West Virginia State University Social Media Guidelines & Procedures

Purpose

West Virginia State University supports the official use of social media to reach audiences important to the institution, such as current and potential students, employees, customers, visitors, supporters or other stakeholders. The definition of social media includes but is not limited to blogs, podcasts, discussion forums, online collaborative information and publishing systems that are accessible to internal and external audiences. Examples include but are not limited to Wikis, RSS feeds, video sharing and social networks like YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram. This policy establishes the criteria and procedure for creating a University presence or participation on social media sites on behalf of the University and offers best practices for the successful management of these endeavors.

University presence or participation on social media sites includes: 1) Media sites established by the University on University-owned domains; 2) Accounts on external sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc., on behalf of the University and/or the University's programs; and 3) Personal accounts on external sites that are approved for use or participation by University employees as part of their job duties. These guidelines and procedures apply to faculty and staff, including student employees, who engage in Internet conversations for work-related purposes or who are asked by supervisors to use or participate in social media as part of his or her job responsibilities.

Approval Process

- All WVSU-related social media initiatives must be approved by a University Relations staff person prior to being activated. Submit an explanation of the proposed social media initiative to socialmedia@wvstateu.edu.
- The following questions shall be considered when there is a request to establish a University-hosted social media site or to participate in Internet discussions or social media on behalf of the University:
    - Can the University's involvement be carried out in such a manner that positively supports the institution's values, mission and goals?
    - Can engagement with the audience add value to both the University and the audience?
    - Is the approach as effective or efficient as other approaches that might be used (i.e. would an existing WVSU social media initiative or the main website accomplish the same goals)?
    - Does the use of social media enable the University to offer services it might not otherwise be able to offer?
    - Do sufficient resources exist to appropriately manage the platform?
- At least one faculty or staff person shall be designated to monitor the medium, identify problems that emerge and take action when necessary.
- The level of editorial control that will be enforced shall be identified and agreed upon with University Relations during the approval process.
- All social media managers must provide administrative access to any WVSU-affiliated accounts to the following University Relations staff members: Vice President for University Relations and Operations, Assistant Vice President for University Relations

and Operations and the Digital Marketing Specialist. For social media sites Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, this will mean providing the University Relations team with current username and password information to access the page(s). For Facebook, the social media manager must give the aforementioned University Relations staff members administrative privileges to the page. This is to ensure that pages remain up to date, and in the event that a page becomes inactive, it can be deleted to maintain an active University presence on social media.

Naming Guidelines

Naming your social media channel is very important. Please ensure that West Virginia State University, WVStateU or WVSU is listed prior to your department, college, program, office, organization or student group. For example, WVSU University Relations for Facebook or WVStateU for Twitter.

Updating and Monitoring

- Pages shall be updated on an ongoing basis by the departments or units that create them to enable rapid response to any problems that may arise and to ensure an engaging, interesting environment for visitors. To be effective, pages must be dynamic and will require updating daily.
- The approved faculty or staff member shall continuously monitor the social media platform, identify problems that emerge and take action when necessary.
- University Relations is charged with the responsibility to monitor social media initiatives, counsel those who represent the University online on adherence to best practices, and take action to restrict or remove an employee's ability to publish should efforts to correct the situation fail. Any disciplinary action deemed necessary will be managed by the respective administrative office in collaboration with Human Resources.
- Any use of University marks, such as logos and graphics, shall comply with the *WVSU Brand and Graphic Identity Manual*, available online. For more information please contact Mark Fuller at 304-204-4034.

Best Practices

- Protect confidential, proprietary and personal identifiable (PII) information: Do not post PII, confidential or proprietary information about WVSU, students, employees or alumni. Employees who share legally protected and confidential information regarding WVSU students, employees or alumni do so at the risk of disciplinary action or termination as well as legal action external to the University. Employees must adhere to state and federal laws related to security and privacy information (e.g. FERPA and HIPAA).
- Encourage comments from followers of your social media platform, but monitor interaction to ensure that discussion does not attack individuals or entities, does not use offensive language and is not threatening. Reserve the right to remove inappropriate comments from users.
- Respect copyright and fair use: Be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the University. General information about copyright laws can be found on the U.S. Copyright Office website at http://copyright.gov/.

- Have a plan: Departments should consider their messages, audiences and goals, as well as a strategy for keeping information on social media sites up-to-date. A University Relations staff person can assist and advise you with your social media planning.
- Link back to the University: Whenever possible, link back to the WVSU website. Ideally, posts should be brief and redirect a visitor to content that resides within the main website. When linking to a news article about WVSU, check first to see whether you can link to a release on the campus website instead of to a publication or other media outlet.
- Photography: Images captured on the Institute campus of WVSU and/or at an event held in any public space with WVSU faculty and students and used for promotional purposes are property of the University and individuals will not be compensated for use of their image and/or likeness. Minors not affiliated with the University may be photographed at an event involving WVSU as long as written permission has been granted by a parent and/or guardian (i.e. a K-12 parental consent form held by the student's school system).
- WVSU logos may not be used endorsements. University logos or other images or iconography may not be used on personal social media sites. WVSU's name, image and likeness may not be used to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate.
- Respect University time and property: University computers and time on the job are reserved for University-related business.
- Strive for accuracy: Get the facts straight before posting them on social media.
- Review content for grammatical and spelling errors: This is especially important if posting on behalf of the University in any capacity.
- Be respectful at all times: Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they could reflect on the poster and/or the University and its institutional voice.
- Remember your audience: Be aware that a presence on social media is or easily can be made available to the public at large. This includes prospective students, current students, current employees and colleagues, and peers. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not alienate, harm or provoke any of these groups.
- Acknowledge who you are: If you are representing WVSU when posting on a social media platform, acknowledge this.
- Terms of service: Obey the Terms of Service of any social media platform employed.

Non-Institutional and Personal Media Sites
West Virginia State University does not monitor the personal social media sites of its employees; however, the University reserves the right to review any site or activity deemed as potentially in violation of the guidelines listed here. On personal sites, identify your views as your own. If you identify yourself as a WVSU faculty or staff member online, it should be clear that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the institution.