

Social Media Policy

Approved by President's Cabinet 3/26/13

GENERAL BACKGROUND

Scope

This policy applies to all use of social media by East Georgia State College **students, faculty and staff** to represent or discuss matters concerning the College, whether or not such use involves the College's network or other computer resources.

Definition

Social media - "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 of popular social media include, without limitation, texting, blogs and propriety platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, My Space, Pinterest, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, Google Plus, and Tumblr.

Social media also includes but is not limited to podcasts, discussion forums, on-line collaborative information and publishing systems that are accessible to internal and external audiences (i.e., Wikis), RSS feeds, video sharing, as well as the proprietary platforms listed above.

Introduction

Within the last few years, the growing popularity of social media has fundamentally changed the way we communicate as individuals and as an Institution. 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, parents, alumni, and other interested parties.

It is important to recognize, however, that the use of social media at or concerning EGSC is governed by the same laws, policies, rules of conduct and etiquette that apply to all other activities at or concerning EGSC, including activities of a private nature conducted away from the College.

Protected Speech

Not all speech is protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This document addresses unprotected speech.

GUIDELINES and POLICIES

The following guidelines and policies were drafted in an effort to address use of Social Media websites by EGSC and its departments. It is important to understand that use of Social Media can create numerous issues for the College. "Official" use of Social Media Sites by faculty/staff/students should adhere to these guidelines and policies that are intended to minimize such risks. Questions regarding the use of Social Media or these guidelines or policies should be referred to the Marketing and Community Relations Department and/or the Web Services Specialist.

BEST PRACTICES

- Be aware that by posting College content to social media sites, you authorize the site to make copies of the College content posted and to use the content for virtually any purpose.
- Copyright claims could be asserted against the College if someone inadvertently posted a picture or video in which a third party claims a copyright. The College would have to secure written permission prior to using/incorporating any copyrighted or proprietary materials. Questions regarding the appropriateness of a posting should be addressed to Marketing and Community Relations. The safest course is to use only materials created by the College for such purposes. Contact the Marketing and Community Relations department for assistance.
- Generally speaking, prior permission (i.e. a release) must be obtained from individuals whose images are identifiable. For that reason, it is always best to use content, such as photographs or videos, provided by the Marketing and Community Relations Department specifically for this purpose. Assistance with releases, or answers to questions about exceptions to the requirement for a release, can be obtained from the Legal counsel.

POLICIES

- The Director of Marketing and Community Relations and the Web Services Specialist must be listed as Administrators on all pages represented as college pages.
- Content posted may be redistributed through the Internet and other media channels and may be viewed by the general public. If deleted or modified, older versions may continue to exist online. Content should not be posted unless it furthers the College's education, teaching and research mission. Share only information that is appropriate for the public.
- In order to avoid discrepancies and minimize the need for updating, social media pages should not be used to post detailed policy or procedure information, for example, program admission criteria. Rather, users should be directed to the official College publications for such information.
- Do not upload, post, transmit, share, store or otherwise make publicly available on the site any private information of any third party, including, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, Social Security numbers and credit card numbers;
- Generally speaking, content should not be posted if it depicts a dangerous activity.
- Content must not be posted if it is not clearly suitable for all ages.
- Do not post content that could create a security risk for the College. Examples include but are not limited to images of healthcare facilities, restricted access areas, business areas and information technology facilities.
- Do not post content that shows (or may be perceived to show) someone getting hurt, attacked or humiliated, that might be considered racist, bigoted or demeaning to a particular group of individuals, that depicts activity that is (or may be perceived to be) illegal, for example drug use, or that could otherwise put the College in a bad light.
- Do not post content that might be embarrassing to an individual or that could be construed as placing an individual in a bad or false light.

- Do not post content that might cause someone to believe that his/her name, image, likeness or other identifying aspect of his/her identity is being used for commercial purposes without permission.
- Special care must always be taken when dealing with images of “special populations,” e.g., minors, health care patients, research subjects. Stringent legal requirements apply. Generally speaking, such images should never be used in this type of context.
- Use of College marks - Pages should feature the department’s official unit signature. Departments also are encouraged to use photographs to display campus beauty. Photos suitable for web posting are available for free at www.flickr.com. Approved marks and logos are featured on the EGSC Marketing and Community Relations webpage at http://www.ega.edu/index.php/offices/external_affairs/marketing_and_community_relations/logo_downloads
- Commercial use, e.g., sales of merchandise: The provision of on-line services or the sale of College publications, products or paraphernalia via “E-commerce” is only permitted in accordance with College and Board of Regents policies and procedures.
- College departments should not use Social Media websites to collect personal information of users, as these sites terms and conditions, as well as state and federal law, impose significant requirements and restrictions on the collection of personal information of users. In the case of minors, significant additional penalties can apply to violations.
- Remember that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy of student education records. Generally, the College must have written permission from a student in order to release any information from a student's education record. In order to comply with FERPA, the College’s email system (and not Social Media) must be used when communicating about an issue involving a specific student.
- East Georgia State College abides by the specific social media terms and conditions, and we ask anyone posting on our pages to do the same. In particular, please do not "post unauthorized commercial solicitations (such as spam)"; "bully, intimidate, or harass any user"; "post content that is hateful, threatening, pornographic, or that contains nudity or graphic or gratuitous violence"; or "do anything unlawful, misleading, malicious, or discriminatory" on any EGSC page. It is important to note that all comments and postings by fans on this site ("User Content") do not necessarily reflect the opinions of East Georgia State College.
- We invite your participation and guarantee that every comment is read and appropriately shared with the administration. We pledge to remain as neutral as possible, and hope that all community members feel encouraged to share in a positive, growing experience. EGSC’s Web Services Specialist and the Office of Marketing and Community Relations reserve the right to remove any posts that contain commercial solicitations; are factually erroneous/libelous; are wildly off-topic; or that otherwise violate the social media site’s statement of Rights and Responsibilities.
- **Social Media Pages must be monitored and 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 more frequently than a Web site. A stale page will likely cause more damage to the image of an entity than having no page at all.

Remedies

All College employees are subject to the code of conduct and standards of behavior as set forth in the EGSC Faculty Handbook, EGSC Statutes, EGSC Staff Handbook, USG Academic Affairs Handbook, Policy Manual of the Board of Regents, University System of Georgia Human Resources Manual, and by state and federal law.

Should any of the policies be violated, the page and content may immediately be removed by the Director of Marketing and Community Relations and the Web Services Specialist. Other disciplinary action may follow if the action violates Acceptable Use Policy or any other policy of EGSC or the USG. See http://www.ega.edu/policy/Section_11.pdf , for more information.

FINAL NOTE

Problems or concerns regarding the use of a Social media site or a college page should be reported immediately to the Director of Marketing and Community Relations, the Web Services Specialist and the Vice President for Information Technology.

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