PennWest UNIVERSITY

Policy UCM005: Social Media Guidelines

Recommended for Approval by:

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A. Intent

This policy ensures university social media accounts align with institutional goals, uphold the university's reputation, and engage audiences effectively.

B. Definition(s)

PennWest Social Media Account. Main social media accounts for PennWest University and its campuses.

PennWest Affiliated Accounts. Social media account approved by University Communications and Marketing and represent a PennWest College, Department or Office.

C. Policy

1. **PennWest Social Media Accounts**
   Pennsylvania Western University (PennWest) values the exchange of ideas and opinions. However, content posted on university-affiliated social media sites does not represent the official views of PennWest unless issued or approved by an authorized university official.

   The university reserves the right to remove any content—including posts, comments, or pages—that is deemed inappropriate or unsuitable. This includes, but is not limited to:

   - Abusive, bullying, or personal attacks.
   - Unlawful, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, abusive, or hateful material.
   - Content that infringes on intellectual property rights or privacy laws.
   - Unsolicited advertisements, promotions, or election campaign material.
   - Chain letters or spam.

Individuals who violate this policy may be restricted from participating in official PennWest social media channels. Students suspected of violations will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for appropriate action.

By posting on PennWest's social media platforms, users acknowledge that their content is publicly accessible and grant the university permission to share, repost, or use their words and images for marketing or promotional purposes.

For your safety, do not include personal information such as phone numbers, email addresses, or home addresses in posts, as comments are visible to all.

2. **Social Media Account Directory**

University communications and marketing shall maintain a social media directory. All university social media accounts must be registered with the Social Media Directory by submitting a social media directory form.

The following is required information that will be maintained by Communications and Marketing for each university social media account:

- Name of the Unit
- All social media accounts (examples: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.)
- Social media account name(s)
- University email for the account(s)
- Name, email, and phone numbers (work and mobile) for all account manager(s)

3. **PennWest Affiliated Accounts**
PennWest affiliated accounts refer to social media account approved by University Communications and Marketing and represent a PennWest College, Department or Office.

   i. **Content & Messaging**
- Account managers are not allowed to post official announcements on university social media accounts that have not already been announced by University Communications and Marketing.
- Content must reflect the university's values and be professional, inclusive, and accurate.
- Avoid political or controversial topics unless directly related to the university's mission.
- All posts should adhere to university branding standards, including logos, colors, and tone.
- The university and account managers have the right to remove comments or posts that contain unprotected speech including obscenity, harassment, illegal activity, defamation or falsehoods.

ii. Compliance

- All posts must comply with applicable laws, university policies, and platform terms of service.
- If an account is closed, the account manager must notify the University Communications and Marketing
- PennWest can disconnect from any platform that no longer aligns with its strategic goals, and the University Communications and Marketing may require the closure of all University Social media accounts on that platform.
- If an account is inactive or unclaimed, the University Communications and Marketing may remove it from the platform.
- University social media accounts created prior to the effective date of this policy are not required to submit the Social Media Account Request form. However, all other positions of this policy are applicable to these accounts. These accounts must comply with this policy within sixty (60) days from the effective date.

iii. Privacy & Confidentiality

- Do not share personal information or confidential data about students, staff, or the university without explicit consent.
- Follow FERPA and other applicable privacy regulations.

iv. Visual & Accessibility Standards

- Ensure content is accessible, including alt text for images, videos with captions, and high-contrast visuals.
- Follow university guidelines for visual identity in all posts.
- Do not plagiarize. Attribute sources by linking to the website where the original content was generated. Likewise, do not use pictures, images, audio, or other intellectual property that the University does not own or have a license and/or permission to use.

v. Crisis Communication

- In case of a crisis, direct followers to official communication channels (e.g., university website, emergency alerts).
- Coordinate with the university's communication team for responses related to rises or sensitive matters.

vi. Monitoring & Analytics

- Regularly track engagement metrics to assess account performance and adjust strategies as needed.

D. Procedure(s)

1. **PennWest Affiliated Accounts - Creation and Management**

- New accounts must align with university goals and gain approval from the department and university communications and marketing division by completing the Social Media Account Request Form for review and approval. The requester will receive written approval or denial of their request within 30 days from the date of submission.

- Personal email addresses or faculty/staff/student PennWest email addresses should only be used when necessary or as a secondary contact on an account. When possible, university social media accounts should be associated with a generic University email address (example: communciations@pennwest.edu).

- When setting up new university social media accounts, account manager(s) are required to follow the Social Media Guidelines. Each account should have at least one full-time staff member responsible for management. Accounts maybe co-managed by students with the supervision of a PennWest faculty or staff member.

E. **Related Policies**
Supersedes Policy AD002: Social Media
UCM001: Licensing, Trademarks, and Logos

F. **Contact Information**
University Communications and Marketing
Communications@pennwest.edu

G. **Policy Review Schedule**
All policies will be reviewed every two years or on an as needed basis if a change in Board of Governors, Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, or Pennsylvania law would create the need for an immediate change.