

# Social Media Guidelines

## Use of Social Media

At the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), we recognize that social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr have become important and influential communication channels for our community. To assist in posting content and managing these sites, the university has developed guidelines for official and personal use of social media. These guidelines apply to university faculty, staff, and registered student organization, and can be used in connection with social media accounts associated with schools, colleges, departments, programs and offices.

## General Guidelines

### University Business Use

- The purpose of using these communication channels on behalf of UDC is to support the university's mission, goals, programs, and sanctioned efforts, including university news, information, content and directives.
- Prior to engaging in any form of social media involving UDC, you must receive permission from the supervisor as appointed by your department head and notify Marketing and Communications.
- When using any officially recognized social media channel, assume at all times that you are representing UDC.
- Confidential or proprietary university information or similar information of third parties, who have shared such information with you on behalf of UDC, should not be shared publicly on these social media channels.
- UDC.edu main social media accounts will post university related social media content generated by faculty, staff and/or students. UDC's main social media accounts can be accessed through the [www.udc.edu](http://www.udc.edu) website, and include:

Facebook, <http://www.facebook.com/UofDC>

Twitter, [http://twitter.com/udc\\_edu](http://twitter.com/udc_edu)

Flickr, [http://www.flickr.com/photos/udc\\_edu](http://www.flickr.com/photos/udc_edu)

YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/universityofdc>

Presidential Blog, <https://www.udc.edu/presidents-blog/>

Instagram, <http://instagram.com/universityofdc>

Instagram Community College: [http://instagram.com/udc\\_communitycollege](http://instagram.com/udc_communitycollege)

Snap Chat, [http://snapchat.com/add/\[udc\\_edu\]](http://snapchat.com/add/[udc_edu])

- Exercise discretion, thoughtfulness and respect for your colleagues, associates and the university's supporters/community (social media fans).
- Avoid discussing or speculating on internal policies or operations.
- A healthy dialog with constructive criticism can be useful but refrain from comments that could disparage colleagues, competitors, or critics. Avoid communications that "shifts the blame" to other individuals or departments. These communications should be handled constructively. Contact Marketing and Communications for assistance with

framing these discussions.

- Be mindful that all posted content is subject to review in accordance with UDC's employee policies and editorial guidelines.
- Please refrain from reporting, speculating, discussing or giving any opinions on university topics or personalities that could be considered sensitive, confidential or disparaging.
- UDC logos and/or visual identity cannot be used for personal social media without university permission. Please visit UDC's marketing and communication website (<https://www.udc.edu/marketing-communications/logo-usage/>) for guidelines.
- Your personal social media account is not an appropriate place to distribute university news. If you have university information and news that you would like to announce to the public or media, please contact UDC's marketing and communications office.
- UDC does not monitor personal websites but will address issues that violate established HR, Editorial, Graphic and Social Media guidelines.
- UDC encourages faculty, staff and students to use social media but reminds users that at any time they can be perceived as a spokesperson of the University.
- Official UDC communications should be posted by/through the appropriate official University accounts. Do not post official communications through a personal account/identity.

#### Personal Use

- Consistent with the UDC (Insert UDC's IT policy name here), personal use of University electronic resources to access social networking sites is to be limited to incidental use. Incidental use must not interfere with an individual's performance of his/her assigned job responsibilities or someone else's job performance or compromise the functionality of the department or campus network.
- Individuals or groups within the University community are not permitted to present personal opinions in ways that imply endorsement by the university. If posted material may reasonably be construed as implying the support, endorsement, or opposition of the university with regard to any personal statements, including opinions or views on any issue, the material shall be accompanied by a disclaimer: an explicit statement that the individual is speaking for himself or herself and not as a representative of the University or any of its offices or units. An example of a disclaimer is as follows:
  - The contents, including all opinions and views expressed, in my profile [or on my page, etc] are entirely personal and do not necessarily represent the opinions or views of anyone else, including other employees in my department or at the University of the District of Columbia. My department and the University of the District of Columbia have not approved and are not responsible for the material contained in this profile [or on this page].
- The university's name, telephone numbers, email addresses, and images are not to be posted on social network profiles for academic and staff employees for personal purposes. However, an academic or staff employee, or student government officer, or registered campus organization may use their university title for identification purposes. If the use of the title might imply endorsement, support or opposition of the university

with regard to any personal statements, including opinions or views on any issue, an explicit disclaimer must appear proximate to the material. See disclaimer above.

### Investigations

In response to concerns or complaints or information provided by individuals, university administrators may look up profiles on social networking sites and may use the information in informal or formal proceedings. In addition, the university has no control over how other employers, organizations, or individuals may use information they find on social networking Web sites.

## **Food for Thought**

Whether professionally or for incidental personal use, if you use social networking sites, please read the following tips:

The Internet is very public, world wide and permanent. What you post lives forever and can and will be used against you. If you use online social networks, here are some questions to ask yourself:

1. Did I set my privacy setting to help control who can look at my profile, my information and photos? You can limit access somewhat but not completely, and you have no control over what someone else may share.
2. How much information do I want people whom I don't know to know about me? If I give them my cell phone number, address, email, class schedule, a list of possessions (such as my CD collection) how might they use it? With whom will they share it? Not everyone will respect my person or physical space.
3. Would I want to see this material in a newspaper headline, on a roadside billboard or on the door of my residence?
4. Is the image I'm projecting by my materials and photos the one I want my current and future employers and friends to know me by? What does my profile say to potential faculty members/advisors? Future graduate school/internship interviewers? Potential employers? Neighbors? Family? Parents? Which doors am I opening? Which am I closing?
5. What if I change my mind about what I post? For instance, what if I want to remove something I posted as a joke or to make a point? Have I read the social networking site's privacy and caching statements? Removing material from network caches can be difficult or impossible. Posted material remains accessible on the internet until you've completed the prescribed process, where applicable, for removing information from the caching technology of one or multiple (potentially unknown) search engines.
6. Have I asked permission to post someone else's image or information? Am I infringing on their privacy? Could I be hurting someone? Could I be subject to libel suits? Am I violating network use policy? Could I be subject to a judiciary hearing?
7. Does my equipment have spyware and virus protections installed? Remember to backup your work on an external source in case of destructive attacks.

## **Getting Started**

If you are thinking of creating a new social media account that will be associated with the University of the District of Columbia, please contact marketing and communications for assistance with strategy, set-up, etc.

### **Tips for getting started:**

- Create a personal account and spend some time learning how the site works.
- Look at what other colleges or other similar groups have done to be successful.
- Read recent articles on social media, on Websites such as Mashable.com. (The marketing and communications team can also direct you to helpful articles.)

**Please note:** To be listed on the university Social Media webpage, please work with marketing and communications and follow the guidelines below.

### **General Guidelines**

- If you wouldn't put it on a flier, carve it into the bricks on Dennard Plaza or want it published on the front of the Wall Street Journal, don't broadcast it via social media channels.
- Social media platforms are not like a Website; they enable two-way communications with your audience. To ensure this interactivity, make sure you are providing fresh, relevant content and actively listening to the conversation and contributing to the dialogue.
- Someone on your team needs to check the sites you establish at least once a day for comments, etc.
- Social media is about creating community and trust; please identify who you are and who you represent on the official platform by providing your full name and title and affiliation with UDC when possible depending on the social media platform.
- Make sure you are posting a variety of relevant, valuable and engaging content. Examples include articles, links, photos, videos and events.
- Remember you must first build trust with your audience, which takes time. Once trust is established you will begin to see community involvement grow. Don't give up; just remember that most social media accounts don't immediately become successful or popular; it takes patience.

### **Naming Guidelines**

Some of the social media platforms will allow you to change your name after the accounts are created, some do not. Naming your social media channel is very important. Please note, that you will not be recognized as an official communication channel of the university unless you adhere to these naming guidelines.

\*Please make sure that UDC\_edu, U of DC, or University of DC is listed prior to your school, college, department, program, office, organization, or student run organization.

**Facebook-** U of DC [insert name]

Example: U of DC Marketing Communication

**twitter-** UDC\_[Insert Name]\_edu or U of DC\_[Insert Name]

Example: UDC\_Marcom\_edu or U of DC\_SGA

**YouTube-** University of DC\_[Insert Name]\_edu or U of DC\_[Insert Name]

Example University of DC\_Marcom\_edu or U of DC\_SGA

## **Moderating Comments**

When managing a social media site, it's helpful to have clear guidelines for moderating comments. Please feel free to use the following to moderate comments on your site, and to post these guidelines to your website or social media account when appropriate.

### **University of the District of Columbia Guidelines to Moderating Comments**

The University of the District of Columbia encourages our fans, followers, and friends to share their thoughts with one another by commenting on a story, feature, tweet, or post that speaks to you. We encourage lively, thoughtful and civil conversation with the following guidelines:

- Comments must be relevant to a topic discussed and to the point.
- Keep your comments clean and constructive.
- Posts that are off-topic, abusive, contain profanity, are threatening in tone or evolve into personal attacks will be deleted. Period.
- Excessively long comments—as determined by the site's editor—are subject to editing for length, clarity and space limitations.
- Anonymous comments will not be published.
- Please do not post links unless you identify, by name, who you are and explain where your link goes, especially if you are a for profit organization. This is to distinguish spam from legitimate opportunities for the UDC community
- The University of the District of Columbia reserves the right to review all comments and remove comments that violate any of the conditions noted above

### **Guidelines for Individual Social Media Websites**

Please refer to the guidelines below if you are managing or considering creating a specific social media account. These provide more detailed information on the culture, logistics and best practices of individual social media websites.

#### **Twitter Guidelines**

- If possible, use a professional photo of your face for your avatar. Show people who you are, and please smile, everyone loves a friendly face. Try to avoid a generic campus photo for the avatar. If you're not sure what to use, just ask.
- Add a short bio.
- Always include a URL, to your school/college/program/etc website. If you do not have one, then use [www.udc.edu](http://www.udc.edu)
- Concentrate first on establishing who you are, begin to build trust.
- Post at least 3 to 4 times per week.
- Use the @username when replaying or referring to other twitter members and @udc\_edu when referring to UDC.

- Retweet as often as possible, provided the content relates back to your goals. For example, if someone says how much they love your program, retweet it.
- When composing your tweets, read them back to yourself and if it wouldn't be interesting enough for you to click on them, someone else probably won't find it interesting either.
- Always spell check your tweets before sending them. But remember that twitter allows for shorthand. "Tomorrow" should be "tmrw" to conserve characters.
- Leave enough characters empty in your post to allow someone to easily retweet it. Try to stay around 160 characters, so someone has room to add "RT @username:" to the beginning.
- Be sure to follow back your followers. But take the time to look at each profile; you do not want to follow spammers, robots, or questionable profiles advertising casinos, clubs, or bars. You should always follow udc\_edu and other UDC twitter accounts.
- An individual should own your twitter account; this ensures a consistent voice for the account.
- The majority of your tweets should be replies to others (55%), followed by your own updates (40%), retweets (4%), and posing questions to your audience (1%).

### Facebook Guidelines

- If your primary audience is **external**, please create a "Fan" Page.
- If your primary audience is **internal**, please create a "Group" Page.
- Please do not create "personal" pages for official school, college, department, program, office, organization, or student run organization Facebook pages.
- Make sure at least one person is identified and responsible for your Facebook page. This will establish a consistent voice and accountability for updates/moderation.
- Customize the page as much as possible but adhere to logo and graphic style guides so your fans know you are affiliated with the University of the District of Columbia.
- Always include a URL to your school/college/program/etc website. If you do not have one, then use [www.udc.edu](http://www.udc.edu)
- When composing status updates, read them back to yourself and if it wouldn't be interesting enough for you to click on, someone else probably won't find it interesting either.
- Always spell check your status updates before sending them.
- Post something at least 2 times a week
- Use the @ symbol when referring to other Facebook members and @ UofDC (UDC) when referring to the University of the District of Columbia
- Use the branding guidelines as set by marketing and communications
- Pick a picture that speaks broadly about your school, college, department, program, office, organization, or student run organization.
- Be honest with your audience about how you moderate your page; refer to the moderating comments guidelines below.
- Actively build your page by adding photos, videos, event postings etc.
- Make the University of the District of Columbia's main page a "Favorite Page" of your school, college, department, program, office, organization, or student run organization

## Classroom use of Facebook

- Create a separate account just for your classes. Keep two accounts if you want to use Facebook personally as well. This keeps your Facebook relationship at school on a professional level.
- Friend students carefully. Make sure you are friending students in current and former classes for professional purposes. Keep as professional a distance on Facebook as you would in person.
- Ask students to put you on limited access to their pages. This keeps you from having to see their spring break photos, status updates that may indicate why they really missed that midterm, or any other information that may compromise your professional working relationship.
- Create lists. Create a list for each of your classes, then keep students in each class on that list. This is a great way to organize your students.
- Warn your students about social networking etiquette.
- Furthermore, warn your students about what they post in Facebook, as future employers may find their Facebook page.

## **YouTube Guidelines**

- Make sure videos are shorter than 3 minutes unless they are compelling enough to warrant something longer.
- Customize the account as much as possible so your viewers know you are affiliated with the University of the District of Columbia.
- Post at least 2 times a month.
- Try to brand videos with pre-rolls and end-rolls. Please contact marketing and communications for existing files for your pre-rolls and end-rolls.
- Try to create quality content.
- Make sure to add title, descriptions, and keywords that match your content for searchability. For a list of UDC keywords please contact marketing and communications.

## **Blogging Guidelines**

- Identify your audience, what are you trying to achieve with your blog, why would a visitor read your blog?
- Don't write a novel; keep your content scannable by writing short paragraphs, think of your blog as your web journal.
- Break up text with headlines, sub headlines, bullets, images and more. Use of images within your post can draw your reader's attention and add interest to your post. Remember, over use of images can take away from your post, but a single image is worth a 1,000 words. Use bullet points or lists. Use formatting such as bold, capitals, italics, to emphasize points, but don't go overboard. Using headings and subheadings throughout your posts helps to draw your reader's eye down the post and helps highlight other sections. Your title describes your entire post, but a heading and subheading is a line of text that includes what the content below it is about.



- Break down your blog into categories. Try to have one topic per post. This will keep your blog posts shorter and increase ease of writing.
- If you allow comments, try to respond to them in a timely fashion. Don't ignore comments visitors make.
- Create good content. Keep your blog interesting by creating unique, useful, insightful content your readers can't get elsewhere.
- Remember blog entry titles are important. Your title is your first impression. Make it known that your post is relevant to your user through your title. Keep your title simple and grab your reader's attention. Titles should describe what the reader would get in the post.

### **LinkedIn Guidelines**

- The main purpose of creating a presence on LinkedIn is to help foster professional communication between UDC alumni and other University of the District of Columbia groups and individuals.
- Content should be relevant to alumni and include professional or career related activities and information.
- The main UDC LinkedIn site is maintained by Alumni Relations, in conjunction with the Career Center.
- All subgroups formed on LinkedIn should include a link to the Alumni and Career Services LinkedIn pages.
- LinkedIn Manager(s) must act as moderators for these pages and monitor them daily.
- LinkedIn main pages should have fresh content posted at least once a week.
- It will be the LinkedIn Manager's responsibility to take on the role of moderator or owner, or delegate this responsibility to a person of his/her choice. The Manager should respond to questions and requests posted to the group.
- The LinkedIn Manager's role is not only to moderate, but to assist in making sure the relevant information on LinkedIn is included on the official UDC website and vice versa.
- When posting information about an event, include a link to the official group page that is hosting the event.

### **Contact Information**

If you have any doubt about posting content on these social media sites, please consult Jay Morrow, Webmaster at [jmorrow@udc.edu](mailto:jmorrow@udc.edu) or 202.274.6253 | 202.425.5379. Due to the evolving nature of social media, the policies and guidelines are subject to revision by the Marketing and Communications team. We also welcome feedback from the campus community.

*(Adapted in part from Seattle University, UC Santa Barbara, <http://www.onlinecollege.org>, and <http://www.classroom20.com>).*