Social Media Guide and Best Practices

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1. About the Presbyterian College Social Media Guide

Presbyterian College believes that social media is a valuable tool for campus and community engagement. PC encourages the appropriate use of social media as a method of engagement, and communicating ideas and information as part of the educational mission of the College. This guideline outlines the rules and regulations to be followed by those who use social media on behalf of PC, and is intended as a guide for all social media formats. Adherence to these policies is intended to avoid copyright claims and other liabilities that might arise from the posting of inappropriate or unauthorized content.

These policies apply to faculty and staff members, as well as student employees, who engage in online conversations for work-related purposes, or who participate in social media as part of their job responsibilities.

These policies are intended to help the College's account holders minimize risk to the institution while developing an effective social media presence that maximizes user engagement.

Key Principles

- Social media is about conversations and relationships. It is not just a broadcast channel or a sales and marketing tool.
- Authenticity, honesty, and open dialogue are key, as are consistency, accuracy, and mutual respect. All of these breed credibility.
- Social media not only allows you to communicate to a wide audience, but also to hear what people say about you and, if appropriate, to respond. Listen first, speak second.
- Be relevant and useful. Consider your audience before all else.

2. Getting Started

2.1 Account Creation

The Vice President or Dean responsible for an area must grant initial approval prior to contacting the Office of Marketing & Communications to set up your social media account. The staff will create an account that is not tied to any individual private account using a unique username and password. This is for the security of both employees and the College - in the event that the individual maintaining the account ever changes job responsibilities or leaves their position at the College.

2.2 Terms of Use

Each platform's respective terms of service dictate the rules and guidelines for authorized use of that platform. Many organizations that operate social media platforms specify that, by posting on their sites, they are granted irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive license to use and distribute content for any purpose, commercial, noncommercial, or otherwise.

3. Best Practices

3.1 Presence and Maintenance

Be present and responsive, and you will gain credibility and value. If you have a social media outpost and someone finds you, they may engage with you and expect a response. It could be a prospective student. Establishing and then deserting a social media outpost could reflect poorly on the College.

Be sure to monitor comments to posts. Check at least once a day for comments and respond promptly.

Be sure to notify the Office of Marketing & Communications if an account is no longer being updated or monitored. The Office of Marketing & Communications reserves the right to delete any Presbyterian College social media account that has been dormant for a minimum of six months.

3.2 Community Building

Once you have established your social media presence, cross-promote in your various channels, both online and offline. This layered communication approach gives you more ways of communicating with a variety of audiences.

4. Guidelines

4.1 Responsibility

In short: think first, publish second.

There's no such thing as a truly "private" social media site: Search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date, comments can be forwarded or copied, and archival systems save information even if you delete a post.

Once you publish something through social media, you lose control of your message. Be certain before you post something that you are prepared to share it with a potential audience of millions.
You are responsible for what you post on your own site and on the sites of others.

Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly to retain credibility and respect.

If you manage a social media channel, discuss when you are empowered to respond directly to users and when you may need approval with your supervisor and with the Office of Marketing & Communications.

4.2 Civility

As a member of the PC community, it is imperative that you engage in thoughtful and respectful dialogue. Your reputation, and the College's, is best served when you remain above the fray.

If users post criticisms of your social media contribution, do not outright delete or suppress such postings if they are valid points to consider. Let the comments stand. Correct misinformation, but don't engage in

heated arguments. Often, the community will correct itself and step in to right inaccuracies or defend the institution. If this happens and is sufficient to resolve the issue, there may be no need for an additional official response.

Feel free to delete inappropriate or vulgar posts. If you have questions about whether a post is appropriate, please contact the Office of Marketing & Communications. Consider posting or linking to a general policy for your social media account.

If you feel a post is threatening in nature or otherwise meriting greater concern, contact the Office of Marketing & Communications for advice. Any threats to the PC campus, students, faculty, and/or staff will immediately be reported to Campus Police. Steer clear of posting about controversial topics. You can always monitor social media conversations about controversial topics via search tools.

Presbyterian College reserves the right to remove content that is spam, commercial, obscene, and/or derogatory.

4.3 Transparency, Representation, and Endorsements

When creating your social media account, note in the description that it is the official presence of your department.

If you identify yourself as a member of the Presbyterian College community via your personal social media presence(s), please clarify that you are sharing your views as an individual, not as a formal representative of Presbyterian College. In addition, never conceal your identity for the purpose of promoting Presbyterian College through social media.

Don't speak outside of your expertise or represent a perspective that is beyond your purview. If someone asks you a question outside of your expertise or you are contacted by a member of the press for a comment, please connect with the Office of Marketing & Communications.

4.4 Confidentiality and Security

Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Presbyterian College, its students, its alumni, or your fellow employees. Use ethical judgment and follow Presbyterian College policies and federal requirements, such as FERPA.

Do not post internal information or rumors that the College may not be ready to release to the public or have not been confirmed by the Office of Marketing & Communications.

Do not collect sensitive information—such as phone numbers, student ID numbers, Social Security numbers, payment information, etc.—via social media, as those are not secure channels.

If you have questions about whether you should share certain information, please contact the Office of Marketing & Communications.

4.5 Media Releases

Do not post a photograph or video image of any individual(s) without first obtaining a signed media release form from the individual(s). There are separate forms for students, faculty/staff, and College guests. You can obtain these forms by contacting the Office of Marketing & Communications.

4.6 Personal Accounts

If you choose to post content about PC on an account outside of a PC-affiliated account, even if it is your personal account, please use the following disclaimer:

"The posting(s) on this site is my own and does not represent Presbyterian College's positions, strategies, or opinions."

Before participating in any online community, even on a personal account, consider if the content is something that you would be comfortable with the PC campus community viewing. Understand that anything posted online is available for view by anyone in the world - even if you limit access to your site.

Keep in mind that any text or photo placed online becomes the property of the site(s) and what is done with it and where it goes is completely out of your control once it is placed online. Remember, even if you delete a post, it is still out in cyberspace somewhere - nothing is ever completely deleted on the Internet.

4.7 Student Organizations

All social media efforts by PC student organizations should strive to represent PC accurately and positively. Language, graphics, and presentations should be professional. Remember that you are representing *YOUR* college.

Avoid copyright infringement by not using copyrighted material without permission. This includes, but is not limited to, photos, logos, text, slogan, phrases, brochures, music. Student organization materials should always cite sources and permissions. If in doubt about copyright permissions, please contact the Office of Marketing & Communications.

5. Branding Standards

The Presbyterian College core values, as detailed in the Mission Statement, should be reflected in social media content and engagement. Consider how your social media channels tie back to the PC website and help extend it.

During the creation process of any social media profile on any platform, the College's Brand Standards will be discussed with each administrator by the Office of Marketing & Communications to ensure that the College's official name, logo and colors are used in accordance with the College's Brand Standards.

5.2 Naming Conventions

Use a consistent profile name and/or handle across all social media platforms. This should align with your department, office, or organization and the College. *Example: youtube.com/PCalumni, facebook.com/PCalumni, @PCSchoolofPharmacy, twitter.com/PCalumni, @PCalumni, @PC_Pharmacy*

5.3 Logos

If you are adapting the logo as your profile picture or avatar, be certain that it is legible upon resizing. Please use approved versions of the PC logo:

- Presbyterian College Official Logo
- Presbyterian College Block PC logo
- Presbyterian College Logo with the office or department name

Contact the Office of Marketing & Communications to receive the desired version(s) of the logo.

5.4 Voice and Tone

The following are tips for reflecting appropriate voice and tone in PC social media content and engagement.

- **Approachable:** A friendly, open, inviting tone will establish the College's social media as a resource for the community. This can be reinforced by frequently asking questions, inviting comments, or proactively responding.
- **Positive:** Adopt a positive tone that shows followers and fans how being a part of the PC community will help them meet their educational and professional goals.
- **Informative:** Be useful and relevant. Share timely information (e.g., reminders about key deadlines or links to campus maps as people head to campus for commencement), and respond to queries promptly and accurately. Use a voice that's knowledgeable but not intimidating or overly academic.
- **Straightforward:** Communicate your message using carefully chosen words that give a lot of information clearly but briefly. You're trying to share information with a busy audience who doesn't have time to wade through volumes of text.

5.5 General Content Guidelines

When posting social media posts be consistent in your voice and tone; this consistency helps build trust, rapport, and relationships. This can be challenging if multiple people are managing the account, in which case, it is best to coordinate among the group key phrases to be used in certain instances or situations.

Here are a few key things to follow:

- Some abbreviations are okay (e.g., ampersands, numerals instead of spelled-out numbers, and easily understood acronyms). Avoid text speak (e.g., "where r u going 2night?")
- Proofread all posts for spelling and grammar. Don't compromise quality in favor of authenticity. When possible spelling, grammar and punctuation should follow *The Associated Press Style Guide*.

- To spur engagement with your content, consider ending your posts with a question. *(e.g., "Professor Smith's new book got a great review in The New York Times. Have you read it? What do you think?")*
- If a question comes up in the comments, respond in an open, conversational manner. If criticism arises in the comments, adhere to the policy you have established for your page in handling such situations and respond in a serious (but not mechanical) tone.
  - You may also want to contact your supervisor or the Office of Marketing & Communications for assistance, if the criticism is especially controversial or could become a public relations issue.
- Be earnest and enthusiastic! Everyone at the College is excited about something, whether it's a club, a research project, or work in the community. Embrace and exude that enthusiasm.

Social media is often said to be conversational, but what does that mean?

- Be friendly, engaging, and responsive.
- Find opportunities to be inclusive ("you," "we," "us").
- Talk to people like you're a person, not an organization or a machine.
- If someone asks a question and you don't know the answer, be honest and say you don't know but you will either find out or point them to someone who does.
- Don't be afraid to be expressive, when appropriate. This could mean exclamation points, emoticons—all in moderation! ;-)

5.5 Social Media Profile Style Guide

- **Profile Picture/Avatar:** Only use images that are in the public domain or that PC has the license to post on the web.
- **Profile Name:** Include the College name along with your division, department, program, or organization name.
- **Profile URL:** This should align with your department, office, or organization name.
- **Background Image:** The image used should directly correlate with your department, office or organization.
- **Bio:** If you are representing a Presbyterian College organization or entity, be sure to include the full name and description in the Bio field. Include the hours during which the account is actively monitored/maintained, and/or a contact email address/phone number for additional questions.
- **Website URL:** This should link to the website on the presby.edu domain.

5.6 Hashtags

If you are using the Presbyterian College hashtags, make sure they are used in the correct context.

- #ApplyToPC, #BeABlueHose – Admissions
- #GoBlueHose #GoHose – Athletics
- #BeABlueHose #PresbyterianCollege – Entire Campus
- #PCBluePride – Campus Life

NOTE: Before creating a new hashtag, check with the Office of Marketing & Communications to see if it is already being used. Some hashtags that are already claimed by other organizations may or may not reflect a different image than that of Presbyterian College's mission.

6. Amendment and Questions

This policy is maintained and will be reviewed regularly by the Office of Marketing & Communications. Questions may be directed to the Office of Marketing & Communications at news@presby.edu.