

Campus February 11, 2013 // by Natalie Harms // 2 Comments

Not your father's confessional

While the UH Confessions Facebook page participants don't begin their posts with "forgive me Father for I have sinned," the posts have one thing in common with that of the church's: anonymity.

"People can say whatever they want without (anyone) knowing about it. They can be kind of stalker-ish or confess about cheating without getting in trouble," said hotel restaurant management freshman Abby Mondlock.

The page, which invites people to write whatever they want anonymously through a survey, was created Jan. 25 by a group of UH students. In its brief existence, the page went from several hundred likes to more than 10,000.

Despite the page's popularity, UH media representatives have a more solemn approach to what the page offers.

"The nature of these sites and the content raises several student welfare issues," said Executive Director of Media Relations Richard Bonnin.

"We wish to remind students and the entire University community that personal information posted on Facebook or other social media channels is there for the world to see and is extremely difficult to remove once posted. Do consider the consequences a posting could have for you and others in the future."

This danger does not seem to be preventing students from posting on the page. However, Mondlock thinks there is reason for concern.

"I don't think it's really safe. The people on the site can easily track people," Mondlock said. "Nothing is ever secret on the Internet. Anybody can hack into a computer these days."

UH's second biggest concern was trademark infringement and the page being seemingly affiliated with the school.

"The UH Confessions Facebook page is not affiliated with the University of Houston in any way," Bonnin said.

"UH, as well as Facebook, has policies addressing issues of trademark infringement. The University's Marketing Department contacted administrators of the site, and they agreed to remove the UH logo from their Facebook page."

The page now touts a custom-designed profile picture, showing that the admins are not intending for the page to go anywhere any time soon.

Community pages go in and out of style like leggings and hairstyles, but some students believe UH Confessions is in it for the long haul. People are attracted to the story-like posts. However, the validity of the statements have been contested by students.

"I read a couple of the posts a couple days ago. I don't go on it frequently," said accounting senior Leah Forest. "I didn't read any posts that were too juicy, so I believed the ones that I read. But do I think people put fake stuff on there? Yes."

The page reached out to the UH community Friday when they organized a Willy Wonka-like game in which the winner gets to meet the team behind it all.

The team spread stickers around the library and asked for the finder of the sticker marked with No. 1 to come forward to meet the page's leaders.

While the goal of this contest is unclear, Mondlock thinks she knows what they are up to.

"I think why they want to reveal themselves now is because it's getting popular and they want to take credit for it," Mondlock said.

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