VSU SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Purpose of Policy:
The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for professional use of official Valdosta State University social media accounts.

This policy will apply to social media accounts created by full-time (FTE) Valdosta State University (hereinafter "VSU") employees for the benefit of VSU. Some examples of the various communication media under this policy include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube. The Office of Communications and Marketing (OCM) is responsible for the campus-wide implementation and maintenance of this policy. This policy will apply only to social media accounts created for the express purpose of officially representing VSU and its departments and does not apply to personal profiles of VSU employees. Employees acting in an individual capacity should exercise caution to communicate clearly that they are not acting in a representative capacity or expressing the views of the University.

Definitions:

Social Media/Social Networking Sites (SNS): Social media is media designed to be disseminated through social interaction using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media uses Internet, mobile, and web-based technologies to transform how people communicate with one another and receive news, information and entertainment. Types of SNS include networks like Facebook and YouTube but also include blogs and podcasts.

Social Media Accounts: These are accounts or profiles created on SNSs. For the purpose of this policy, "account" will refer to official accounts that represent VSU or its departments, offices, and programs, and not personal employee profiles.

Social Media Best Practices: These consist of widely recognized guidelines, ethical considerations, and conventions for creating successful social media campaigns and accounts.

Social Media Manager(s): The coordinator for the OCM will assign responsibility of social media management to FTE employee(s) in the OCM. The Social Media Manager(s) will consult VSU units in the creation, management and success of social media outlets to further the mission of the university and its units. The OCM will lead periodic training sessions regarding social media use and its role at VSU.

Social Media Terms and Conditions: The terms and conditions imposed by an SNS in which the User is participating.

University's best interest: To represent the University in a fair, accurate, and legal manner while protecting the brand and reputation of the institution.

Administrator: A Full-Time or Full-Time-Equivalent VSU employee authorized to submit content and provide feedback to other users on any VSU-sanctioned social networking site. Identified

by their unit and supervisor as an authorized SNS account User and is registered with the OCM as an account administrator.

Selection of administrators:

Whenever possible, a unit should appoint two individuals to act concurrently as account administrators for a social networking site representing VSU. If there are not two FTE employees available to serve as account administrators, the Social Media Manager(s) may serve to protect account access and compliance but will not serve as a content producer or moderator. The OCM will maintain a directory of all account administrators for VSU-affiliated accounts.

Compliance with Rules and Regulations:

Terms of Use: Whenever a social media account is created, the social media outlet requires the account creator to agree to certain terms and conditions for use of the site by clicking "Yes" or "I accept" as part of the account creation process. As a user of the SNS, you are subject to the terms and conditions of the site. Account administrators are delegated authority to create official social media accounts through completion of the application process and approval by the OCM. The OCM will request legal and/or administrative approvals from units prior to approving applications when required.

Respect Copyright and Fair Use: When posting, be mindful of the copyright and other intellectual property rights of others and of the university. For guidance, see generally Information Resources Acceptable Use Policy[1].

Advertising: This Policy does not authorize units to enter into advertising agreements with a SNS. Any VSU unit wishing to purchase advertising services (boosted posts, targeted advertising, sponsored messages, etc.) from social media sites must follow all applicable rules and policies governing such services as established by the offices of Financial Services and Procurement. University employees generally do not have the authority to place advertising without administrative approvals. Requests for advertising must be directed to the OCM at 229-333-6020.

Maintain Confidentiality: Do not post sensitive or proprietary information about VSU, or personal, medical or financial information on its students, its alumni or employees. Follow federal requirements and university ethics policies. Use ethical judgment and follow federal requirements and university policies, including[1] (Links are included in the footnotes of this policy):

- Gramm Leach Bliley (security of student information)
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA – Confidentiality and privacy)
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA – students' rights to educational records and privacy)
- Ethics
- Anti-Harassment
- Non-Discrimination

- Title IX non-discrimination
- Intellectual Property
- Violence in the Workplace
- Disruptive Behavior

Political Campaigning: VSU Human Resources policy 804.07(b)(2) forbids the use of University materials, supplies, equipment, machinery, or vehicles in political campaigns. This policy extends these restrictions to the use of VSU social media accounts. If you wish to publish content of a political nature that is not considered campaigning (for example, a guest speaker who is a seated elected official), contact the OCM at 229.333.6020 before publishing.

Enforcement Procedure: The OCM will be responsible for enforcing the Social Media Policy. The Social Media Manager(s) will provide input and assist in University outreach and training on this policy and best practices. They will manage the day-to-day account application process and update the social media web site and account directory as needed. No one unaffiliated with VSU may have access to accounts, and the Social Media Manager(s) shall have reasonable access to all accounts.

In cases where this policy has been violated, the following procedures will be followed.

1. Upon first failure to comply, a notice will be sent to any Administrator who fails to comply with the Social Media Policy. A copy of this notice will be sent to the administrator's supervisor.

2. A second failure to comply with policy will result in a notice to the Administrator, his/her supervisor and the respective cabinet level officer. The Administrator will be required to complete the training on social media policies.

3. The social media account privileges will be withdrawn if a third violation occurs on the same account or by the same Administrator.

In the event of an employee stating refusal to follow the policy, official recognition of the account will be immediately withdrawn and/or the employee's access to the account will be revoked, at the discretion of the OCM. In the event of suspected fraud or malfeasance, University policies will be followed.

Account Access: In addition to maintaining at least two (2) account Administrators, all official VSU SNS accounts must be registered with the OCM. This registration will include the account credentials, in the following forms:

1. the email address used to log in to the account, which in all cases should be a university email alias (example: socialmedia@valdosta.edu), not a personal account (example: @gmail.com) or an individual account (example: johnsmith@valdosta.edu); and

2. the password for the account, which must be updated in the OCM's account registry each time it is changed. It is the responsibility of the account Administrator or unit supervisor to notify the OCM of password updates, credential updates, and Administrator changes to department accounts.

Personal account access: In the case of team-managed accounts like Facebook pages, in which Users use their personal accounts to access and manage an official account, the OCM's Social Media Manager(s) shall be granted access to the account, but will not obtain the login credentials for the Administrator's personal profile. The list of Administrators/Users is maintained by the OCM and may be requested at socialmedia@valdosta.edu.

Acceptable Use: The account administrator will abide by the following acceptable use rules:

- By posting content to any social media site, the Administrator represents that the University owns or otherwise has all of the rights necessary to lawfully use that content or that the use of the content is permitted by fair use.
- The Administrator agrees that he or she will not knowingly provide misleading or false information.

Standards of Conduct: Members of the university community are expected to adhere to the same standards of conduct online that they would exhibit on campus. Members are expected to adhere to all state laws, federal laws, and applicable university policies, procedures, and regulations, and also the conditions of use established by the SNS platform.

Administrators are fully responsible for what they post to VSU social media sites. Administrators are additionally expected to follow the SNS's Terms and Conditions regarding interactions with other users and acceptable conduct.

Recognition: All officially recognized social media accounts will be publicly listed by VSU in a directory on the VSU social media website. Student organizations desiring to create officially recognized university social media accounts must be registered with the OCM and must be in good standing in the Office of Student Life. The Social Media Manager will verify registered student organization accounts annually.

Appropriate Content and Interaction: Administrators must refrain from using information and conducting activities that may violate local, state or federal laws and regulations. If you are unsure whether certain content is protected by privacy or intellectual property laws, contact the Office of Legal Affairs. This includes the use of GIFs, memes, and similar content.

Inappropriate, offensive, injurious and illegal content posted by users (whether they are affiliated with the university or not) on official university pages will be removed by VSU employees identified as account administrators or at the direction of the Social Media Manager(s).

Best practices for social media accounts must be considered. Administrators may contact the OCM at any time for consultation on current best practices.

Campus emergency: In the case of a campus emergency, all VSU social media channels must stop posting until the event is over. The *@ValdostaState* and *@VStateNews* accounts shall be the only accounts to post updates and information during a crisis. These updates will be approved by the VSU President and the Crisis Communications Team.

Document Retention: Communications created using social media shall follow the applicable Records Retention Schedule, as per USG policy.
http://www.usg.edu/records_management/schedules/A

Moderation:

VSU is committed to the protection of academic freedom. The OCM will regularly review content posted to official VSU accounts, and with respect to any site maintained in the name of the University, may remove or cause the removal of any content for any lawful reason, including but not limited to, content that is threatening, obscene, a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, or otherwise injurious or illegal, or which violates the terms and conditions of the SNS.

How to manage community-generated content: The occasion may arise when an SNS user (affiliated with the university or not) may post content to an official VSU account that violates the terms and conditions of the SNS or this social media policy. In this case, the administrator of the official account should immediately contact the OCM Social Media Manager(s) before taking action. The Social Media Manager(s) will assist the account to remove the content from the account (as necessary) and remove the offending user from page (if necessary). Deleting comments/posts or removing users may be performed only after consultation with the OCM Social Media Manager(s), and will be performed in alignment with the following comment practice, which account administrators should provide as a statement on their SNS profile:

Comment Policy:

> "Valdosta State University welcomes the community's contributions to its social networks (e.g., comments, photo tagging, wall posts, and the like). Community-contributed content is the opinion of the specific author and does not represent Valdosta State.
>
> [VSU Account Name] abides by [SNS Name]'s Statement of Rights and Responsibilities and asks that those who "Like/Follow" its [SNS Name] Page do the same. In particular, please do not: post unauthorized commercial solicitations (such as spam); threaten or harass any user; post content that is obscene, that contains nudity, sexual content, profanity, or violence; or do anything unlawful, misleading, malicious, or discriminatory on [VSU Account Name]'s [SNS Name] Page.
>
> In addition to the circumstances above, [VSU Account Name] reserves the right, but is not obligated, to remove comments that: contain commercial solicitations; are factually erroneous/libelous; are wildly off-topic; that expose the private data of others; that consist of cut-and-paste talking points; that cannot be translated into English by online translation software; or that otherwise violate [Name of SNS]'s Statement of Rights and Responsibilities. [SNS Name] encourages all users to utilize the "Report" links when they find abusive content.
>
> [VSU Account Name] thanks you in advance for your contributions to the university's [SNS Name] Page, and for your help in creating a safe and vibrant online community

here."

Interactions and Content: All content posted and interactions with SNS users should adhere to the spirit of the Blazer Creed and the VSU brand. Failure to do so may result in loss of account access for the account administrator and/or loss of official recognition for the SNS account.

Non-Administrator Takeovers and Temporary Account Access:

On occasion, non-VSU account administrators (students, faculty, staff) may be permitted to manage official VSU accounts on a temporary basis. These "takeovers" must:

1. be approved by the Social Media Manager in advance,

2. be preceded by a consultation on VSU social media policy with the temporary host, and

3. contribute to the advancement of the VSU brand.

When takeovers occur, the temporary host will receive account log-in information on the morning of their takeover. The password will be changed on the last day of hosting by the official account administrator or the Social Media Manager.

Host Guidelines: If someone leaves a comment on a host's post, the host should follow the VSU Social Media Policy guidelines on interactions, adhering to the spirit of the Blazer Creed and the VSU brand.

Should any inappropriate comments be posted on a host's posts or on previous posts, hosts should not delete the comments. VSU's Social Media Manager is also logged into the account but may not see the notification before you do. Hosts should take a screenshot as soon as possible and notify the VSU Social Media Manager (contact info below) so they can decide how to handle the situation in accordance with the Social Media Policy.

All content should be the property of the host or VSU. All posted content should follow acceptable use and content guidelines in the VSU Social Media Policy.

Restricted Content: Content posted by hosts containing the following (or depictions thereof) will be removed from the account, and the host's access to the account may be revoked by the Social Media Manager: alcohol; illegal activity or drug content; profanity; nudity, sexual content, violent or graphic content; threatening speech or harassment (including negative remarks about other organizations or institutions); advertising for non-VSU organizations or entities; other restricted content outlined in the VSU Social Media Policy.

Please do not share photos or video after your agreed-upon end time. Do not follow any users while you are logged on to the account.

Hosts are strongly encouraged to log out of personal accounts while running official VSU accounts. Managing multiple accounts makes it easy to accidentally post personal content to the university account.

Official VSU social media accounts are the property of Valdosta State University. The VSU Social Media Manager reserves the right to remove any guest host's post at any time.

University-Sponsored Facebook Groups

The university operates a number of university-sponsored Facebook groups for student cohorts. The following policies shall apply to administration and participation of these groups.

Administration: University-sponsored Facebook groups ("Groups") shall be administrated by the OCM and managed on a daily basis by the Social Media Manager(s). Other administrators may be identified, or volunteer, to become administrators at the discretion of the executive director of communications and marketing and the employee's supervisor.

Moderation and Content: While the tone of interactions between VSU employees in the Groups may be casual, the content of interactions shall adhere to the guidelines established in the VSU Social Media Policy. Group administrators may remove any post from the Group that does not adhere to the guidelines for moderation in the VSU Social Media Policy.

Participation: Though administration of the Group is the responsibility of the OCM, full-time employees from other VSU departments may at times volunteer to provide input to the Groups through commenting or posting information from their department. Participation will be limited by the following:

1. Employee participation in Groups must be approved by the Group Administrators and the employee's supervisor;

2. Participation is voluntary, and may be discontinued at any time at the discretion of the employee, the employee's supervisor or cabinet member, or the Social Media Manager;

3. The employee may only post accurate information from their department. Employees who post information for other departments, or who post inaccurate information, may be removed from the Groups. Only employees who are designated spokespersons for their areas may provide content or input into Group conversations.

Failure to comply with these procedures will result in removal from the Groups.

The OCM will maintain a list of approved participating departments, as well as a timeline for department participation in each cohort.

Membership: Membership for Groups will be limited to accepted and enrolled VSU students for cohort Groups. Enrollment status will be verified via a permission to join request in the Facebook interface, in which students must provide validation information. Members who violate the VSU

Social Media Policy and/or moderation may be removed at the discretion of Group administrators.

Lifecycle: A cohort Group may be established during the recruiting year (for example, the high school Class of 2019 may be added to the VSU Class of 2023 cohort Group). At the conclusion of the first year (when accepted students enroll), employee participation will be evaluated by Group administrators and modified as needed.

Footnotes:

[1] URLs to referenced websites include:

- Gramm Leach Bliley (security of student information): https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/policies/documents/security-of-student-information.pdf
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA – confidentiality and privacy): https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-health/hipaa-statement.php
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA – students' rights to educational records and privacy): https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/policies/documents/student-rights-to-educational-records.pdf
- Ethics: https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/policies/documents/ethics.pdf
- Acceptable use: https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/policies/documents/information-resources-acceptable-use.pdf
- Non-Discrimination: https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/policies/documents/non-discrimination.pdf
- Anti-Harassment: https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/policies/documents/anti-harassment.pdf
- Title IX non-discrimination: https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/policies/documents/sexual-misconduct-and-title-ix.pdf
- Intellectual Property: https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/policies/documents/intellectual-property.pdf
- Violence in the Workplace: https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/policies/documents/violence-in-the-workplace.pdf
- Disruptive Behavior: https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/policies/documents/disruptive-behavior.pdf