

## East Georgia State College Social Media Policy

**Revisions Approved by President's Cabinet 5-24-16**

**Approved by President's Cabinet 12-16-14**

**Introduction:** EGSC recognizes and embraces the power of social media, and the opportunity those tools provide to communicate with the EGSC community including students, faculty, staff, parent, alumni and other interested parties. EGSC recognizes the importance of academic freedom and the use of social media to promote academic instruction, research and other scholarly activities. EGSC acknowledges that all employees and students have the right to speak on matters of public concern as a private citizen. In all venues, the college encourages responsible use of social media.

**Scope:** This policy applies to the use of social media platforms by East Georgia State College faculty, staff and students to represent or discuss matters concerning the college. The policy applies to this group when representing or discussing matters concerning the college whether posting as an EGSC social media account administrator, an employee or posting as an individual, outside of official EGSC duties, outside of work hours and when posting from a non-EGSC computer or device. The *EGSC Social Media Best Practices* provides guidance for the authorization, establishment and maintenance of college social media sites and is attached hereto.

**Definition:** Social Media is a term used to describe web-based tools and platforms that enable a group of individuals the ability to share and communicate ideas with each other quickly and publicly. Examples of popular social media include, without limitation, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Myspace, Pinterest, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, Google Plus, Snapchat and Tumblr. Social media also includes discussion forums, on-line collaborative information and publishing systems (i.e. Wikis), video sharing as well as the proprietary platforms listed above. This policy applies to social media platforms maintained by EGSC.

**Social Media Activities:** Posts and other content specifically added by administrators of the EGSC social media account are official EGSC content. All content posted on an EGSC social media page by an account administrator and content posted to a non ESGC social media page using EGSC computer equipment or network is subject to this policy, the EGSC Acceptable Use Policy and the EGSC Campus Computer Network and Usage Policy. Content posted to an EGSC social media page by an employee or student's non-EGSC computer or personal device is also covered by this policy. Further, depending on your affiliation with EGSC, your online activity may be subject to other applicable policies and laws including but not limited to the *EGSC Student Code of Conduct*, the *EGSC Employee Handbook*, the *EGSC Faculty handbook*, the *EGSC Information Technology Policies*, the *USG Policy Manual* and the *USG Human Resource Administrative Practice Manual*.

EGSC does not monitor social media content 24/7 and thus cannot immediately review every comment posted on its page. User provided content is not screened or evaluated during the submission process. Opinions expressed by other users do not necessarily reflect the opinion of EGSC and. EGSC cannot verify the accuracy of such posts. Users are encouraged to report content that violates the social media platform's Code of Conduct, EGSC and/or USG policies and the law to the Associate Vice President for Institutional Advancement. The college reserves the right to remove content and to revoke the user's privilege to post to the EGSC social media page.

### **Social Media Activities Violating the Law or Policy**

Use of social media that violates the law, including but not limited to federal, state, local, and when applicable foreign laws and EGSC and/or USG policies will result in disciplinary action and may result in criminal or civil penalties. In addition, content posted on a social networking site may be used as evidence of activity that violates the law.

The following guidelines highlight several activities that violate law or policy and are not intended as a comprehensive list.

Acceptable Use Policy and Campus Computer Network and Usage Policy: Social media users must abide by the college's Acceptable Use Policy and Computer Network and Usage Policy when posting content on EGSC social media account or posting content on a non-EGSC social media account using an EGSC computer or network.

Confidentiality of Student and Applicant Records: Federal laws (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), Georgia law, EGSC policy and USG policy governing the confidentiality of student and applicant records apply to social media use. Information such as academic records, disciplinary records, e-mail correspondence should never be released through social media without the express written consent of the student or applicant that includes consent to the disclosure through social media.

Release of Restricted Data: Release of social security numbers, financial information, employee or student medical information, and any other confidential records held by the college is strictly prohibited.

Adhere to Applicable College and USG Policies: Use social media in a manner that complies with EGSC and USG Policies, including but not limited to policies concerning discrimination, harassment, bullying, information technology policies, conflict of interest, and USG Ethical Code of Conduct.

The college will address, through appropriate disciplinary procedures, the social media activities of faculty staff or students that is defamatory, discriminatory, harassing, violates FERPA, violates ethics, represents a conflict of interest, and/or violates the law, USG policy or EGSC policy. Disciplinary actions will vary depending on the circumstances surrounding the violation, the severity of the violation and prior violations by the student or employee. Disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to, issuance of a written warning, revoking the user's access to the EGSC social media page and/or termination.

Violations of the *EGSC Social Media Best Practices*, standing alone, will not violate the EGSC Social Media Policy.

## **EGSC Social Media Best Practices 5/24/16**

**Introduction:** The *Social Media Best Practices* are designed to assist employees and students in the effective use of social media platforms, protect his or her personal and professional reputations and follow college policies. While official communication is the primary responsibility of designated campus personnel, the college recognizes that other EGSC employees and students may also further institutional goals by using social media. The college expects all employees and students participating in social media on behalf of EGSC to understand and follow these best practices. Individuals desiring to create a social media page or profile for an EGSC unit must obtain permission from his or her supervisor and the Associate Vice President for Institutional Advancement. The Associate Vice President for Institutional Advancement and the Web Services Specialist must be listed as administrators on all pages represented as college pages.

**Scope:** These best practices apply to the use of social media platforms by East Georgia State College employees and students to represent or discuss matters concerning the college when posting on behalf of EGSC, when posting to EGSC social media accounts as an individual, outside of official EGSC duties, outside work hours, and when posting to non-EGSC social media accounts.

**Definition:** Social Media is a term used to describe electronic, web-based tools and platforms that enable individuals to share ideas and content quickly and easily. Examples include discussion forums, on-line collaborative information and publishing systems (i.e., Wikis) video sharing, and proprietary platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Myspace, Pinterest, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, GooglePlu, Snapchat and Tumblr.

### **Best practices When Posting on Behalf of EGSC:**

1. Recognize the inherent lack of privacy in social media environment. Anything shared within social media, even within a closed network such as a listserv, is not guaranteed to stay private, even if you adjust privacy settings. It can be shared, stored and spread globally.
2. Respect copyright and fair use doctrine when posting text, picture, video in which a third party claims a copyright. Give proper credit for work used and make sure you have the owner's permission to use the work prior to posting. Questions and assistance are available from the Marketing and Community Relations department.
3. Obtain permission before posting images of students or others, particularly if they were taken in a classroom setting or include minors. The *Use of Photographs, Audio and Video Agreement and Release* is available from the Institutional Advancement department.
4. Limit the time you spend on attending your department's social media presence to what is needed to post fresh content, evaluate traffic data, review related sites, and monitor comments. The *EGSC Acceptable Use Policy* allows employee's use of college computers during work hours for college related business. Personal social media conversations must take place after work hours.
5. Identify your role as poster to your audience. Do not blur the line between professional and personal business. If you are authorized by your supervisor to represent EGSC in social media, state this clearly. Use a professional photograph. In personal posts, you may identify yourself as an EGSC employee, but state that you are sharing your views as an individual, not as a representative of EGSC. Example Disclaimer: "The postings on this site are my own and do not represent the view, positions or opinions of East Georgia State College." Before creating any pages or accounts to conduct college business, secure the approval of your supervisor and the Associate Vice President for Institutional Advancement.
6. Ensure that your posts are accurate and factual. Verify information with a source first and cite and link to sources when possible. Content may be redistributed quickly, and older versions may continue to exist online. Errors should be corrected quickly.

7. All college social media sites should strive to meet Section 504 web accessibility best practices. To ensure that social media sites are accessible to all students, designated campus communicators must work with the Information Technology and Institutional Advancement departments to develop appropriate videos, text, photos and any other content.
8. Posts should further the college's educational mission. Complaints of alleged unethical behavior, employee complaints about supervisors, student complaints about faculty and other complaints for which an existing college complaint mechanism exists, should use the respective complaint mechanism to voice a complaint. Such complaints should not be posted on social media sites.
9. Have a plan or content calendar to guide your posts and update regularly. Be sure you are contributing valuable insights and posting quality content regularly to keep the content updated. Linking to other college sites and following them is a good method for sharing information. Be prepared to move quickly in response to new developments and announcements with relevant information on the site.
10. Be careful of social media widgets and tools, and scripts that are hosted externally. Widgets and tools can be embedded in existing websites allowing social media content to be displayed directly from your website. As a result, inappropriate content can be displayed directly on EGSC websites. Externally hosted scripts can be tracked without the knowledge of the website visitor and the content delivered to the EGSC site can be altered by the external host at any time to intentionally or unintentionally negatively affect web site visitors.
11. Be prepared to accept and respond to comments. Respond to negative comments professionally and by providing educational information that may resolve or diffuse the issue. If the matter in question involves a topic that can easily ignite debate (Example: politics, religion), avoid it. Example Disclaimer: "Users are fully responsible for any content they load on any of EGSC's social media sites. Comments posted here do not represent the opinions of East Georgia State College."
12. Emergency Communications will be posted on the main East Georgia State College webpage, Twitter and Facebook pages. Departmental social media sites should not post this information unless directed to do so by the Office of Institutional Advancement.
13. The college logos and campus photos may be used on social media sites, when in conformance with the EGSC *Logo Usage and Identity Standards* and upon prior approval of the Institutional Advancement department.

#### **Best practices When Posting as an Individual (outside of official EGSC duties)**

1. In personal posts, identify yourself as an EGSC student or employee, but be clear that you are sharing personal views and not speaking as a formal representative of EGSC. If you identify yourself as a member of the EGSC community, ensure that your profile and related content are consistent with how you wish to present yourself to your colleagues. Please be aware that activity on behalf of the college on social media is subject to the EGSC and USG policies.
2. A disclaimer should be used when posting content to any online platform outside of EGSC that has to do with the work you do at EGSC or with individuals associated with EGSC. Example Disclaimer: "The postings on this site are my own and do not represent EGSC positions, strategies or opinions."
3. Even if you identify your affiliation with EGSC in your comments and add a disclaimer that the views are your own, readers may associate you with the college.
4. Do not use the EGSC logo or make endorsements. Do not use the college marks or images on your personal sites. Do not use EGSC's name to promote or endorse any product, cause, political party or candidate.
5. Do not post personal information that scam artists or identity thieves could use. Do not list your home address, phone number, or indicate when you will be away on vacation. Consider using a separate email address that is used only for social media sites.

6. Consider whether the content of your message would be acceptable in a face to face conversation, telephone or other medium. If not, it is not acceptable on a social media site.

The above best practices are designed to provide direction to employee and student use of social media. Problems or concerns regarding the use of social media by an EGSC employee or student should be reported immediately to the Web Services Specialist and the Associate Vice President for Institutional Advancement. Any violations of these best practices, standing alone, will not subject the poster to disciplinary action. However, the college reserves the right to remove the social media post(s) that are the subject of the violation(s).