

Social Media Use & Personal Electronic Account Privacy Protection Policy

Social media is a powerful communication tool and it shall be the policy of Hagerstown Community College (HCC) to actively use it to educate, inform, and collaborate with its students, staff, faculty, and alumni, as well as members of the community. Social media provides college staff and faculty with the ability to reach students outside the classroom and a way to better inform the public about college news and events.

When it comes to social media usage on behalf of the institution, HCC expects its employees to be honest and transparent in their electronic communications as they would be in person and to respect privacy, confidentiality, and copyright laws. Posted content on college social media sites should always be accurate, concise, student-oriented, sensitive to diverse audiences, and respectful to the college, its employees, students, and the community.

The college cannot request access to personal electronic accounts of students, applicants, prospective students, or employees and cannot base acceptance to the college or employment at the college on access to these accounts or content contained within these accounts. Students and employees are not required to provide access to these accounts and are not required to participate in social media activities as a condition of their acceptance to, enrollment at, or employment at the college.

HCC cannot compel a student, applicant, prospective student, or employee as a condition of enrollment, employment, or participation in extracurricular activities, to add to the list of contacts associated with any electronic account any individual (including a coach, teacher, administrator, other college employee, volunteer), or change the privacy settings associated with a personal or electronic account. HCC will not threaten or take any action to discharge, discipline, terminate, or prohibit from extracurricular activities a student or employee related to these conditions. These provisions are consistent with the Annotated Code of Maryland.

This policy requires that the administration create and maintain guidelines and employ best practices as applies to employees and students posting online material on behalf of HCC. Employees and students are subject to the same laws, professional expectations, and guidelines when interacting online with students, parents, alumni, donors, and the media as they are in person. Confidential and proprietary information about the college, its students, faculty, staff, alumni, and donors may not be posted on social media sites. Other information that may not be posted includes information that violates federal or state laws and student information that is protected by FERPA.

Students and employees will be issued access to college-related electronic accounts (i.e. Moodle, HCC email accounts, WebAdvisor) and they are expected to use them for college-related business. (More information on these accounts and the appropriate use of them can be found in HCC Policy #5093, Use of Computing, Network and Communications Resources Policy.)

Maryland's law makes it clear that privacy protections do not apply to electronic accounts opened or controlled by the college. Privacy protections also do not apply to information that is public on

individual accounts. The policy also does not apply to suspected criminal activity investigations or other investigations related to health and public safety, in publicly accessible accounts.

Fans and followers of official college social media accounts must agree to respect the terms of individual social networking sites and understand that HCC officials have the right to remove any content that is deemed to be offensive, illegal, inappropriate, of a harassing or threatening nature, a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, or can be construed as defamation of character. Profane language will also be removed. HCC has the right to block posts from fans or followers who violate these provisions, HCC is not responsible for posts or comments made by fans, followers, or visitors to HCC's social media accounts.

Related College Policies

- I. Use of Computing, Network and Communications Resources Policy (Policy No. 5093)
- II. Code of Trust (Policy No. 2030)
- III. Code of Student Conduct (Policy No. 4040)
- IV. Expressive Activity Policy (Policy No. 8068)
- v. Commercial Solicitation Policy (Policy No. 8069)