SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
Eastern Connecticut State University

Definitions:

Social media are Internet-based communication channels that use social interaction, scalable publishing techniques, and accessible technology to share user-created content (video, audio, text, and multimedia). Examples include LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, and MySpace.

A *University-affiliated* social media page is one that shows or implies a direct connection to an Eastern Connecticut State University office or department or official University program.

Guiding Principles:

The University recognizes the value of social media to the campus community in providing opportunities to share faculty, student, and staff creativity, viewpoints, and experiences with various constituencies, while also providing access to current topics and issues. However, it is critical that we ensure that the University's social media accounts are used to support Eastern's mission, goals, and programs. Because everything that we do ultimately reflects on the University's organizational and professional reputations, Eastern Connecticut State University employees should use caution when using social media platforms, as these platforms create messages and information that are immediate and permanent.   This policy is intended to properly portray, promote, and protect the University and assist faculty and staff at Eastern Connecticut State University who are responsible for managing social media sites on behalf of the University and its departments. They do not apply to student clubs, student-funded organizations, and other student groups. Administrators of such social media accounts will be asked to use the following disclaimer to differentiate themselves from official University social media sites.

"This social media site is not maintained by Eastern Connecticut State University and should not be construed to be an official communication of the University. Content is managed solely by the account holder and does not necessarily reflect the policies or opinions of the University."

To clearly indicate what social media sites are official, University-sanctioned accounts, the following language will be added to existing Eastern social media sites and will be a requirement for new official sites:

"This social media site is maintained by Eastern Connecticut State University and constitutes an official University communication. Content is managed by a University employee."

Classroom-based accounts maintained by faculty and/or faculty/staff personal social media accounts are exempt from all aspects of this policy.

Establishing a Social Media Account:

Officially recognized Eastern Connecticut State University social media accounts must be reviewed and approved through the following authorization process. Staff and/or faculty establishing an official social media site must use the Web Publishing Authorization Form (http://nutmeg.easternct.edu/webdev/documents/webauthorizationform.pdf).

Once the form is approved, University Relations and Information Technology staff will work with you to ensure account administration continuity and establish optimum workflow. To ensure continuity and currency, each officially approved account must have at least two employees assigned to maintain it. These designated account administrators are responsible for site content and currency; sites are subject to official review. Should a social media account administrator leave the University, the appropriate department head must designate/assign a new administrator. Departments seeking to establish social media accounts that have training needs should contact the Office of University Relations or the Center for Instructional Technology.

Professional Considerations:

- **Appropriate Content:** Inappropriate, offensive, injurious, and illegal content is subject to removal and other sanctions. Repeated inappropriate postings are subject to having those users permanently blocked from Eastern social media sites.
- **Institutional Integrity:** Content published by and about the University on social media platforms should be accurate, consistent, and current, i.e., matching information distributed through publications, the Eastern website, and other official Eastern promotional materials.
- **Intellectual Property**: Copyrighted Information cannot be posted without the written approval of the copyright holder; this includes text, photographs, videos, and other creative content. In addition, sources of information must be cited whenever possible. Eastern and Connecticut State Colleges and Universities copyright policy can be found at http://its.easternct.edu/policies/copyright.htm and at http://copyright.southernct.edu.
- **Confidentiality:** Confidential and proprietary University information must not be shared publicly on Eastern's social media accounts.
- **Other Considerations:**
  - Privacy: Like all educational institutions, Eastern is bound by the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). For that reason, other than directory information (i.e. name, address, phone, email, major, dates, of attendance, grade level, degrees received) the University requires student permission before publishing content about them. Similarly, please be respectful of the privacy of colleagues and ensure that you have their written approval before publishing content about them.
  - Ethics/Conflict of Interest: All social media activities covered by this policy are subject to applicable Ethics Codes and Conflict of Interest policies of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities System. These are available at http://www.ct.edu/hr/policies.
  - Professionalism: Eastern employees are expected to practice the same professionalism online that they do in the workplace. They will be held accountable for publishing social media content that is defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous or that

creates a hostile work environment. Offensive posts to Eastern-affiliated social media sites may be removed and repeat offenders blocked from posting.

- o General Computer Policies: All Eastern employees and their use of social media are subject to the University's information technology policies found at http://its.easternct.edu/policies.
- o Personal Pages: While this policy doesn't apply to personal pages, staff and faculty who maintain personal social media accounts and indicate their University affiliation are asked to clearly identify those accounts as being personal and not University sites; must not use University logos as the primary graphic identifiers for those personal sites; and must not use University computers and other technology to maintain those sites.

Promoting the Eastern Brand

Social media published on behalf of the University should reflect Eastern's marketing goals:

- **Clearly Reflect a Connection to Eastern.** All official social media sites must link to Eastern's website (www.easternct.edu). This happens in two ways:
  - o Departments with social media pages can link to them from department websites.
  - o Social media pages must include a link back to the Eastern homepage when possible.
- **Cross-Promotion:** Official social media pages managed by Eastern staff and faculty will be promoted on the "Connect With Us" social media portal found on the University's homepage at http://www.easternct.edu/contactus/connectwithus.html.
- **Contact Information**: Social media pages must provide information on who maintains the page(s) and how they may be contacted.
- **Descriptive Information**: Social media that allow for descriptive information must clearly articulate the relationship to Eastern, the purpose of the page, and its primary audience.
- **Name:** While it is preferable to use the University's full name ("Eastern Connecticut State University"), "Eastern" is an acceptable alternative. "ECSU" should be avoided if possible.
- **Spelling and Grammar:** As a higher education institution, we are held to a higher standard than the average web author regarding grammar and spelling. As representatives of the University, Eastern employees are asked to proofread content before publishing.
- **Third-Party Links:** Links to third-party sites, including commercial sites and other external entities, should be carefully evaluated before being implemented.
- **Visual Identity**: Social media affiliated with Eastern must be easily identifiable with the University by following the graphic standards established by the Office of University Relations. The office must be consulted about creating graphic icons ("avatars") for departmental level social media sites.
- **Customer Service**: Managers of Eastern social media sites should demonstrate accountability to Eastern's constituencies by committing to accurate information and responding to questions (correcting misinformation or taking action).

Social Media Advertising

As with any University advertising, only designated budget managers are authorized to purchase paid social media advertising.

Policy Administration

This policy is administered by the Director of University Relations and the Chief Information Officer.   The policy will distributed periodically to all faculty and staff members for their review as part of the overall ITS and University Relations staff awareness and training program.

Violations by outside postings are subject to permanent blocking. Violations by employees are subject to limitations or renovation of social media account privileges, and/or corrective action based on University policy and state/federal statutes.

Resources

A number of resources exist for those who want to enhance their social media skills or keep up with the ever-changing landscape, including:

- **Mashable**, social media news and web tips http://mashable.com/

- **Simply Zesty**, social media news and tips http://www.simplyzesty.com/

- **EMG**, higher education marketing and social media http://talk.emgonline.com/Blog/Pages/Notebook/Brand-Manager-s-Notebook

- **Wired**, technology trends and tips http://www.wired.com/epicenter/category/social-media/