SOCIAL MEDIA @ LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY

The term *social media* covers a wide range of online tools but what they all have in common is making social interaction simple. Social media tools allow users to share information, images, and videos with the world or a select group. Social media tools provide an excellent way to make connections and form relationships.

The current generation of students, and those that will follow them, use social media tools frequently. If you are unfamiliar with social media it is advisable to start learning about it now. Consider whether it is appropriate for you and if so, how it can be used to improve the experience of your audience.

There are many articles available online discussing various ways social media is being leveraged in Higher Education including everything from the admissions process, to enhancing the classroom experience, to connecting with alumni.

Using Social Media? Let Us Know!

The Web Communications team is developing a comprehensive list of social media activities on campus. This will allow us to help in promoting those activities. If you are responsible for a social media account that represents a University department, program, activity or other organization please send an email to webteam@longwood.edu and let us know.

Longwood University Social Media Guidelines

- Consider what you actually want to achieve with your social media endeavors before you start. Don't do it just because everyone else is doing it. If you establish a presence and don't do anything with it, or start and don't keep up the momentum, it can be a worse reflection on your image than having no presence at all.

- Social media is about interaction and building relationships. Budget enough time to learn about your followers and/or fans. Spend time responding/reacting to them and to current events.

- Give the followers/fans a reason to continue following your feed and/or revisiting your page. Give them content of value.

- Always consider what you are about to put out through any social media outlet. Once it is out there it is very hard to take it back. Use your best judgment.

- If you are using any automated feeds to provide content to a social media outlet consider how those posts are timed and how they will look in your overall timeline. (example: Story about

opening of Communication Studies building showing up in Twitter timeline while the Farmville homicide story was developing.)

- Consider very carefully the use of personal social media accounts for professional purposes. For example, if a student finds you on Facebook, consider very carefully accepting a friend request. Try to steer them towards a more official social media outlet or set up a separate account for professional purposes.

- There will be some loss of control in the content associated with your social media outlet. Comments can be left on blog posts and Facebook walls. Before you start, develop an idea of how much you wish to censor these comments. Where are the boundaries and when will you plan to take action? Be open to rethinking those guidelines as issues occur. It will be impossible to prepare for everything that is going come up.

- Always remember that you are representing Longwood University and your own Department/Organization/Office.

- Consider how much of the author's personality should be allowed to show through in any posts and/or communications. If more than one person is posting for the account consider whether you want people to know who it is each time or if you want to keep it non-transparent.

- Be respectful in all your interactions.

- Try to vary the content as much as possible depending on the particular social media outlet. Examples: providing links to other useful content, your own news and events information, commentary on current discussions, commentary on current events as they happen, breaking news, photographs, videos, and much more.

Approved by the Web Committee

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