



## **Social Media Guidelines and Procedures**

The College respects the First Amendment rights of others and embraces the free speech values that are paramount to a higher education environment. These guidelines are not intended to circumvent those rights. Rather the guidelines are to highlight key policies and laws, provide expectations, and offer advice on best practices to assist employees who administer social media accounts on behalf of the College.

College staff and faculty administering institutional social media accounts are expected to follow the Social Media Guidelines and Procedures listed below. These guidelines are broad in nature as social media technology is constantly evolving and no one set of guidelines and procedures can address all the particular situations and circumstances that may arise.

The College President has assigned the Public Relations and Marketing (PRM) Office to maintain and monitor official college accounts on several social media sites as a way to provide announcements and information about upcoming events and activities as well as to provide a forum for open discussion among students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the community. As the administrative gatekeeper of social media, the PRM Office is responsible for establishing, maintaining, and enforcing HCC's social media guidelines as necessary.

### **Official College Accounts**

A. The social media sites that represent HCC must:

1. Abide by the college Acceptable Computer Usage policy and other policies listed in the "Related College Policies" section of the Social Media Policy.
2. Have been created through the submission of the "Social Media Account Request" form (Attachment 2) and be registered with the HCC Public Relations and Marketing (PRM)

Office. Requests must be made by an HCC staff or faculty member.

3. Have a minimum of one college faculty or staff member as an administrator of the online account at all times. College employees who serve as online administrators are charged with managing and monitoring content on their official college accounts on a regular basis and are responsible for removing any content that may violate college policies.
  4. Provide administrative access to all sites representing HCC to the PRM Office. An individual, designated by the PRM Office, will be added as an administrator or provided administrative login information.
  5. Work with the PRM Office on the images, color palette, and naming conventions for all online sites.
- B. HCC's Social Media & Public Information Specialist will serve as the social media coordinator and will be added as an administrator or provided administrative login information for all college-affiliated social media accounts.
- C. The PRM Office will make the final decision in any situation regarding the use of social media and ensure the pages are set up properly according to a social media site's policies and guidelines.
- D. The PRM Office reserves the right to enforce this policy by removing links to third-party websites and content and/or recommending the administrator remove or change the site or online content as needed.
- E. Fans and followers of official college accounts agree to respect the terms of individual social networking sites and understand that College officials have the right to remove any content that is disruptive to the educational program, offensive, illegal, profane, harassing, threatening, defamatory, a violation of privacy or intellectual property laws or contrary to the mission of the College. The College reserves the right to block individuals who violate these provisions but will exercise this discretion only after issuing a warning to the violator.

- F. The PRM Office, in consultation with the administration, which includes but is not limited to, the Office of Academic Affairs, the Office of Student Affairs, the Finance Office, and/or the Office of the President, will resolve any conflicts or concerns regarding social media.
- G. Official student organizations (i.e., official chartered student groups recognized by the Student Activities Office and governed by the Student Activities Policy No. 4036) are permitted to have an official presence on social media sites with the approval of the student organization's advisor and the PRM Office. Guidelines and procedures outlined in the Social Media Policy and Social Media Guidelines and Procedures document must be followed.

## Creation & Maintenance of Accounts

Official HCC institutional accounts on all social media platforms are maintained by the PRM Office. Individual departments, student organizations, and other campus entities must contact the PRM Office prior to creating an account by completing a "Social Media Account Request" form and emailing it to [pr@hagerstowncc.edu](mailto:pr@hagerstowncc.edu). HCC is not responsible for content posted to non-official HCC social media sites. The decision to approve a new social media account is at the discretion of the PRM Office based on the selected Account Administrators and intended audience, as well as how the expected content will affect the marketing messages for the main HCC accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. If accounts are not maintained by selected administrators, the PRM Office reserves the right to delete or close an account.

1. **Account Administrators:** Account administrators will be approved by the PRM Office based on their current job description. All Account Administrators must sign a "Social Media Acknowledgment" form. Account administrators that are classified as non-exempt employees are not to post to official HCC social media accounts outside of their working hours and will not be compensated for doing so. Additionally, account administrators should not use a personal device to post to official HCC social media sites.
2. **Facebook Pages:** To maintain the integrity of the main HCC Facebook page, Facebook pages will not be commonly considered. The goal is to disseminate all types of college information through one main site, rather than having many separate sites that limit the opportunity to reach the largest possible audience. This also serves to help the PRM Office control and monitor the release of college-related information.
3. **Facebook Groups:** Facebook groups are available to those departments or student organizations that wish to share a common cause, issue or activity to organize, express objectives, discuss

issues, post photos, and share related content. Facebook groups can be private or public and all group members must be approved by an account administrator. All group members, including account administrators contribute to groups from their personal account, therefore group account administrators should consider creating a separate business account linked to their HCC email to use for the administration of official HCC Facebook groups.

4. **Twitter:** Twitter accounts are for news and information sharing in 140-character or less messages. Content must be precise and to the point and account administrators must post frequently. HCC uses Hootsuite as its Twitter management platform. Hootsuite allows users to schedule tweets in advance, keep updated on new mentions, and track hashtags.
5. **Instagram:** To continue to grow HCC's Instagram presence, Instagram accounts will not be commonly considered. Departments, programs, and student organizations that wish to share content via Instagram should send decent quality photos and information to the Social Media Specialist for consideration.
6. **Snapchat:** At this time, there are no official HCC accounts on Snapchat. HCC does have an official geofilter for students to use while participating on Snapchat on campus.
7. **Ad Account:** All social media advertisements and boosted post must be initiated through HCC's main ad account ONLY and approved by the Social Media Specialist.

### **Expectations for Social Media Content on College Accounts**

1. It is an expectation that content be posted on a regular basis to keep the account current and answer questions in a timely manner. Page administrators are expected to respond to user concerns and address issues of inappropriate conduct with warnings issued as needed.
2. It is an expectation that content be accurate, concise, student-oriented, sensitive to diverse audiences, and respectful to the college, its employees, students, and the community.
3. It is an expectation that posted content adhere to established college policies relating to electronic communication for both students and employees including, but not limited to: Use of Computing, Networks and Communications Resources (Policy No. 5093), Code of Trust (Policy No. 2030), Code of Student Conduct (Policy No. 4040), Free Speech & Anti-Discrimination (Policy No. 4042), and Commercial Solicitation (Policy No. 8069).

4. It is an expectation that concerns of abusive or inappropriate content be reported according to the procedures posted on the social media site and shared with HCC's PRM Office at [pr@hagerstowncc.edu](mailto:pr@hagerstowncc.edu).

## **Best Practices for Effective Online Communication**

The following are recognized best practices for success in creating and interacting on social media platforms:

- **Be respectful of others.**

Whether you are an administrator or a fan/follower, always treat others fairly. Be sensitive to different perspectives and viewpoints and never react in a defensive or hostile manner.

- **Be accurate, honest, and transparent.**

Make sure you are providing accurate information. Take the time to verify information before it's posted. If you make an error or need to post a correction or retraction, do so publicly so that others are aware of it. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading.

- **Respect confidentiality and privacy laws.**

Use good judgment about content and respect privacy laws. Do not post confidential or proprietary information about the college, its students, its alumni, or staff and faculty. Follow college policies and federal requirements under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). If in doubt, contact the PRM Office for guidance.

- **Don't violate copyright laws.**

Follow the laws governing copyright and fair use dealing with copyrighted materials owned by others, including HCC's own copyrighted material and brand. It is good practice to give credit to the owner/author/creator for content that is not your own and provide a direct link or URL to that content if possible.

- **Be professional.**

As an employee, remember that you represent HCC. You are the public face of the college and should always consider the intended audience when posting or commenting. Proofread your

content prior to posting and try to avoid spelling and grammatical errors.

- **Don't be afraid to ask questions.**

If you need help, are uncertain of how to respond to a question or complaint, or need advice on how to handle a difficult situation, contact the Social Media & Public Information Specialist by calling 240-500-2262 or by emailing [pr@hagerstowncc.edu](mailto:pr@hagerstowncc.edu).

- **Think before you post.**

Once something is posted online, it lives forever. Search engines frequently catalog posts and archive social media content. Don't make the mistake of posting something that you will regret later or that could negatively impact the college, your current or future career, or your personal reputation.

- **Moderate Comments Judiciously.**

Comments are an important part of social media engagement. Do not delete comments simply because they are negative or disagree with your point of view as that could be deemed as viewpoint discrimination and prohibited under the law. Use the standards outlined under E.as criteria when evaluating whether to remove a comment or block the person.

### **Policy Reference:**

These guidelines support the intent of the following Board Policies: 2030 Code of Trust; 4036 Student Activities; 4040 Code of Student Conduct; 5093 Use of Computing, Network and Communication Resources; 8069 Commercial Solicitation; 8095 Social Media Use and Personal Electronic Account Privacy Protection; 4042 Free Speech and Anti-Discrimination