



Social Media Procedures Guide

OVERVIEW

Collin College embraces the exchange of ideas and information and understands the role social media can play in connecting with various constituents and communities. This document was developed to provide platform-neutral guidelines for using social media and creating social media content on behalf of Collin College or as a representative of Collin College. These guidelines apply to all college employees and social media sites associated with college departments, programs, offices and groups. In addition, these guidelines are designed to help social media users connect with audiences within the framework of existing college policies and procedures.

Collin College is the owner of the college's brand and trademarked imagery. Those seeking to open social media identities on behalf of a department, function or initiative of Collin College must adhere to the guidelines in this document. The procedures will help you be immediately recognized as an official part of "Collin College" amidst social media clutter and will help you stand out from the crowd. Users of social media who create identities with content on behalf of the college must adhere to the Collin College [policies and procedures](#). Specifically, social media users should refer to:

- [Board Policies](#)
- [Appropriate Use of Information and Technological Resources](#)
- [Software and Copyright Compliance Statement](#)
- [Faculty/Associate Faculty Handbook](#)
- [Copyright Information](#)
- [Collin College Graphics Standards Manual](#)

Social media are a fast-evolving group of tools and technologies. As social media tools and usage evolve, so will these guidelines in an effort to reflect those changes. This document is posted on the PR intranet site in CougarWeb, and employees should review the document often. We also welcome your feedback. Please email Marcy Cadena-Smith at mcsmith@collin.edu with feedback or questions.

What is Social Media?

Social media are best defined as "online communications in which individuals shift fluidly and flexibly between the role of audience and author. To do this, they use social software that enables anyone without knowledge of coding, to post, comment on, share or mash up content and to form communities around shared interests."¹

Social media also allow users to redistribute existing content within their networks, potentially broadening a message's reach beyond the original network. Well-known social media services include (but are not limited to) Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Flickr and blogs.

Official Use

Collin College is currently active on many social media platforms, and the Public Relations office manages the institutional accounts listed below. In addition, many other college offices, faculty and student organizations maintain their own social media sites.

Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/collincollege> , <http://www.facebook.com/collin.cougar> & <http://www.facebook.com/collinalumni>

Flickr – <http://www.flickr.com/photos/collincollege>

Instagram – <http://instagram.com/collincollege#>

LinkedIn – <http://www.linkedin.com/edu/school-admin?id=20095> & <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Collin-College-Alumni-3828570>

Twitter – <http://twitter.com/collincollege> and <http://twitter.com/collincougar>

WordPress – <http://cougarnewssite.wordpress.com/>

YouTube – <http://www.youtube.com/collincollege2000>

GETTING STARTED

Being successful with social media takes time. You have to post frequently and regularly and you also have to listen and engage. While frequency may vary by channel, daily engagement is a good baseline. By first determining what your goals are, and assessing how valuable social media are in reaching them, you can determine how to allot your time and resources.

You may want to maintain a personal account on a social media service for a while before launching an institutional account, so you can observe how people and organizations communicate in the space. Watch and listen before jumping in and speaking up. If you are unsure about whether social media is right for you, feel free to contact Public Relations to talk about your options.

Step 1: Choose the Right Channel

- Facebook – For those looking to build brand awareness
- Flickr – For those with robust visual communication assets to offer consistently over time
- Twitter – For those looking to engage an audience with a high frequency, and those able to be available to respond with some immediacy and engage in conversation
- YouTube – For those with robust video assets to offer consistently over time

Step 2: Create the Page

Naming Conventions

When you create a social media account, the naming convention starts with “Collin College,” such as Collin College Photography, Collin College Commercial Music or Collin College Alumni. That way, all Collin College accounts are grouped when searching.

Coordinate District-wide

To avoid multiple department social media pages, please make sure colleagues who are in your department but who teach or work at other campuses know about the department’s new page. For example, Facebook department pages are district-wide and a department should only have one Facebook account/page.

Step 3: Brand with College-Approved Logos and Graphics

Contact the Public Relations office for simple graphics, photos, the college logo or other college marks. Request these from Marlene Miller at marmiller@collin.edu.

Step 4: Connect

Always connect back to the college’s social media pages.

Facebook

On Facebook, after you have created your page or pages, “Like” [Collin College](#) and [Collin Cougar](#). Be sure to let us know, so we can “like” your department or organization page. Email Marcy Cadena-Smith (mcsmith@collin.edu) in Public Relations with the name and/or URL of your new Facebook page.

Twitter

Like Facebook, the college maintains an official presence on Twitter with the handles [@collincollege](#) and [@collincougar](#). Likewise, Twitter accounts on behalf of a college unit should follow [Collin College](#) and [Collin Cougar](#).

Step 5: Get Backup

If you create a page for an official unit of the college, the log-on credentials must be shared with the unit manager and others designated in your area so there is backup and so that postings can occur regularly and frequently, albeit not necessarily by one person. As a result, you will have more than one administrator for the Facebook page. Anyone in your department can post to the Facebook page once it is set up.

EMPLOY BEST PRACTICES

Social media can be a very useful and powerful tool that can mold the brand of Collin College and engage our college community. Please share and repost information among colleagues and friends by linking to the original source. Read on to learn about the college's social media ground rules for posting information.

Be Respectful

Social media interactions should comport with the Collin College Core Values: We have a passion for Learning, Service & Involvement, Creativity & Innovation, Academic Excellence, Dignity & Respect and Integrity. At times, online communities can incite strong feelings about a topic. If responding to a vehement post, comment cautiously - your comments will reflect on yourself and/or the college and may impact the institutional brand.

Think Twice Before You Post

Anything posted on a social media website is public, theoretically *forever*. If you post information today, be aware that your post could outlive you. Years from now people will still be able to view what you post today thanks to search engine technology. Even if *you* delete information you posted, that post has already been cached and can be found. Think twice before you post. Only post pictures and words that are appropriate to share with the general public and future employers.² As a rule of thumb, if you wouldn't say it to the media or to your boss, then don't post it. If you have any doubts about the content of your post, then ask before you post it.

Be Honest, Transparent

Be honest and upfront about your identity and who you represent. If you are posting on behalf of the college, say so by stating your full name, title and affiliation with Collin College (when possible). In personal posts, you may identify yourself as a Collin College employee. However, be sure to clearly state that you are not representing the college and the views expressed are not necessarily those of the institution. Consider using the following statement when necessary: "This is my personal opinion and not necessarily that of Collin College."

Be Accurate

Do you have all the facts? Make certain to verify information before posting it. Give credit and link to the original source when using or posting material that was not created by you, such as direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos, videos. Review content for spelling and grammatical errors.

Correct Mistakes

People make mistakes. If you make a mistake, admit it and correct it as soon as it is discovered.

Maintain Confidentiality

Do not publish confidential or proprietary information about Collin College, its students, alumni, employees or donors. Combine ethical judgment and good common sense when posting. Follow college policies and federal requirements, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Maintain Privacy

Be sure not to disclose information that is private, such as information gathered through informal discussions not meant public release.³ This includes, but is not limited to, research or work by a professor, faculty member or students.

Post Valuable Content

If you post a comment on social media, make sure you are contributing relevant, valuable information. Offer insightful commentary, but avoid self promotion or blatant college promotion as this behavior is viewed negatively. In addition, a valued member is someone who actively engages in the community. If you choose to use social media, stay engaged. Post regularly, update information, and remain active. If you don't have time to commit, then reconsider the use of social media at this time.

Respect Your Audience, Collin College and Coworkers

Your post can have a broad reach and may be viewed by current and prospective students, donors, employers, parents, colleagues and peers. Make sure your comments do not harm, alienate or provoke these, or unidentified, groups.

Be Aware of Liability

You can be held legally responsible for comments or photos you post. Make sure you are not breaking copyright laws or posting information that is trademarked. If you have questions, reference the copyright resources listed at the end of this guide.⁴

Respect College Time and Property

College computers and time at work are to be used for college-related business. Limit the time spent on managing or maintaining your college-related social media interactions as directed by your supervisor. Maintain your personal social media on your own time using non-Collin College computers.

Ensure Accessibility of Electronic and Information Technology (EIT)

If you plan to use social media as a class enhancement or on behalf of Collin College, the social media platform must be accessible to people with disabilities. In addition, if you plan to require the use of mobile devices for your class, the technology required must also be accessible to people with disabilities. Though you are not responsible for making a social media platform accessible, you are responsible for making sure that your choice of social media platform used on behalf of Collin College is accessible. People with disabilities must have equal access to all content presented by Collin College. In general, it is crucial that the social media platform is accessible to people with visual, motor, and auditory disabilities. Examples of specific disabilities include Blindness, Deafness, Parkinson's Disease and Cerebral Palsy.

Be sure to check with the social media developer for accessibility tools and features. If you determine that the social media platform is not accessible, be prepared to offer an alternative that is of equal value. For tips on using social media with equal access in mind, go to <http://www.howto.gov/social-media/using-social-media-in-government/improving-accessibility>.

POSTING ON BEHALF OF COLLIN COLLEGE

Social media are designed to build community and establish connections. These easy-to-use, two-way online collaboration tools are changing the way we communicate with students, colleagues and the public. In addition to adhering to the best practices outlined above, when you create or post to a social networking site on behalf of Collin College, you need to:

Get approval

Before you begin using social media, get approval from your dean, director or supervisor. Your boss should know and approve of time spent managing, monitoring or using social media on behalf of the college. Also, notify Public Relations so your page can be logged on the master roster of official accounts.

Reflect the Core Values

Act with integrity and treat others with dignity and respect. Abide by the college's Core Values. The Public Relations office does not pre-screen content, but we do reserve the right to remove content deemed inappropriate, such as pornographic, libelous, defamatory, harassing, hostile or unprofessional.

Be cautious

Post facts, not your opinion. Make sure your comments or messages are in concert with and accurately reflect the college's official position. Contact the Public Relations office with questions at 972.758.3896.

Be Honest, Transparent

When you are posting on behalf of the college, clearly state your full name, title and affiliation with Collin College. Remember that when you post using the college username, your responses are viewed as the official word from Collin College. Discuss with your supervisor when you are empowered to respond directly to users, when you may need to collaborate with your supervisor or Public Relations and when you need to refer the post to Public Relations.

Be Accurate

Do you have all the facts? Make certain to verify information before posting it. Give credit and link to the original source when using or posting material that was not created by you, such as direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos, videos. Review content for spelling and grammatical errors.

Stay connected

Check your pages routinely and respond in a timely manner. Stay engaged by posting regularly—at least once a day—and actively updating information.

POSTING AS AN INDIVIDUAL

Be Honest, Transparent

In personal posts, you may identify yourself as a Collin College employee. However, be sure to clearly state that you are not representing the college and the views expressed are not necessarily those of the institution. Consider using the following statement when necessary: “This is my personal opinion and not necessarily that of Collin College.”

Safeguard the Collin College Brand

Do not use the college logo or any other college mark, such as the cougar logo or the college seal, on your personal social media site. Do not use college photos or images created by the college.

Do Not Make Endorsements

“Collin College” should not be used to champion or favor any merchandise, organization or political party.⁵

SAFETY AND PRIVACY

Protect your digital identity. Be mindful about the information you provide and allow to be known about yourself. Read privacy terms and set your privacy settings to control who can view your profile and what information can be viewed.

What if you want to change or delete a post? Once information is posted, it remains available for perpetuity. In fact, according to a National Public Radio broadcast, the Library of Congress is archiving tweets and lawyers are using Facebook status updates in cross-examinations⁶.

Following are resources to help you protect your privacy:

Facebook Privacy Controls

<http://www.facebook.com/collin.cougar?sk=info#!/privacy/explanation.php>

The First Key to Responsible Social Use: Protect Your Privacy

<http://socialmediatoday.com/chrissy/1619711/first-key-responsible-social-use-protect-your-privacy>

How to be Safe, Secure and Social

<https://www.privacyrights.org/social-networking-privacy>

How To Protect your Privacy on Facebook and LinkedIn

<http://www.mint.com/blog/how-to/howto-protect-your-privacy-on-facebook-myspace-and-linkedin/>

RESOURCES

Collin College Policies

<http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/304>

Procedures and Guidelines for Faculty and Staff

<http://www.collin.edu/hr/index.html>

Appropriate Use of Information and Technological Resources

[http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/043500/pol.cfm?DisplayPage=CR\(LOCAL\).pdf&QueryText=APPROPRIATE%20USE](http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/043500/pol.cfm?DisplayPage=CR(LOCAL).pdf&QueryText=APPROPRIATE%20USE)

Software and Copyright Compliance Statement http://ftp.collin.edu/hr/pdfs/Software_Copyright_Compliance_Statement.pdf

Faculty/Associate Faculty Handbook

<http://www.collin.edu/facultyhandbook/>

Copyright Information

<http://www.copyright.gov/>

Collin College Graphics Standards Manual

<http://www.collin.edu/news/NewsFiles/GSM2012.pdf>

SOURCES

¹PR Pro with Joseph Thornley, *What is Social Media?*, April 2008 <http://propr.ca/2008/what-is-social-media/>

^{2, 3, 4, 5}University of Michigan, <http://voices.umich.edu/docs/Social-Media-Guidelines.pdf>

⁶National Public Radio (NPR), *Protecting Your Privacy on Social Networking Sites*, May 2010, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=127037413>

Ball State University, http://cms.bsu.edu/About/AdministrativeOffices/UMC/WhatWeDo/Web/~media/DepartmentalContent/UMC/pdfs/BallState_SocialMediaPolicy.ashx

DePaul University, http://brandresources.depaul.edu/vendor_guidelines/g_socialmedia.aspx

Facebook Privacy Controls, <http://www.facebook.com/collin.cougar?sk=info#!/privacy/explanation.php>

Mint Life, *How to Protect Your Privacy on Facebook and LinkedIn*, September 2007, <http://www.mint.com/blog/how-to/howto-protect-your-privacy-on-facebook-myspace-and-linkedin/>

Seattle University Social Media Policy, www.seattleu.edu/marcomo/Inner.aspx?id=53083

Southeast Missouri State University, <http://www.semo.edu/president/images/>

WDS_SocialMediaGuidelines_2010-04-27.pdf

University of Notre Dame, <http://opac.nd.edu/social-media-policy/>

Vanderbilt University Social Media Handbook, www.vanderbilt.edu/publicaffairs/webcomm/vu.resources/socialmedia-handbook/