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SHU Uses Podcast to Inform, Start Conversations

Gary L. Rose

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/gary_rose/20/
Sacred Heart University is engaging its students and the community in this year's election process with weekly podcasts on its online forum, SHUsquare, led by Professor Gary Rose, a political science expert.

Rose already has produced podcasts on the Iowa caucus and the New Hampshire primary for SHUSquare's SoundCloud website. In one of his most recent installments, he described this year's presidential election as, "quite frankly, one of the most unpredictable and exciting contests that I can remember during my lifetime."

The SHU square project, coming from the University's Office of Digital Learning, is Sacred Heart University's virtual teaching and learning commons. Spearheaded by Professor Pilar Munday, (SHUSquare faculty coordinator and associate professor, Spanish) the SHUsquare team has developed the plan for political podcasts. "The goal is to engage faculty and students in enriching discussions beyond the classroom and make Prof. Rose’s analysis accessible to the general public too," said Jaya Kannan, director of the Office of Digital Learning.

Each Thursday, Rose records his podcast based on recent developments in the election process, including debates, primaries and new polls. He offers information that traditional media outlets rarely include, describing in simple terms what the caucuses and primaries mean for the presidential candidates and the number of delegates they need to get their party's nomination.
In his first podcast, Rose explained that he will discuss the unfolding presidential selection system in the weeks and months to come before Election Day in November. "It's a dynamic process; it's filled with a great deal of uncertainty," he said. "It's like a roller coaster—nobody really knows how this thing is going to end."

The public forum SHUsquare provides is "a great way to get our university involved in the election," Rose said. "It's a very good connection to the democratic process."

Junior Bridget Hughes, who is Rose’s research assistant, prepares the content for each episode with Rose, records and edits the podcast and manages the SoundCloud account.

"I think the podcast is a great way to encourage students to connect their studies to the outside world, Hughes said. "All students, regardless of major, learn to think critically about their role in society and what it means to have an impact. Given how many of those in the student body will be voting for the first time this November, we hope students and professors can use it as a starting point for discussing the issues facing our country."

"As the semester goes on, we’re also hoping to showcase student perspectives in our weekly episodes," she said. "As a student in the department, I appreciate the opportunity to engage with my courses beyond the traditional classroom. Offering new, diverse experiences—like working on a weekly podcast—helps students develop new skills and examine course material from a new perspective."

Rose and Hughes are hopeful students and the public will tune in. Hughes said they’ve already seen a response from the SHU community, with the first three podcasts garnering nearly 200 listeners.

“Several professors have worked with us to get the program going,” she said. "I think the podcast offers a simple, convenient way to keep up with one of the most contentious political events in American history, and I hope the SHU community finds it useful."

To listen to the podcasts, visit: https://soundcloud.com/shu-square-politics.