

# Social Media Guidelines

**The Southwest Mississippi Community College Social Media Guidelines have been developed to assist units at SMCC with their social media presence. The guidelines were created to provide helpful direction to the areas of the college interested in utilizing social media as a tool for marketing, PR, crisis communication and student relations purposes. These recommendations and tips are encouraged by the Office of Digital Public Affairs when managing a social media account affiliated with Southwest and will evolve as social media evolves.**

**If you have questions about material included in the SMCC Social Media Guidelines, please contact The Office of Digital Public Affairs at 601.276.4809.**

## **GENERAL GUIDANCE**

For the purposes of these guidelines, social media is defined as any online medium that provides for user interaction, discussion, and commenting (such as social networks, blogging, micro-blogging).

The Southwest Mississippi Community College Office of Digital Public Affairs is responsible for overseeing the coordination of all social media activity for SMCC and its units.

Each unit participating in social media will designate a single point of contact for its social media efforts and provide that information to the SMCC Office of Digital Public Affairs for coordination purposes. Give that information to the SMCC Office of Digital Public Affairs's Social Media Coordinator, Dr. Andrew Dale or by emailing [adale@smcc.edu](mailto:adale@smcc.edu).

Social media accounts associated with the Southwest Mississippi Community College should not be used to promote products, causes, or political candidates.

All SMCC employees using social media should maintain a clear distinction between personal and professional uses. When your social media activity is observable by end-users, stakeholders, and/or other professional audiences, your behavior should represent you well and reflect positively on the college. When using social media personally, do not incorporate SMCC's name into your username (NOT "Southwestgirl" or "JohnDoeSMCC"), and do not assert that you are speaking on behalf SMCC.

Southwest Mississippi Community College employees using social media for professional purposes should communicate appropriately according to the standards of the environment in which they're operating. Most social media environments are communities of peers, not classrooms with instructors. You should conduct yourself online as you would in public. SMCC's credibility in the social media world, just as in the real world, depends upon your credibility.

## **REGISTERING AND MANAGING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA**

**All social media accounts that wish to be officially associated with SMCC should be registered with the SMCC Office of Digital Public Affairs.**

To register a social media account contact Dr. Andrew Dale in the SMCC Office of Digital Public Affairs. After it is approved, SMCC's social media strategist will collaborate with you to create the new account. All social media accounts should comply with the official branding and visual identity standards of the college. If you are unsure about any aspect of creating a new SMCC-affiliated social media site, contact the SMCC Office of Digital Public Affairs.

### **Best Practices for Using Social Media**

#### **DO:**

- Post to your social media accounts daily or, at the least, weekly.
- Answer people's questions promptly and adequately. It is the responsibility of the account holder to monitor social media accounts for such questions.
- Vary your posts to keep followers interested. Post newsy updates, share links to other web-based resources, include photos or videos, ask questions, or request input or feedback. Post information that ties to issues current in other media, such as news or weather reports.
- If anyone posts something profane or inappropriate to your page, delete it without comment.
- Write content specifically for the forum where you'll be posting it.
- When you share a web link, write a brief description of it in your post, along with the link. This way, you are telling your followers why you've chosen it for them and why you believe it's relevant to them.
- As a user of social media, pay attention to messages that generate good responses and lively discussions on the pages and accounts you like to visit. Use those posts as models for constructing your own.
- Use official Southwest-issued profile photos, etc., for your professional social media accounts. Follow the established guidelines for their use.

- Posts should include information that is as complete and accurate as possible and that is valuable to followers/readers.
- Keep your posts friendly and engaging, just like your face-to-face interactions. This is your opportunity to put a human face on our college in the social media space.
- If a member of the news media contacts you because of something you posted, respond promptly and courteously. Many media professionals are monitoring social media for leads on stories, and this could be a great way for you to build relationships and visibility in the mass media, too.
- Whenever possible, link back to the SMCC website. Ideally, posts should be very brief; redirecting a visitor to content that resides within [www.smcc.edu](http://www.smcc.edu). When linking to a news article about the college, check first to see whether you can link to a release on the SMCC website instead of to an external publication or other media outlet.
- Posts on social media sites should protect the SMCC's institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste.

#### **DON'T:**

- When identifying a minor in a photo, do not use his or her full name in the caption. Instead use the first name, the first initial of the last name, and the name of the county to protect the minor's privacy (example: Billy T., Choctaw County).
- Don't post or tag a photo of a minor unless he or she has a signed photo release form on file that allows SMCC to use his or her photo for promotional purposes.
- Don't re-post or retweet negative/inappropriate comments, even to point out its errors! Doing so just spreads the negativity further, and may even make it seem to have originated with you. If someone repeatedly posts inappropriate content, block that person using the features available in that medium.
- Please do not automatically post your Twitter feed to your Facebook page.
- Do not engage in arguments or vent frustrations when you are using social media professionally. Communicate respectfully and positively with your contacts.
- Don't use overly technical or bureaucratic sounding language.

We are happy to link to other official SMCC social media pages from our Social Media Hub. If you administer an SMCC social media site for a department, division, or group, please feel free to contact the SMCC Office of Digital Public Affairs to let us know about your page.

As designated by the Office of the President, the Office of Digital Public Affairs reserves the right to request content managers to remove hostile, insulting, offensive, disrespectful and other inappropriate posts, comments, and content from social media that is officially associated with Southwest Mississippi Community College.

Questions about Southwest's Social Media Guidelines must be directed to the ODPA at (601) 276-4809 or [adale@smcc.edu](mailto:adale@smcc.edu).