**COLLEGE OF LAS SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES**

Social media is a valuable way to communicate with prospective and current students, faculty and staff, alumni, donors, community members, and others interested in the College of LAS.

When you are considering creating a new social media account, or as you are looking to create a social media strategy for your unit, utilize the following guidelines.

**Getting started**

First and foremost, when you’re looking into increasing your social media presence, do your research. Consider these questions: What audience are you trying to reach and can you do it through this platform? Are you already reaching this audience in another, more effective way? Do you have time to maintain this account?

* Creating a new account is a big step; make sure it’s the right one.
* Create quality content to post regularly, but do not over-post. A general rule of thumb is to post around three times a week or more, depending on platform.
* Content should focus on the stories and accomplishments of our students, faculty, and alumni.
* Interact and engage with your audience—remember, social media helps create community!
* Promote your accounts in other communication formats, such as emails and newsletters, to recruit followers.
* Link to other university accounts and actively follow them; rebroadcast relevant info from other units on your account/feed. If you engage with them, they will be likely to return the favor.
* Keep up with rapid changes to social media. New services appear rapidly and older ones vanish. Settings and policies also may change with no notice from the provider.
* Delete the account if it isn’t achieving its goals. Do not let an account sit vacant.

Keep in mind when using social media that you are representing not just your unit, but also the College of LAS, and the University of Illinois. Bring your unit’s personality to your social media postings, but leave personal postings to your own social media.

**Managing account access**

**All university social media accounts should be accessible to more than one person in the unit.** If you have a single administrator for your accounts and he or she leaves the unit without passing on access it is very difficult to regain access to your accounts.

Use a general departmental email address for your Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube accounts. This isn’t possible with Facebook or LinkedIn, so make sure to designate at least one other administrator on the account. Document everyone who has access and passwords for each of your accounts, and regularly remove people who should no longer have access to post to the unit account.

We caution against allowing students direct access to posting on your unit’s social media accounts. If you decide to allow students to manage your accounts, please ensure they’re working under the close supervision of a faculty or staff member in your unit.

When anyone with access to your social media accounts plans to leave the unit, double check that they’ve granted administrative access/shared the login information with someone else. When they’re gone, change the passwords on accounts with central logins, and remove their administrative access on Facebook and LinkedIn. Store your passwords in a secure place. Never send a password via email.

**Creating a social media communications strategy**

* Reach out to [Melissa Kuhl](mailto:msteine3@illinois.edu) in the college Office of Communications and Marketing for guidance as you develop your strategy.
* Identify your mission and goals (recruiting students, raising money, empowering faculty, etc.)
* Select platforms based on objectives and audiences.
* Decide what kind of content you’ll post. Think through where the content will come from and how often you will share it.
* Establish metrics and measure outcomes. All social media channels offer analytics that can help you adjust your strategy.

**Setting your tone**

* Keep the tone of postings conversational but professional.
* Each unit has a unique audience and voice, but all university accounts should have a tone that is smart, kind, thoughtful, proud and deeply supportive of and excited about the university.
* Think before you post. Remember that journalists and bloggers actively follow social media feeds—once content is posted online, it can be repeated and shared globally.
* Use a spell-checker and careful thought when posting. If you are uncertain about a post, take some time to identify any questions before publishing. You may want to get a second opinion.

**Meeting brand standards**

* You profile picture should include the Block I. Do not use the column I anywhere on your social media platforms. You can use the [template](https://uofi.app.box.com/s/na3xz69kmc0forbayiv90wjc2l0aea5e) provided by Public Affairs or contact Melissa Kuhl for assistance in creating your profile picture.
* Mention in your account bio that you are part of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.
* Do not create anything resembling a logo to represent the campus, the college, or your unit.
* Student groups should identify themselves as such and should not imply that they are an official university or college source.

**Adding a comment policy**

Use the [University Social Media Comment Policy](https://publicaffairs.illinois.edu/services/social-media/social-media-comment-policy/) regarding the type of comments permitted on your accounts. Policies and practices on deleting, hiding or otherwise censoring outside comments or posts on University social media accounts will be a matter of public record and subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

**Joining the college directory**  
Check the College of [LAS department directory](https://las.illinois.edu/about/units) to ensure your platforms are correctly identified. If anything is missing, email Melissa Kuhl.

**Threatening Situation**

In the event that a comment or reply on social media seems threatening or particularly abrasive, contact the LAS Communications and Marketing team.

**Questions?**

Anyone with questions about starting, maintaining, or otherwise managing their social media channels should contact [Melissa Kuhl](mailto:msteine3@illinois.edu) in LAS communications and marketing.