN THE NEWS

[Hollenbach serves as Alvernia Resident Assistant for the 2023-2024 academic year](#) 

Jakob Hollenbach of Topton, PA (19562) is one of 38 Alvernia University Resident Assistants (RAs) who completed a collective 207 total programs while pursuing their undergraduate or graduate degree...

February, 21 2024 -  Verified by [Alvernia University](#)

[Alvernia honors Hollenbach for Resident Assistant role](#) 

Alvernia University honors Jakob Hollenbach of Topton, PA (19562) for successfully completing Resident Assistant (RA) training and serving as an RA into the 2023-2024 academic year while pursuing a...

February, 15 2023 -  Verified by [Alvernia University](#)

ACHIEVEMENTS ADDED BY JAKOB

Jakob Hollenbach was recognized for earning a spot on an honors list

Added by Jakob

Engaging Student Ambassadors

Similar to the University's goal to build systems that independently sustain content production, a key strategy in increasing student engagement with Merit involved the creation of student ambassadors, mainly through the Resident Assistants (RAs) on campus. These RAs played a crucial role in promoting Merit among the student body, encouraging their peers to sign up and participate actively on the platform. This peer-to-peer approach was instrumental in driving up student engagement and use of Merit, as students were more receptive to embracing a platform endorsed by their fellow students. The RAs, as trusted and influential figures on campus, effectively communicated the benefits of Merit,

leading to increased visibility and participation in the platform.

In doing so, the University was able to instill a sustainable system beyond staff turnover that continuously drives adoption and engagement with Merit by the student body. Alvernia also included information about Merit in the orientation packets that both parents and students receive to create sustainable avenues to promote Merit again. Students and parents were introduced to the Stakeholder Email Collector in these packets. This tool extends the University's owned stakeholder information for outreach while creating opportunities for parents, family, friends, or mentors to stay apprised of news regarding their student and to share stories they're notified about across social media.



2022-2023

Media Placements

 **96%**



**University Stories
Published in Newspapers**

 **400%**



**Social Media
Engagement**

in link clicks from social media posts

 **36%**



**Web Traffic to Student
Accomplishments
Pages**

 **39,500**

7,900 views in 2022



**Overall Website
Traffic**

 **18%**



Clear Results

The adoption of Merit proved to be a pivotal move for Alvernia University, demonstrated by significant improvements in analytics from 2022 to 2023. Media placements experienced a 96% increase; more specifically, they sustained a 400% rise in university stories published in newspapers. Social media engagement saw a substantial boost with a 36% increase in link clicks from social media posts, which was reflected by increased traffic to their student accomplishments web page, jumping from 7,900 views in 2022 to 39,500 views in 2023. Brand recognition, interest and retention were bolstered as well, with direct traffic rising by 25% and website traffic increasing by 18%.

Future Outlook

Alvernia University is committed to further integrating Merit across various digital platforms and on-campus activities, focusing on sustainable practices for long-term engagement and storytelling. The University aspires to continue its innovative approach in the educational sector, ensuring its competitive edge is maintained through ongoing adaptation, adoption of innovative internal systems and digital strategy enhancement.



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Erin Mark

Director of New Business Development

518-429-2790 erin@meritpages.com meritpages.com

The screenshot shows the Merit University website interface. At the top, the Merit logo and navigation links for 'STUDENTS' and 'ACHIEVEMENT' are visible. A map of the United States is displayed with several colored circles indicating student locations: a yellow circle with '46' near Seattle, a yellow circle with '14' in Idaho, a green circle with '4' in North Dakota, an orange circle with '351' near San Francisco, and an orange circle with '475' near Los Angeles. Two callout boxes are overlaid on the map:

- Robert Riley**
Student at Merit University
Majoring in Finance
From Westminster, MD
Robert Riley of Westminster named to the dean's list at Merit University
Merit University is pleased to announce the following student made the dean's list for the fall 2024 semester.
Westminster, MD resident, Robert Connor Riley, has been named to the dean's list at Merit University for the fall 2024 semester. Students who earn dean's list honors must carry at least 12 graded credit hours and earn a GPA of between 3.5 and 3.899. Riley is majoring in Finance.
- Ameila Casalla**
Student at Merit University
Majoring in Education
From Albany, NY
Ameila Casalla of Albany named to the dean's list at Merit University
Merit University is pleased to announce the following student made the dean's list for the fall 2024 semester.
Albany, NY resident, Amella Casalla, has been named to the dean's list at Merit University for the fall 2024 semester. Students who earn dean's list honors must carry at least 12 graded credit hours and earn a GPA of between 3.5 and 3.899. Amella is majoring in Education.



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