SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Social media includes a variety of online tools and services that allow users to publish content and interact with their audiences. Currently, the most common social networks or websites within this rapidly changing media space include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Flickr and blogs. Through its institutional social media presence, the College communicates directly with and receives instant feedback from online communities that include students, faculty, staff, alumni, prospective students, families, and friends.

Faculty and professional staff, including supervisory employees, are expected to use good judgment if interacting with students or colleagues via social networking websites, and if posting information about the College or their employment on such sites or blogs. Faculty or staff members who manage social media as representatives of Washington College are responsible for following all normal expectations for professional behavior as representatives of the College.

If your social media presence is representing your Washington College department, group, organization or activity, you are also representing your own professional reputation and the College. Even on your personal site, if you indicate that you are a Washington College faculty or staff member, visitors to the site may perceive that you are speaking for your department or the College. By invoking your professional affiliation with Washington College, it may be hard to contend otherwise if you are not explicit about that fact. With this in mind, employees should not post messages on behalf of Washington College unless doing so is within the scope of their job duties.

The "Appropriate Use Guidelines" listed below provides suggestions on how to use social media in ways that can prevent you from inadvertently affecting your professional reputation or how the College is perceived.

- **Be aware of liability.** You are legally liable for what you post on your own site and on the sites of others. Individual bloggers have been held liable for commentary deemed to be proprietary, copyrighted, defamatory, libelous or obscene (as defined by the courts). Employers are increasingly conducting Web searches on job candidates before extending offers. Be sure that what you post today will not come back to haunt you.

- **Be transparent about your role at Washington College**. If you participate in or maintain a social media site on behalf of the college, clearly state your role and goals.

Strive for accuracy and correct errors quickly. If you have questions about whether it is appropriate to write about certain material, ask your supervisor first.

- **Be Respectful**. Be professional and respectful always. Anything you post on a social media site in your role as a Washington College faculty or staff member reflects on you and the College. As such, be careful with your comments and avoid engaging in non-academic arguments or extensive non-academic debates with critics. If a negative post or comment is found online about Washington College or yourself, do not counter with another negative post. Instead, publicly offer to remedy the situation through positive action. Contact your supervisor for assistance with this issue.

- **Maintain Confidentiality**. Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Washington College, its students, its alumni, your fellow employees or yourself. Use good ethical judgment and follow all local, state and federal regulations, such as FERPA and HIPPA and college policies including the Washington College Confidentiality Agreement.

- **Refrain from posting derogatory remarks**. Employees are to refrain from posting derogatory, false, inflammatory or harassing comments about students, colleagues or former colleagues, alumni, donors, and trustees. The Acceptable Use Policy for Information Technology Resources prohibits using Washington College's computing resources to "send transmissions in a threatening or harassing manner." Employees should adhere to all rules and requirements outlined in the Acceptable Use Policy.

- **Consider your audiences.** Social media often span traditional boundaries between professional and personal relationships. Use privacy settings to restrict personal information on otherwise public sites. Choose profile photos and avatars carefully. Be thoughtful about the type of photos you upload.

- **Protect your identity**. Don't provide personal information about yourself or others that scam artists and identity thieves might steal. This includes telephone numbers, mailing addresses, email addresses and copies of personal documents.

- **Respect college time and property**. The Acceptable Use Policy for IT Resources states, "Academic or administrative use of Washington College IT Resources always takes precedence over recreational and non-institutional use." The college computers and your work time are to be used for college-related educational and business purposes. 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. Limited personal use of computing resources is acceptable as long as it doesn't violate any policies, but for the most part, you should maintain your personal social media sites on your own time.

- **Think before you post**. Whether it's your personal or a Washington College social networking site, remember that nothing is truly private in social media. Think about your comments, photos or other content before posting. Remember that anything you share, even within closed networks, becomes publicly available information. Your content can be stored and shared globally instantly. If it's not something that you would share with the mainstream media, don't post it on your site.

Departments may establish additional guidelines specific to their department, which must be reviewed in advance with the Director of Human Resources. Supervisors are encouraged to discuss any potential violations of this policy with the Director of Human Resources. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

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