

them better and feed into the admissions model. All students, including first-year students, will schedule and book consultations, whether these take place offline or online, with counsellors and psychologists online. In some cases, students will engage counsellors and psychologists directly using communications technologies such as instant messaging (chat) and web-chat-voice interaction. The proposed client service centre, which will feature state-of-the-art contact centre technology, will play a major role in routing and escalating calls and messages, whether they be synchronous or asynchronous, voice, e-mail, sms, chat or fax, workstation-based or mobile-based. A clear implication is that certain portal feeds and information will also be available from the students' device of choice, the cellphone.

With all of these future plans, it is clear that SU is convinced of the potential of portals as support channels and enablers of academic initiatives and is striving to realise this potential. However, the advent of Web 2.0 and social networking, such as the Facebook phenomenon, implies that the notion of an institutional portal, provided and controlled by the institution, is being questioned. In fact, it could be argued that the institution has already lost control of the communication channel and that the portal has been usurped by Facebook, iGoogle, MySpace, and the like. These 'personal start pages' are the forerunners of the truly personal portal, MyPortal. Furthermore, MyPortal will be an aggregation of feeds from other portals, websites and services, including the institutional portal and will be accessed from various devices including mobile devices (Gootzit, 2007). An obvious implication is that in order to 'bring the university to the user', the institution should deliver its services and information in the digital environment that is preferred by the user. Currently, such a preferred environment for students would surely be Facebook. The question that then arises is: Would students welcome – or tolerate – intrusion of their social world by the academic world? So the question remains: How will the utilisation of portals to support institutional initiatives such as the FYA provide for the user's preferences? Collaboration with all stakeholders within the university with regards to the services as well as the environment where it will be provided via the portals, therefore, remains a critical success factor in using portals to support institutional initiatives.

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