Social Media Standards and Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

The following standards and guidelines are designed to support staff and faculty in many forms of marketing communications, represent Panola College well, and serve our many students, constituents, and community in increasingly timely and helpful ways. This document will provide examples of naming practices, key definitions used in a social media environment, and best practices. Social networking sites are an integral part of everyday life for millions of people around the world. Social media is becoming an increasingly important aspect of how we interact with our audiences. Properly used, social networking sites can be valuable parts of our efforts in reaching out to prospective students, while maintaining a connection with current students.

These standards and guidelines address use of all forms of social media sites maintained by Panola College and its departments as well as participation in social media by Panola College employees. It is important to understand that interactions through social media can be of great benefit but also can create issues for the College. Due to the risks involved, including loss of control over brand and content, misuse of electronic communications, and internet security threats, it is imperative that official use of social media sites by College employees adhere to appropriate standards and guidelines.

OBJECTIVES

Social media is a term used to describe a variety of Web-based platforms, applications and technologies that enable people to socially interact with one another online. Some examples of social media sites include Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Google+, blogs and other sites with content generated by both the owner and the audience. Social media also allows for easy sharing and re-purposing of existing content, thereby expanding the reach of your work and enabling others to share it with their friends and networks.

Social Media Key Definitions
- Hashtags- a word or phrase preceded by a hash (#) and used to identify messages on a specific topic; can be used as a search feature
- Likes- Instead of writing a comment for a message or a status update, a Facebook user can click the "Like" button as a quick way to show approval and share the message. Facebook recently added a "Love," "Ha ha," "Wow," "Sad," and "Angry" button. Google+ uses "+1".
- Favorite- Sparks interest of other online users to start a conversation or comment on the tweet; Twitter's version of liking a tweet/post.
- Retweets - when someone on Twitter sees your message/status and decides to re-share it with their followers.
- Mentions- A reply to another user with the preceding @ symbol attached to the beginning of the username.
- DM or PM -short for direct message or personal message, and it is used to send a private tweet/message to a person.
- GIF - A form of computer image that moves as an animation, because it consists of frames, like a movie with no sound.
- Memes- Used to describe a thought, idea, joke, or concept to be shared online. It is typically an image with text above and below it.
- Tagging- Publicly connecting with a person(s) via an account and sharing that with your followers.
- Blog - a personal website or web page on which an individual/organization records opinions and links to other sites on a regular basis.
- Groups - a community of people and friends to promote, share and discuss relevant topics, specifically on Facebook

Panola College will use social media sites to encourage and to create dialogue between the College and its target audiences, thus building relationships and supporters.

For the College, as a Whole
- Build an online community of supporters for Panola College
- Create relationships with existing and potential students as well as faculty, staff, and the community
- Increase enrollment and maintain retention of current students

- Increase brand engagement and visibility within the community

For Instructional Departments
- To find opportunities (internships, job leads) for current students
- To assist with assessment
- To maintain connection to alumni and help foster connections among alumni

For Student Groups (Example: SGA, PTK, Caddo Club, etc.)
- To communicate with members (events, communications, pictures)
- To recruit members
- To offer value-make a difference in another person's life

Parameters That Will Be Used to Measure Success
- Participation- the extent to which users engage with Panola College's content
- Influence - the size of the user base subscribed to your content
- Web traffic - the number of unique visitors, page views to Panola College's web site

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

By participating on social media profiles and websites officially administered by Panola College, it is understood that user-generated content on the College social media profiles or websites does not reflect the opinion or interests of Panola College or its offices. Content must not be inappropriate in nature (see below). All participation and user-generated content appearing on Panola College social media profiles is subject to this agreement.

All participants on Panola College social media profiles and websites are to act appropriately and respectfully with the other participants in our online community. Participants should refrain from derogatory content which includes but not limited to: content which is illegal, blatantly profane, political, violent, sexual, pornographic, discriminatory, or otherwise defamatory. All content deemed inappropriate will be removed at the discretion of Panola College Office of Institutional Advancement.

Panola College accepts no responsibility or liability for any data, text, software, images, videos, messages, audio, or other content, which is generated by and posted publicly by users other than Panola College in its official capacity. Panola College accepts no liability or responsibility whatsoever for the content of any target third-party site linked from a page.

Creation & Maintenance of Panola College Affiliated Social Media Accounts
Employees of the College are not permitted to create individual department accounts or pages without approval and assistance from the Office of Institutional Advancement. Our department reserves the right to enforce the deletion of any unapproved social media pages, accounts, or sites.

The Office of Institutional Advancement maintains Panola College's official institutional accounts and pages. To maximize the effectiveness of these pages, the College will limit the number of supplemental Panola College affiliated accounts and pages on all social media platforms based on user need and value. The preferred method for College departments wishing to promote their information and services is to do so through the main Panola College accounts. This can be done through the submission of an event form (http://www.panola.edu/faculty-and-staff/visual-comm-guide/eventpromotion.html) or by email to the Office of Institutional Advancement.

Consider Before You Commit
- Do you have time to post fresh content to your site daily or at least a couple of times a week?
- Can my (and my audience's) needs be met through the main Panola College pages?
- What does my audience need?
- Do you have a big enough audience to engage with?
- Do you have a few minutes every day to check your site for comments/messages and make thoughtful comments on those of others?
- Who are we talking with on our profile?
- What do our fans want to hear or see?
- To what should we reply and how often should we reply?
- How often should we post content?
- Who will the administrators be?

If any of this sound difficult or you're unsure of the answer, reconsider committing to social media at this

time. When it comes to the Internet, old content = no content. It is better not to have a social media page at all then to post a few times then forget about it.

Profile Names

It is important to appropriately name social media profiles, both to encourage search engine optimization and to avoid confusion with other Panola College entities. Be sure to identify Panola College as well as the individual department or program when creating a profile name. Do not use the same or closely similar titles to other Panola College departments and programs. Because profile names cannot be changed in some instances, it is required that page administrators request the approval of the Office of Institutional Advancement before assigning a profile name.

Profile Photo

You'll need a profile photo created for your social media site. Please contact the Office of Institutional Advancement to request a profile photo be sent to you. Do not adjust, stretch or tamper with the photo. Profile photos should be consistent across all pages and easily identified as an official Panola College page. Club pages can use other images, such as event photos or group photos as profile photos, but must keep images current to the academic year.

Cover photos may use other images, but must also stay current to the academic year.

Privacy

Audiences expect and require confidential and private matters to remain that way. Never reveal personal information about people such as current locations, home addresses, phone numbers, or other information about a student, faculty member, employee, or other community member in any fashion. Never reveal confidential, proprietary, or otherwise private information about any person, organization, or Panola College and its students, employees, or alumni. Be mindful of existing federal laws such as HIPPA and FERPA which prohibit disclosure of certain personal information. In addition, remember to practice good ethical judgment.

Copyrighted & Protected Photos

All content posted on pages and websites administered by Panola College is subject to applicable copyright laws. Users may only post content of which they are the owner(s) or have written or licensed permission from the copyright owner to share the content (i.e. under an attribution Creative Commons license).

If permission is given through an official Panola College photo release, departments and programs may tag photos, videos, and other items to individual users or groups. Tagging can potentially engage and invite others to participate with Panola College social media pages.

Administration

At least two administrators should be appointed to each social media profile or website and they must be a Panola College employee. In addition, the Director of Institutional Advancement MUST be assigned as an Administrator and/or have the user name and password to each page. Students that are added to a Page should be added as Editors only. They should understand these standards and proper action on the web. It is the staff/faculty administrator's responsibility to remove any former employee or student's access to pages for security purposes upon departure.

Stay Active and Connected

All pages associated with the College are required to post *at least* once a week. Accounts that have not posted within the last semester will be considered inactive. One benefit of utilizing social media is the ability to share information almost instantly with a global audience. Respond quickly to messages, new developments, announcements, or emergencies with relevant information. Offering your audience, a small amount of accurate information quickly will be more appreciated and valuable than a full report after the event. Make regular comments on interesting posts to your site and on other sites. If you see another Panola College account post that's important to students and the community, immediately share/repost/retweet.

Solicitation Policy

Solicitation is the sale or offer of any property or service, whether for immediate or future delivery, and the receipt of or request for any gift or contribution. The College has the right to remove such posts from Panola College affiliated accounts and pages.

Have a policy in place

Not all comments your site receives will be positive. Respond to negative comments professionally and by providing additional information that may help resolve the issue. As a proactive measure, post a disclaimer on your site stating you reserve the right to remove inappropriate comments or link to the social media standards page at www.panola.edu/about/social-media. Then, be diligent about removing comments containing vulgar language, those that attack any group or individual and those that are obviously spam.

Disclaimer example.

- *"The purpose of this Facebook page is to further Panola College's vision and mission to support student learning and staff professional development, and enhance communication with students, staff, and community members. Users are expected to use the site only for those purposes. Any views and comments expressed by users on this site are those of the users and do not necessarily reflect the views of Panola College. Any user's reference to a specific commercial product or service does not imply endorsement or recommendation of that product or service by Panola College. All users are personally responsible for the content of their posts and Panola College is not responsible for the content of external online platforms. Users are expected to communicate in a respectful, courteous, and professional manner. This site is regularly monitored and any inappropriate posts will be promptly removed. Improper posts including those that are obscene, defamatory, or so incites people as to create a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts or a violation of Panola College rules. This may also pertain to posts that are not related to the stated purpose of the site, including, but not limited to, comments of a commercial nature, political activity, and comments that constitute discrimination or harassment."*

However, deleting comments that might be critical of Panola College is not generally advisable. It is much better to respond or allow another member of the community to respond and sometimes to ignore than to delete. For communities to develop trust, it is important that users feel that you are willing to listen to concerns and able to allow for difference of opinions. Remember, social media is for conversation and discussion. Page administrators should feel prepared and confident to steward conversations on a variety of topics and should get input from a trusted advisor when unsure how to effectively respond to any topic.

Enforcement

Complaints or allegations of a violation of these standards will be processed through Panola College's grievance procedures, Student Conduct Code or resolution of controversy. Upon determination of a violation of these standards, Panola College may unilaterally delete any violating content, and terminate the administrator's access. It is the page administrator's responsibility to demonstrate and/or establish the relevance of content if a content complaint is made official.

BEST PRACTICES

The keys to success in social media are being honest about who you are, being thoughtful before you post, and respecting the purpose of the community where you are posting.

- **Be accurate.** Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It's better to verify information with a source first than to have to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible; after all, that's how you build community. If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly. This will earn you respect in the online community.

- **Be respectful.** You are more likely to achieve your goals or sway others to your beliefs if you are constructive and respectful while discussing a bad experience or disagreeing with a concept or person.

- **Be engaging.** Participation is the key in the development of a community using social media. Ask questions, encourage interaction, allow fans to contribute to your fan page. Be sure to select topics that will spark some feedback and discussion. Be creative and have fun.

- **Be a Team.** Avoid using "I" in posts. Instead, use "Panola College," "The College" or "we."

- **Consider your audiences.** Social media often span traditional boundaries between professional and personal relationships. Be thoughtful about the type of photos you upload.

- **Think before you post.** There's no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it's wise to delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed.

- **Maintain confidentiality.** Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Panola College, its students, its alumni, or your fellow employees. Use good ethical judgment and follow Panola College policies and federal requirements, such as FERPA, HIPPA and the Health Insurance Security/Privacy.

- **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.

- **Deleting Comments.** Do not delete a comment just because you disagree with the commenter's point of view. Comments are an important part of the conversation and a foundational aspect of social media. People will disagree with you from time to time. However, you can (and should) monitor social media for which you are responsible, and you may delete any comments that are abusive, obscene, obviously spam or have links to irrelevant or inappropriate blogs or websites.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

HOW DO YOU AVOID A CRISIS?
It is not always possible to avoid a crisis, but here are some helpful hints that can at least enable you to catch it early on.

Monitor
It is important to monitor your social media pages daily. This will insure that you are alerted of any issues.

In the event of a crisis concerning a post of a comment, video, picture, or Tweet that contains derogatory content on a social media page that represents Panola College, we have developed the following guideline for approaching the situation. If you are unclear as to what kind of action to take, please contact the Office of Institutional Advancement.

Removing a Facebook Post
It is best to respond in the thread of discussion rather than create a new post. Users may accuse the College of censorship. If this occurs, a response can be provided that states the following:

Censorships Examples:
- *"Panola College adheres to the Statement of Rights and Responsibilities provided by Facebook. We only remove posts that are in violation and threaten the safety of discussion in this forum."*
- *"Panola College welcomes lively discussion on its Facebook page, but monitors posts to maintain community standards. Content that contains obscenity or profanity, personal attacks, commercial or sales/promotional material or anything otherwise determined to be inappropriate will be deleted by page administrators.* **"**

Provide the link: http://www.facebook.com/terms.php

Steps Before and After Removing a Post:
1. Determine that a violation of Facebook privacy has occurred
2. Take a screenshot of the post
3. Print the post and physically mark up the actions taken
4. Delete the post
5. Send any history of actions taken to the Office of Institutional Advancement

PANOLA COLLEGE PLATFORMS

Panola College is excited to participate on social media and other online channels with students, staff, friends, and community members. Our mission is to be of value to our students, alumni, staff, and faculty. A list of all official Panola College and Panola College Affiliates social media pages can be found at http://www.panola.edu/about/social-media.html.