

Social Media Policy ADM 14.0

Office of Marketing/Office of Human Resources/ IT

Policy Type: Administrative

Applies to: Faculty, staff, student employees, students and volunteers

POLICY DATES

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The rapidly-changing landscape of technology and the advent of the internet have vastly changed how people communicate and collect information. Electronic communication tools continue to evolve, and social media have become powerful elements of this online communication process. Today, social media have been largely embraced by people of all generations and are widely used in our society. Thus, they have the power to significantly impact individuals, organizations and the reputations of both.

The University of Mount Union (hereinafter referred to as Mount Union) actively uses social media platforms as a means of engaging in dialogue with constituents and promoting the institution's successes, events and news. At the same time, Mount Union recognizes that the use of these tools potentially opens the door to any number of unintended consequences.

Therefore, the purpose of this policy is to ensure that all social media interactions facilitated on behalf of Mount Union represent the institution's best interests in an effective and enriching manner. The overarching goal is to fulfill this purpose while also honoring the spirit of social media communication and appreciating the benefits of facilitating and encouraging interaction with the public. **The intention of this policy is not to regulate personal social media use but to protect Mount Union and its reputation and interests when individuals are acting on behalf of the institution.** The best practices set forth in this policy refer most frequently both to the use of good judgment when using social media and how existing policies and regulations are applicable in the social media world.

Social media is defined by Mount Union as public forms of communication that are used via the Internet. This form of communication combines integrated technology, social interaction and the construction of words and/or pictures. Sites include, but are not limited to: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, YouTube, Shutterfly, Flickr, Foursquare, SCVNGR, Plurk, Blogs, Wikis, Digg, etc. or any social site that can be created by a person and utilized for promoting the institution in any manner.

Social media applications allow you to interact with others online, yet they should be used only with careful consideration of the implications of "friending," "liking," "following," "searching" or accepting such a request from another person. The potential always exists for liability issues as well as the misinterpretation of the relationship or the potential sharing of confidential or proprietary information. Representatives of the institution and their social media relationships with one another, including colleagues, subordinates, prospective students, current students, alumni, donors, parents and others, merit close consideration of the implications and the nature of the social interaction. This policy was created in an effort to provide guidelines for faculty and staff members in these cases.

Table of Contents

- I. Policy Details
 - A. Social Media Guidelines
 - B. Disclaimer

Office of Marketing/Office of Human Resources/ IT

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Policy Details

A. Social Media Guidelines

The following guidelines have been established to ensure that faculty and staff members using social media refrain from harming Mount Union or themselves through social networking whether navigating those networks on the job or off.

These guidelines are intended to guide efforts that are made as an official representation of the University, but they also are useful to keep in mind for personal social media interaction as well.

Any posting of information and material on a social media site may give rise to personal liability and/or liability to the entity employing the individual posting the material or information. Utilization of social media in any manner is subject to any law or regulation impacting the use of the material published.

Refrain from Using Your Personal Social Media Sites for the Conduct of Business Personal

Social media accounts should not be used by faculty or staff members of the institution to conduct business on behalf of Mount Union. Faculty members may create a Facebook group page, linked from their personal pages, to support teaching and learning related to a particular course. Please see additional guidelines for Facebook group pages on p. 2 of the Guidelines and Procedures for Official Social Media Sites.

Respect University Time and Property

Mount Union computers and time on the job are reserved for University-related business as approved by supervisors and in accordance with Mount Union policy. Your online activities should never interfere with your job or commitment to Mount Union's constituents. It's appropriate to post at work if your comments are directly related to accomplishing work goals, such as seeking sources for information or working with others to resolve a problem. Reserve participation in personal social media conversations for your own time. See the Technology Resources Acceptable Use Policy for additional details on the acceptable use of Mount Union-owned technology.

Recognize Issues of Liability and Civil Law

Injurious and defamatory statements may subject you and/or Mount Union to civil liability. Faculty and staff members are responsible for what they post on their personal sites and on the sites of Mount Union. Individuals across the country have been held liable for copyright infringement as well as defamatory, libelous or obscene comments.

Respect Copyright, Fair Use and Intellectual Property

Show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others, including those owned by Mount Union. For additional information, consult Mount Union's Non-Infringing Uses of Copyrighted Material statement. Do not use intellectual properties of Mount Union, such as photography, video, artwork and publications copyrighted to the University, without authorization of the Office of Marketing. Be Familiar with Existing Conduct Policies Adhere to all existing policies and procedures of the University, including but not limited to:

1. Employment Policies Handbook for Hourly Staff
2. Employment Policies Handbook for Administrative Staff
3. Employment Policies Handbook for Faculty
4. Faculty Handbook
5. Student Handbook
6. Statement of Business Conduct and Ethics
7. Technology Resources Acceptable Use Policy
8. Identity Program

Preserve Confidentiality

Do not disclose confidential or proprietary information of Mount Union or its students, alumni, donors, trustees and faculty or staff members, or any other individuals in any way affiliated with Mount Union. As a guideline, refrain from posting anything that you could not legally present in a public forum. Apply principles of ethics and adhere to all University policies and federal requirements, including, but not limited to:

- a. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA)
- b. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Refrain from Disparaging Remarks Do not make disparaging remarks about Mount Union or its programs, services or constituents.

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Show Respect

Don't use ethnic slurs, personal assaults or obscenity or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the Mount Union community. Show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered sensitive, including politics and religion. Don't pick fights.

Don't Be a Bully

Refrain from bullying or harassing any constituent of Mount Union through any social media outlet, whether on personal time or work time. Abusive, harassing, threatening or defaming posts will not be tolerated by Mount Union and may result in disciplinary action being taken. All faculty and staff members are expected to treat their colleagues and peers in a respectful and dignified manner and are personally responsible for ensuring that their behavior does not constitute bullying and/or harassment.

Beware the Rumor Mill

Do not post or comment on rumors related to Mount Union in any way. Refrain from denying or affirming them whether doing so outright or in subtle ways, speculating about them or furthering them through hypothetical scenarios. Direct inquiries regarding rumors should be brought to the attention of the Office of Marketing so that the administration can determine if an official institutional response is required.

Protect Constituents and Business Partners

No material should be posted on a social media site that refers to or identifies any other individual without the express permission of that individual. The same policies, professional expectations and guidelines for interacting with students, parents, alumni, donors, faculty and staff members, trustees, media and other University constituents apply online as in the real world. Be prepared to remove any personal pictures of Mount Union constituents or coworkers or discussion of any personal situation involving named or pictured individuals posted to social media sites upon the request of those individuals. Never discuss confidential details of business partnerships.

Maintain Transparency

When posting, faculty and staff members should be upfront about their identity. Never pretend to be someone else. Tracking tools enable supposedly anonymous posts to be traced back to their authors.

Refrain from Endorsements

When representing Mount Union, do not endorse any opinion, product, cause, religion, political party or political candidate unless it is related to an officially-approved institutional effort. Those who are uncertain about whether or not an effort is officially-sanctioned by the institution should contact their supervisor or the Office of Marketing.

Be Accurate

Verify facts before making comments. Avoid making unsubstantiated claims. Cite and link to sources when possible. If a mistake is made, admit it. Correct mistakes promptly.

Apply the Front Page Test

If it's not appropriate to print on the front page of a newspaper, then it's not appropriate to post on social media. In cases where faculty and staff members aren't certain whether posting information is appropriate or not, they should feel free to discuss the matter with a supervisor. However, a good general rule of thumb is that, if you have to ask, it's likely questionable.

Protect Your Identity

Don't provide personal information that could put you at risk for identity theft, including a home address or telephone number. Identity theft has negative consequences for the individual and could potentially compromise Mount Union security.

Don't Be Naïve About "Privacy"

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ADM 14.0

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“Privacy” in social media does not exist. Remember that many systems save information even after the author has “deleted” it, and many search engines turn up posts and pictures long after the initial publication date. Consider the unintended consequences of comments being forwarded, copied and/or subpoenaed. Be sure that what is posted today will not come back to haunt you in the future. Be careful.

Let Somebody Know

Mount Union faculty and staff members are responsible for reporting any social media posts, whether directed at or coming from a Mount Union community member, that include comments that are bullying or harassing in nature and/or threats of harm to oneself, others or the institution. Individuals can report such information confidentially through the Ethics Point system.

B. Disclaimer

If, at any time, the Office of Marketing finds that an officially-sanctioned social media site is not appropriately representing Mount Union in accordance with the guidelines previously presented, the Mount Union Identity Program or other existing University policies, the site will be terminated.

Mount Union has the right, in its sole discretion, to remove any content for any reason from an official Mount Union social media site, including, but not limited to, content that it deems threatening, obscene, a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws or is deemed to be otherwise injurious or illegal. If a social media site is created as an official representation of Mount Union, that site will remain the property of the institution and not the author. Further, the author does not have any expectation of privacy in and to the Mount Union computer equipment and/or software used to create any social media content.

Employee violations and misconduct in the usage of social media will be handled in accordance with applicable University policy and may include request for removal of content or the site and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Mount Union is not liable for any information posted on personal sites. Furthermore, Mount Union is not responsible or liable for any activities or incidents resulting from web content that is not posted by the University. Mount Union does not monitor faculty, staff or student media/social networking content published independently of their work at Mount Union. The views and information on such postings do not constitute official Mount Union information or positions, and any such postings must expressly state the opinions or views expressed are not the views and opinions of Mount Union.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Office of Marketing, Office of Human Resources and Office of Information Technology. However, as social media is an ever-changing entity, this policy is subject to change at any time.

Responsibilities

Position or Office	Responsibilities
Office of Marketing	Review and Keep policy up to date
Office of Human Resources	Review and Keep policy up to date
Information Technology	Review and Keep policy up to date

Resources

Social Media Policy

ADM 14.0

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Contacts

Position	Office	Telephone	E-mail/URL
VP of Marketing	Marketing Office	(330) 823-6063	marketing@mountunion.edu
Director of Human Resources	Human Resources	(330) 829-6560	Humanresources@mountunion.edu
Director of Information Technology	Information Technology	(330) 823-2854	IT@mountunion.edu

History

All changes must be listed sequentially, including edits and reviews. Note when the policy name or number changes.

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