Social Media Policy
USG Policy 2a (2.00) | Approved April 2017

I.   Purpose & Applicability

This policy pertains to Universities at Shady Grove staff and students who are creating and publishing on social media on behalf of a USG-affiliated account (i.e. Student Event Board, Student Council, etc.). This does not apply to personal social networking accounts that are set up by individuals for personal use and/or program related social media accounts (i.e. UMES at Shady Grove, CRIMSA USG, etc.).

II. Definitions

A. *Social Media*: refers to any platform for online publication and commentary, including, but not limited to, blogs, and social networking sites such as Facebook, Flickr, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Twitter, Google+, Wordpress, Vimeo, and YouTube.

III. Policy Statement

A. Our community values and promotes academic expression and responsible behavior. The Universities at Shady Grove (USG) recognizes the tremendous opportunity and responsibility in using social media to connect directly with prospective students, current students, faculty, staff, parents, partners, donors, media, community members, and graduates of programs offered at USG. Please use the Best Practice Guidelines when crafting your social media communication:

IV. Social Media Best Practices

A. The Universities at Shady Grove's Brand:

i. The Universities at Shady Grove's name or logo should appear somewhere in social media profiles, such as the profile photo, cover photo or bio. Do not use USG's main wordmark or seal as an avatar, cover/header image, background image, or profile image. Prior to finalizing your avatar, cover/header image, background image, or profile image, make sure the image you use is legible at the display size, is sufficiently high resolution not to appear pixilated, and can be displayed without distorting dimensions. Confirm that you have permission to use the image, icon or graphic that you select. Contact USG's Marketing and Communications department for approved logos

B. Disclaimer

i. USG-affiliated accounts should contain a disclaimer stating that any user-generated content does not reflect the opinions or views of USG. Establish a clear, written policy about what types of content are acceptable and what types will be removed from your social platforms. The policy should be public-facing and posted in the account bio or description. Below is USG's comment policy that you can use verbatim or model for your own pages.

ii.   USG retains the discretion to delete unacceptable comments including comments that:

   i.   Contain discriminatory, obscene, unlawful, threatening, harassing or defamatory language, images, video or content;

   ii. Contain commercial endorsements, advertisements, or are considered "spam" – repeated posting of identical or very similar content; or

   iii. Disclose confidential information, or personally identifiable information, such as an e-mail address, home address, or phone number for yourself or others

C. **Provide Engaging Content**

   i.   Craft brief, effective messages that pique interest, provoke questions and implicitly convey *why* a reader should want to learn more.

   ii. Post regularly but avoid redundancy, such as repeating reminders for an upcoming event several times. On Facebook and Twitter, aim for a posting frequency of at least once per week, preferably more often.

   iii. Pay attention to how people on various platforms use language in their messages and stay current by adopting standard writing styles, abbreviations and posting conventions.

   iv. Include a diverse mix of content types, such as (1) original writing, video, audio or photos highlighting upcoming events, new publications, achievements, opportunities or perspectives; (2) links to material produced by others, like breaking news stories; (3) dialogue with and comments from constituents.

   v.   Tailor your voice to the needs and interests of your intended audience. Keep in mind that social media is a platform for more intimate/casual conversations than other media, but more informative voices might be appropriate in some cases.

   vi. Provide a balance of heavy/light and short/long posts to engage diverse readers.

   vii. Respond to questions, comments, and complaints quickly and appropriately.

D. Prioritize Accuracy and Propriety

   i.   Take the time to think before you post. Once your content is online, it is no longer under your control, so take a moment to reflect and to proofread.

   ii. Be the first to respond to your own mistakes. If you make an error, be up-front about recognizing it and correct it quickly. If someone points out your mistake, thank them for letting you know.

   iii. Respect privacy and confidentiality. We encourage university faculty, staff, and students to participate in community dialog and to share their work and experiences with public audiences. However, it is important to remember prohibitions against posting personal, confidential, or proprietary information, such as those outlined FERPA and HIPAA. Sharing restricted information, even unintentionally, can result in legal action against you or USG.

   iv. Respect intellectual property. When quoting someone else's work, remember to credit the original source. Rather than reposting a full-length piece, post a small excerpt and link to the original.

   v. Before you friend, like, or follow another account or comment on an external company or product, consider if the relationship is appropriate and how it might be perceived by others. Unless reflecting an existing relationship, official USG accounts should avoid suggesting that USG endorses a particular group, cause, brand, or person.

 E. Use Resources Wisely

   i. Original content is important to engage readers, but it can be laborious to create. Get the best return on your time investment by syndicating original content across multiple platforms and accounts, or linking to older content when it becomes relevant again, but take care to avoid redundancy.

   ii. Allocate sufficient time for account management to ensure a strong, continuously active social media presence. As you plan your schedule, include time for social media strategy development, daily communications, and usage/readership assessment.

   iii. Vigilantly monitor your site for signs of hacking. If you are hacked, or you fall into a phishing trap, immediately update your password and notify your friends/followers. The larger your audience is, the more tempting it will be for unauthorized parties to gain access to your account, and the more serious the repercussions.

   iv. Regularly assess efforts. Analytic tools can help determine how successful tactics are at helping you reach your communications goals. If tactics aren't bearing fruit, change your approach until you find something the works with your audience. Some platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, have built-in metrics, and there are several free and subscription services that can help you delve deeper into the data. We also recommend using a link shortening and tracking service, such as bit.ly or goo.gl, so you can see click-through numbers on the links you post. Remember to record your metrics so you can gauge your performance over time.

   v. Delete or merge inactive and redundant accounts. Such accounts can frustrate followers, harm your reputation, and consume resources that could be better spent elsewhere.

 F. Multiple Accounts

   i. Consider how your social media accounts are connected with and help extend your web presence. Use a consistent account name or reasonable variations across platforms. Use consistent graphics, colors, fonts, and language as much as possible (as appropriate).

V. Social Media Legal Requirements

 A. Managing Reputational Threats on Social Media
  Crises and reputational threats can happen online or offline. These can include incidents or threats of campus safety, tragedy, crime or natural disaster. A crisis may also involve

an incident that threatens USG's reputation. USG's Marketing and Communications office will lead the institutional response and social media strategy. This office serves as the most accurate source to gather and distribute timely information from the Police, the Executive Director's Office and the Incident Response Team. This centralized approach is in place to prevent misinformation, rumor-spreading and inconsistent messaging.

During a crisis event, please refrain from posting on your social media sites, unless you are re-posting from USG's primary, authenticated social media channels or using content provided in an issue brief.

B. Terms and Conditions
All social media networking platforms have terms and conditions (i.e. rules) that govern the use of that particular community. If you decide to participate in these communities, you should familiarize yourself with the terms of service before you begin to engage, as signing up for an account means you agree with the terms. Here are links to terms and conditions for some of the most popular social media sites:

   i. Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/legal/terms

   ii. Flickr: https://www.flickr.com/help/guidelines

   iii. Instagram: http://instagram.com/about/legal/terms

   iv. LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/legal/user-agreement

   v. Snapchat: https://www.snapchat.com/terms

   vi. Twitter: https://twitter.com/tos

   vii. YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/t/terms

C. Copyright Laws

Please respect all laws and policies governing intellectual property including those relating to copyright. Copyright protects original works of authorship that are "fixed in a tangible form." If you are using a work that is protected by copyright, you need to have permission unless your use falls under one of the exceptions to the license requirement such as fair use. Fair use allows portions of certain works to be used without permission under specific circumstances. Just because The Universities at Shady Grove is an academic institution does not automatically mean use of a copyrighted work is fair use. For more information on fair use and tools for fair use analysis, please see the University of Maryland's Libraries Copyright Guide: http://lib.guides.umd.edu/copyright.

YouTube, Vimeo, and other video streaming platforms require that, when uploading video, you must own or have rights to use both the video and audio components of the uploaded content. If you are using music or other audio created by another person, you must obtain permission to use the song (music composition, score, lyrics) and the sound recording in question; this could require obtaining permission from more than one copyright holder.

If you post copyright protected material on YouTube without permission, it may lead to your video being removed, a strike against your account, and ultimately fines for copyright infringement. For more information on copyright and how it applies to

YouTube, see YouTube's guide here.

D. Privacy Laws

    i. USG is committed to protecting the privacy of members of our community. Always use ethical judgment when posting information on social media about students, faculty, staff, and alumni. The release of confidential or proprietary information about students is prohibited by law and governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). USG's Photography and Video Privacy Policy should be reviewed and shared when using images of students, faculty, and staff. The Photography and Videotape Consent and Release Form is available by accessing the link below.