

East Georgia State College Social Media Policy

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 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 Director of Marketing and Community Relations. 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.

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For an up-to-date copy, go to the policies and procedures page on the EGSC website