Shannon Rauch is drawing a lot of attention on Facebook — not for the photos or clever musings she posts on her personal site, but for her research on the social media phenomenon.

In 2013, Rauch’s study “Face to Face Versus Facebook: Does Exposure to Social Networking Web Sites Augment or Attenuate Physiological Arousal Among the Socially Anxious?” was published in the journal Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking.

Since then, the assistant professor of Psychology at Benedictine University at Mesa has received calls from media outlets far and wide, including the Washington Times, Medical News Today, Forbes, Fortune, Men’s Health, National Public Radio, USA Today, Time and even The Daily Star in Bangladesh by reporters seeking her expertise on the psychological effects of using social media.

The subject matter of the stories ranges from cyber stalking and blind dating to social media hoaxes and social media addiction.

While people log on and use social media for a variety of reasons, Rauch’s findings show that the vast majority of people do so to escape from boredom, as she explained in an article published by Medical News Today.

“Social media delivers a reinforcement every time a person logs on,” Rauch said. “For those who post status updates, the reinforcements keep coming in the form of supportive comments and ‘likes.’ And of course we know that behaviors that are consistently reinforced will be repeated, so it becomes hard for a person who has developed this habit to simply stop.”
When it comes to meeting new people, “Facebook stalking” has become a natural first step in the process. This often leads people to become more obsessed about their own image on social media, Rauch said.

“For many people, constant use of social media is equivalent to being persistently preoccupied with what others think,” Rauch explained in an article posted on the website Anxiety.org.

In Rauch’s study, 26 female students were first tested for levels of social anxiety. She then divided the students into four groups. One group only viewed a person’s Facebook profile, while another group was instructed to observe a person in a room, but not interact with them. Another group looked at a particular person’s Facebook profile and then observed that same person in the room. The final group saw the person in the room and then viewed their Facebook page.

Rauch found that the students who viewed a person’s social media page before seeing them in person had heightened levels of arousal. This was especially true for participants who had a high level of chronic social anxiety. This counters the perception that online experiences can be helpful for people with social anxiety disorders, as she explained in a Time magazine article.

“If your goal is to calm yourself for the face-to-face encounter, Facebook is probably not the best strategy,” Rauch said.

Another unintended consequence of social media is the ease at which users can spread and re-post information that masquerades as truth.

One widely circulated fabrication — that Facebook would begin charging for private profiles — was reposted and sent out en masse by users, many of whom believed the post to be true. Other hoaxes, such as false celebrity death rumors, have been shared by millions of users.

“I think it’s a case of information overload,” Rauch told Fortune. “We’re so used to getting a lot of information through Facebook — especially younger people — that we quickly scroll through. And the fact that it is a hoax gets lost, because we’re on to the next thing.”

Today, more than 1.65 billion people spend an average of 50 minutes a day on Facebook — more than any other leisure activity except for watching TV programs and movies, according to The New York Times.

And psychologists in particular will continue to pay considerable attention to Facebook and other social media outlets as they grow and compete for more face-time from their users, Rauch said.

“Because of its growing pervasiveness, the understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of Facebook interactions continues to be of considerable importance,” Rauch said. “Its influence on those who struggle with social anxiety is particularly critical.”
Benedictine provides its M.B.A. program in three formats (or modalities) designed to meet the needs of both working adults and recent college graduates.

Students can choose from the On-campus M.B.A. (with classes held on campus), the Workplace M.B.A. (with work-based class sites) and the Online M.B.A. (available throughout the United States).

The three program formats are modeled after the University’s foundational graduate-level business courses and provide premier management expertise for those looking to launch a new career, move up in their organization or step into an advanced leadership position. There are not only more job opportunities for employees who earn their master’s degree (according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics) but having an advanced degree — especially an M.B.A. — is now required for many positions that once only required a bachelor’s degree.

BenU is competitively priced and provides a diverse student experience through exposure to industries and experiences outside of one’s own field. Our faculty members play a key role because they are global leaders who build personal relationships with you and facilitate access to an international network of business professionals.

Students can also customize their career interests by choosing from 20 concentrations and seven dual-degree options.

The On-campus M.B.A. prepares professionals with at least two years of significant work experience for executive and managerial positions in business. Students usually complete one to two courses per quarter in classes that meet once a week in the evening or on weekends on Benedictine’s main campus in Lisle in the Goodwin Hall of Business — an innovative business hub which includes the latest software and technological tools, including access to the Bloomberg Trading Lab.

The Workplace M.B.A. provides graduate-level business and leadership training to groups of professionals on-site at their place of employment. Locations for these hybrid classes can be arranged through the University’s School of Graduate, Adult and Professional Education at the work-based sites of employers in northern and central Illinois, and on-campus in Mesa, Ariz. This hybrid format includes a weekly online component and is designed to meet working adults where they work so they can enhance their leadership and career potential by more easily fitting courses into their schedules.

The Online M.B.A. grants students access to our rigorous courses online wherever they are and at their convenience. The program imparts high-level management skills and enables learners to analyze complex, real-world business problems and implement solutions in an environment that mirrors the dynamic, fast-paced business world. There are multiple opportunities to collaborate, engage and network with other professionals who are enrolled in this in-depth program.

To learn more, schedule an appointment or attend an event, visit ben.edu/mba.
Lisle campus buildings reorganize to better serve students, alumni

Benedictine University’s Lisle main campus underwent a major office reorganization during the summer to better align resources and support services for students and alumni.

The moves consolidate related offices under one roof so students (current or prospective) and alumni can more easily find what they need in one place, rather than having to walk across campus and visit multiple buildings and offices.

The Lownik Enrollment Services Center now contains all of the University’s enrollment functions and retains the offices of Financial Aid, Human Resources, and Administration and Finance. The Office of the Registrar is scheduled to relocate from the Krasa Student Center to Lownik this school year.

The Office of Alumni Relations moved from the Krasa Center and is now operating out of the Neff Alumni Center (formerly Neff Welcome Center), which is dedicated to the University’s rich history and generations of alumni.

Goodwin Hall is now home to the Academic and Career Enrichment Center (ACE) (previously known as the Student Success Center and Career Development Center), the School of Graduate, Adult and Professional Education (formerly called the National Moser Center for Adult Learning), and the Advising Center. Another new entity on campus, the Center for Experiential Learning (BenXL), has also taken residency in the building.

Catholic Schools Team Up in Arizona

Four of Arizona’s private, Catholic institutions of higher education recently joined forces to support their individual missions and help students complete a meaningful and values-based education.

Together, they formed the Catholic Universities of Arizona and created a website, catholicaz.org, to help prospective students sort through the different programs offered by each school.

The schools in the association include Benedictine University at Mesa, The College of St. Scholastica and the University of Mary (the fourth school will leave Arizona after the fall semester).

The venture is supported by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix and encourages awareness among southwestern Arizona’s elementary, middle and high schools.

New sports programs heating up

The Redhawks are rising stars in the NAIA and the California Pacific Conference (CAL PAC). The women’s volleyball team finished 17-7 during the 2015-16 academic year, the men’s basketball team finished 9-1 in conference play, and men’s volleyball and women’s softball both finished at .500. Women’s basketball, baseball, women’s beach volleyball, and men’s and women’s soccer will be offered for the upcoming season.

News from the Mesa Campus

Partnership with Chamber of Commerce

BenU at Mesa recently partnered with the Mesa Chamber of Commerce to launch the Junior Chamber Program to provide BenU students hands-on leadership opportunities.

Beginning this month, students within the program will volunteer a minimum of 50 hours between chamber activities and time with member sponsors. The students will receive professional development, mentoring from Mesa business leaders, and participate in chamber and community events, as well as philanthropic activities.

Several area businesses have committed to be member sponsors of the program. The sponsors will assist, present and provide shadowing opportunities for the class throughout the year.
Jim Fedinec, C92, Biology

As medical director of the emergency room at Valley West Hospital in Sandwich, Ill., and emergency ultrasound director at both Valley West and Kishwaukee hospitals in DeKalb, Ill., Jim Fedinec, M.D., knows a thing or two about balance.

It’s a skill he developed as a Biology student in the Scholar’s Program and as a student-athlete who participated in both track and football at Benedictine.

“The combination of mind, body and spirit are what it takes to succeed,” he added. “At Benedictine, it was about more than studying books, it was about keeping your spiritual and physical worlds strong as well. Balancing and strengthening all three provided the stability I needed to succeed in life.”

Fedinec came to Benedictine after receiving several scholarships and hearing rave reviews from his father (Joseph K. Fedinec, C58) and brother (Joseph M. Fedinec, C92). While he gained an education that prepared him for a successful career in medicine, Benedictine is also the place where he met his wife, Jonelle (Mrozek) Fedinec, C94, Social Science.
Fedinec is a fellow of the American College of Emergency Physicians and the American Academy of Emergency Medicine. He is certified by the American Board of Emergency Medicine and is also a registered diagnostic cardiac sonographer and registered diagnostic medical sonographer.

In 2006, he served as medical director for the PGA Championship at Medinah Country Club.

When not working, he enjoys spending time with his wife and three children — Jimmy, Amber and Lexi — and is an avid marathoner, having completed every Chicago Marathon since 2002.

While having dedication, drive and determination is crucial for success in both medical school and the professional world, it helps to know when to relax and how to have fun, he said.

“My advice to students would be to stay focused on your dreams and goals,” Fedinec said. “Keep the three pillars of mind, body and spirit strong. Work hard, but also enjoy your life, friends and family.”

One of his patents is for colored stitches, mirrored after the option provided to patients receiving a cast for a broken bone. The other patent is for a central line kit which integrates ultrasound equipment and tools to facilitate the placement of large central venous catheters in patients. The ultrasound-guided kit reduces the chance of error and greatly increases the speed and accuracy of the procedure, Fedinec said.

He maintains his relationship with his alma mater by attending events such as Homecoming and the College of Science Reunion. In 2016, Benedictine recognized Fedinec for his professional accomplishments with the Who’s Who Rising Star award.

Fedinec doesn’t limit himself to practicing medicine, however. As an inventor, he is seeking to make his mark on the medical field with two U.S. patents.

After graduating in 1992, Fedinec attended medical school at Rush University, and completed his residency in emergency medicine at Advocate Christ Medical Center. Prior to his current positions at Valley West and Kishwaukee hospitals, he worked at Advocate Christ Medical Center, Edward Hospital and Northwest Community Hospital.

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Notice of Site Visit by Accrediting Agency

Benedictine University is seeking comments from the public about the University in preparation for its periodic evaluation by its regional accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The University will host a site visit November 7-9, 2016, with a team representing the HLC. Benedictine University has been accredited by the HLC since 1958. The team will review the University's ongoing ability to meet the HLC's Criteria for Accreditation.

The public is invited to submit comments regarding the University to the following address:
Public Comments on Benedictine University
Higher Learning Commission
230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500
Chicago, IL 60604-1411

The public may also submit comments on HLC’s website at www.hlcommission.org/comment.
Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of the University or its academic programs. Comments must be in writing.

All comments must be received by October 7, 2016.
Benedictine University is located in Lisle, Illinois, just 25 miles west of Chicago, and has branch campuses in Springfield, Illinois, and Mesa, Arizona. Founded as a Catholic university in 1887, Benedictine enrolls nearly 10,000 students in 56 undergraduate and 19 graduate programs. Forbes magazine named Benedictine among “America’s Top Colleges” for the sixth consecutive year in 2016. A 2016 PayScale Inc. report ranked BenU one of the top 10 colleges in Illinois for return on investment and in the top 20 percent nationally. Accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (hlcommission.org). For more information, contact (630) 829-6300, admissions@ben.edu or visit ben.edu.

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You can contact the editor at lhale@ben.edu.