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University of Dayton

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# Not-so-candid camera: new professional headshot photo booth in UD library

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## News

- [News](#)
- [Not-so-candid camera: new professional headshot photo booth in UD library](#)



Tuesday February 21, 2023

There's a buzz in Roesch Library, but not because of caffeinated drinks coming from The Blend. One by one, students are getting free headshots in the new Iris Booth, a photo booth that takes professional quality pictures.

Laura Bender, a senior majoring in pre-medicine and philosophy, was curious about the booth when she saw it near The Blend. Later that week when she stopped to grab a cup of coffee before an in-person interview for medical school, she snapped her photo in the time it took for her drink to be made.

"It's important that the picture is good quality so that it's representative of the experience you have, especially when you're only meeting and interviewing over Zoom," Bender said. "In person, somebody's presence comes off easier, Zoom only gets a snapshot of your face, so being able to associate you with a good picture is really helpful for memory's sake."

The same is true for professional and career search websites. A profile is 14 times more likely to be found on LinkedIn if it has a professional photo, according to the company's research.

"Branding is so important when it comes to students or alumni and their ability to job search," said Jason Eckert, Career Services executive director. "I see sites like LinkedIn growing in prominence and the headshot is a really important feature. Not every student has access to a photographer or photo studio so I'm very excited that students, faculty, staff and alumni can come to the photo booth and take a high quality professional image to use for networking, LinkedIn and Handshake."

Daniel Hennessey, a senior and UD Student Government Association senate speaker, pitched the idea to buy the booth to SGA leadership and then to UD Career Services after seeing one on another campus. He cited students taking pictures of their yearbook photos, using low-quality images or just generally unprofessional pictures on their LinkedIn profiles to illustrate the need for the photo booth.

"The booth provides a simpler, more convenient option for students and other users because they can do everything at their own pace," Hennessey said. "The booth also gives you tips and tricks for positioning and posture, and editing is really easy as well. You can correct pictures on your phone, so no matter what your level of comfort is around editing pictures, the headshot booth makes it really easy. I can play around with it and figure it out myself."

The booth's professional lighting and editing features ensure all students are seen clearly and are represented accurately in their image.

Thanks to SGA and Career Services, as well as an alumni donor, the machine was purchased and installed in late December 2022. More than 377 pictures have been taken by 261 users since then.

"In reality, a lot of really great things came together at the right time," Eckert said. "We've provided a photographer at the annual career fairs, and we will continue that service for at least another year, but if a student needs a headshot tomorrow, they now have a great service that provides on demand access."

The photo booth is open for use during the Ryan C. Harris Learning Teaching Center's hours of operation.

