LUTHER COLLEGE

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Department:	Marketing and Communications
Subject:	Social Media Policy
Date Issued:	September 4, 2019
Date Revised:	
Approved by:	Reviewed at Cabinet, Approved by President, September 4, 2019

I.   Policy

The following social media guidelines are intended to help anyone speaking on behalf of or associated with Luther College to engage in productive, meaningful and intentional social media practices, as well as identify and avoid potential issues that may arise.
These guidelines are examples of best practices from the industry and various institutions, and are intended to help you navigate both the benefits and implications for yourself and the college of participating in social media.

II.   Purpose

Luther College supports students, faculty, staff, alumni and members of the greater Luther community in their right to openly and actively communicate and engage in information sharing. In keeping with our founding ideals, our goal is to encourage and protect diverse perspectives while also maintaining positive and constructive social media conversations that preserve and enhance the image and reputation of Luther College.

Social media platforms and other digital communication channels provide valuable tools through which the College can pursue positive, open sharing of information, opinions and learning that can ultimately increase transparency among participants and create a tighter-knit, global Luther community. As such, Luther College encourages students, faculty, staff and representatives of Luther College to participate in social media, as outlined in this policy.

While this document aims to provide an overarching guide to refer to as needed, it will regularly evolve to reflect the ever-changing landscape of social media. We will make the community aware of these updates as they are made, but please check back periodically to ensure accordance with Luther College's Social Media Policy and Guidelines.

III.   Scope

This policy applies to all faculty, staff, students, departments, organizations (including student), as well as alumni and friends of the college that use Luther's name, images or branding in their social media accounts.

IV.   Terms and Definitions

- "Spamming" is defined as, "sending irrelevant or inappropriate messages on the internet to a large number of recipients."
- "Cyberbullying" is defined as, "Using social networking or other internet sites for the purpose of exhibiting, distributing, posting, or communicating matter in any form (text, image, audio, or video) that intimidates, harasses, or is otherwise intended to harm, insult, or humiliate another, or that disrupts or prevents a safe educational or working environment."

V.   Guidelines and Procedures

A. Guidelines for best practice

The following guidelines reflect best practices when using social media:
- Be considerate. Engage in friendly, civil, respectful and constructive conversations.
- Interact with others. Social media provides an opportunity for two-way communication.
- Be transparent. Always be upfront about your identity. If you have been given permission to communicate on behalf of the College, be clear about that (and make sure you have the authority to do so). Be every bit as diligent about stating when you are communicating on your own behalf, rather than on behalf of the College.
- Protect private information. Assume that everything you post online can be made available to the public, even if you attempt to protect your privacy through "closed" or "private" venues of communication. If discussion arises about internal policies, consider directing the conversation to a more private form of communication such as in person communication or a phone call. Follow federal, state, and College requirements such as HIPAA (the privacy of individually identifiable health information) and FERPA (the privacy of student education records).
  - Students: Observe our Code of Student Conduct
  - Faculty and staff: College policies; Faculty Handbook; Staff Handbook
    - Be safe. Sharing photos, text, personal information, individual location and video could compromise your safety and privacy. Shared content has a very long life and may be difficult to remove. Be careful about what you post for your own personal protection and safety and the protection and safety of the campus community.

B. Creating a Luther College social profile

- Develop a strategy; this is the single most important step in planning and implementing a successful social media presence, and a requirement when seeking approval to create social accounts on behalf of the College. Within this strategy, you should:
  - Assign one or more full-time employees to oversee the profile and its activity, and ensure that consistent, quality content is shared. This person should also be responsible for responding to comments and messages. Students should be allowed to post on behalf of the College **only** with direct staff supervision.
  - Know and outline the audience(s) that you will reach with your new efforts.
  - Set realistic goals and decide on how you will measure those goals.
  - Identify the content that will be valuable to your audience(s) and enhance the image and reputation of your department/unit and of the College.
  - Create a content calendar/posting schedule to ensure consistent and quality content is created and approved prior to posting.
  - Do not allow your social presence to lapse into inactivity—try to post once a week, at a minimum, to each of your social media accounts. If an account remains inactive for more than six months, Luther College's Marketing and Communications Department reserves the right to remove or demand the removal of the account.
- Check in with Marketing and Communications. If your supervisor has authorized you to create a new social media presence on behalf of Luther College, contact the Marketing and Communications Department at socialnetwork@luther.edu to review your goals and walk through your proposed strategy, as well as review various resources and best practices necessary to run a social media account. The office will also provide you with brand guidelines and resources you will need, as applicable, to make your presence look and feel professional, while also being consistent and on brand.
- Defer to open membership. Inclusion needs to be our default posture in a medium built for connectedness and community. As groups become a more prominent focus within the Facebook platform, particularly, our dedication to diversity and inclusion needs to be demonstrated in the way we structure our communities.
  - Groups that are public can use screening questions to avoid bots and trolls as well as clearly defined moderation standards and community guidelines to ensure the conversation stays productive, on topic and respectful.

  - For instances where restricting membership is necessary to maintaining the integrity, safety or intention of the group, it is permitted to maintain a closed group as long as that group is not discoverable through platform searches. For instance, in the case of Facebook, this would be a "Secret, Closed Group."

C. Posting, tweeting and commenting on behalf of Luther College

- Be authorized. Don't post or comment as if you are a representative of Luther College or one of its departments or entities unless you are authorized by the Marketing and Communications Department to do so. Luther College Marketing and Communications reserves the right to remove posts and comments that are posted as a College-owned entity without authorization.
- Be attentive and real. You must have a real, live person to monitor comments, post content and engage with users. Not doing so puts the College and its community members at risk, as well as those engaging in dialogue. While curating relevant content is a great tactic, solely relying on automated tools to post directly to Facebook or Twitter is not a viable or appropriate social media strategy. People engage with relevant, contextualized content.
- Be appropriate. Never display or promote content that violates College policies, e.g., depicts underage drinking, harassment, uncivil behavior or discrimination. **Do not** use official Luther social media platforms to endorse or oppose political candidates, ballot initiatives, pending or approved legislation, or politically charged discussions. Use of College resources for political purposes will jeopardize Luther's IRS 501 (c) (3) status and result in the immediate removal of those accounts. The role of the College is to promote education and awareness, not a specific point-of-view or course of action. Consult with the Marketing and Communications Department if you have questions about displaying potentially political, offensive, disruptive or polarizing material.
- Listen carefully to what is being said. Investigate accuracy prior to responding.
- Verify content. Ensure the content that you and others share is accurate, current, and authentic. Reserve the right to remove content that is plagiarized and/or violates copyright restrictions. Beware of hoaxes and misinformation.
- Be responsive. When appropriate, address issues that arise from the community—even if your initial response expresses that you are gathering more information and will get back in touch. Be careful not to violate privacy laws or say anything that will harm the image and reputation of your department and/or the College as a whole. When responding to comments or messages, do not get defensive.
- Allow constructive criticism from the community, but remove comments that are libelous, obscene or hateful. If you need a second opinion on whether or not comments reach this threshold, please contact the Marketing and Communications Department at socialnetwork@luther.edu.
- Be appropriate for varied audiences. Social media is highly prone to the misinterpretation of jokes, sarcasm, and pranks, especially when speaking to audiences of varied backgrounds and interests. When acting on behalf of the College, remember to respectfully and appropriately engage in conversation,

even if controversial. However, a good rule of thumb when posting, responding to comments, and/or engaging in controversial topics, is "If in doubt, leave it out."

- Direct media queries to the Marketing and Communications Department. If you are contacted by a member of the media about a posting or comment on a social networking site, or if a reporter asks general questions about Luther College's official activities, events, staff, faculty or students via social media, the College asks you to immediately contact the media relations team at news@luther.edu who are prepared to handle the response.
- Monitor and react appropriately. Remove comments, photos, videos, posts, links that contain profanity, sell or promote products, are spam or otherwise contain unlawful, threatening, harassing, bullying, slanderous or hateful content. If you need a second opinion on whether or not comments reach this threshold and/or are in violation of College policies, codes of conduct or manuals, please contact the Marketing and Communications Department at socialnetwork@luther.edu.
- Follow Luther College rules. Communicate only in a manner that is in accordance with Luther College policies. Respect the members of our community as well as proprietary information, intellectual property, privacy, copyrights and patents.
- Source content. Provide a direct link to the original post, photo, video, article, etc. and include online references to the author when sourcing content from outside parties.

D. **Keeping a personal (non-Luther) web presence**
- Don't be afraid to utilize and engage on social media. Social media channels may help you increase your outreach for personal and professional endeavors.
- However, **always be transparent**. You may identify yourself on personal web pages and social sites as an employee, student, alumnus/alumna or friend of Luther College, but be clear about when you are speaking on behalf of Luther College (if you hold this designation, as determined by the Luther College Marketing and Communications Department) and when you are speaking as a private individual or a member of the community.
- Comments you make using personal accounts may be perceived as a reflection on your employer and your career, regardless of your intent. When speaking as a private individual about college matters, consider including a disclaimer on your account, website, etc. such as:
  - *"The views expressed on this [account, blog, website] are my personal opinions and do not necessarily reflect the views of Luther College."*
- Do not use the Luther logo and other registered trademarks for your personal web site. For that, you would need prior authorization from the Marketing and Communications Department.

E. **Risks, legal guidelines and alignment with existing College policies**
- Like any form of communication, there are risks and responsibilities inherent in the use of social media and digital communications. Improper use can carry legal

consequences and damage reputations. Stating and recognizing these risks is not intended to deter use, but to educate and promote best practices that will improve social interactions for the entire Luther community.

- These Luther College guidelines help our community establish and maintain a social media presence for the school that aligns with existing policies and branding, navigate ethical issues as they arise, and balance personal and professional images on social media.
- It is essential to consider these social media guidelines in conjunction with the aforementioned existing College policies including the
  - Staff Handbook,
  - Faculty Handbook,
  - Student Handbook,
  - Luther College Honor Code,
  - Luther College Code of Conduct,
  - Information Technology Services (ITS) Policy, and the language contained therein.
- In the case of improper use of any social media accounts that use Luther's name, images or branding, as well as personal use, that violate the guidelines outlined in this policy and in the above policies, Luther College, in partnership with legal counsel as necessary and appropriate, will address the offense and correct and resolve the situation.

F. Institutional Oversight

- Luther College's Marketing and Communications Department manages and administers the College's institutional social networking accounts and official profiles. Institutional accounts include any account which a reasonable person would assume speaks on behalf of or represents the position of the institution or a department of the institution. Examples include, but are not limited to, an account for an athletic team, an ensemble or choir, or an academic department or discipline.
- Faculty, staff, or students beyond the Luther College Marketing and Communications Department with responsibilities for administering social networking accounts in Luther College's name or as Luther College-branded assets must make themselves known to the College's Marketing and Communications Department. This helps ensure consistent messages and practices and means the office can provide you with additional information and resources. Please contact socialnetwork@luther.edu. Examples of social networking accounts in Luther College's name or Luther-branded assets include, but are not limited to, student organizations, anything bearing the Luther bell, the gnome, or parts or all of the college logo.
- Luther College reserves the right to monitor its institutional entities online, including affiliated Facebook pages, groups or events, Twitter feeds, Instagram

accounts and other social media profiles, official blogs, and comment boards associated with Luther College. The College also reserves the right to quell activity that inhibits safe and constructive conversation. Such activity may include but is not limited to hateful or threatening remarks (see the relevant code of conduct, policies, and manuals on acceptable discourse); excessive posting or "spamming"; "cyberbullying"; or use of language that violates college policies.
The Marketing and Communications Department reserves the right to remove inappropriate posts and ban or block disruptive users.

- The Marketing and Communications Department also reserves the right to screen any and all submitted content before posting to institutional social media entities. The College reserves the right to re-publish, distribute or otherwise reuse any content posted on our institutional social media sites.

G. Reporting Process

- Behavior by faculty or staff members that may be in violation of this policy or other College policies may be reported to the Human Resources department: hr@luther.edu.
- Behavior by students that may be in violation of this policy or other College policies may be reported to the Vice President and Dean for Student Life: students@luther.edu.
- Behavior on social media that causes immediate concern for the safety of the College campus and community should be reported to Campus Safety and Security: 563-387-2111.
- To report general violations of this policy, please contact the Marketing and Communications Department at socialnetwork@luther.edu.
When reporting violations of the Social Media Policy, providing screenshots of the behavior being reported will aid in the appropriate department's prompt response as well as assist in maintaining reporter confidentiality; the identity of the individual reporting the infraction will be protected if possible but cannot be guaranteed.

VI. Confidentiality and Record

Reports of behavior by faculty, staff, and students that represent potential or confirmed violations of this policy will be maintained by the Office of the Dean of the College, the Human Resources Office, and the Student Life Office, respectively.