

January 2017

TCC Social Media Standards

Social media is a general term used to reference sites and activity on sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or any other virtual hub where users interact. Other popular social media sites include Instagram, Tumblr, LinkedIn, WordPress and the list grows daily.

Here at Tidewater Community College, students and employees are encouraged to embrace social media sites as venues for streamlining processes and enriching communications and engagement.

While we are excited about these resources, we want to make sure that you – our social media contributors – are aware of your rights and responsibilities.

These standards include legal considerations, along with supplementary tips to aid your success. As outlined in TCC's [Social Media Policy 3301](#), all who contribute to official TCC social media accounts are required to comply with these standards.

Official TCC social media accounts that abide by these standards will be included in the official Social Media Directory.

The Office of Interactive Communications will remove or ask you to remove content that doesn't meet these basic standards. Repeated violations may result in the loss of your social media privileges and your listing in the directory.

Chartered Student Organizations may establish social media accounts. The organization's faculty/staff advisor is responsible for ensuring content produced by the organization's members abides by the [Student Code of Conduct](#) contained in the [Student Handbook](#). Student Life staff members on the respective campuses will monitor the social media of Chartered Student Organizations and take corrective action when warranted.

This is a living document that will be updated from time to time as the social media landscape continues to shift. Please contact the Social Media Coordinator at socialmedia@tcc.edu with any feedback.

So, you want a social media site

Social media is exciting, but strategize first.

- Who is your audience?
- What is your goal?
- Which channels will support your goals?
- How often will you be able to post?
- Who will maintain your social media?

The Social Media Coordinator's job is to help you answer those questions and decide how you should proceed. Contact socialmedia@tcc.edu.

Once you have established a site, register it with the Office of Interactive Communications at socialmedia@tcc.edu. Registering your site will allow your site administrators to become members of the TCC Social Media Users Group and your channel to be included in the TCC [Social Media Directory](#).

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Administrative rights for official TCC social media accounts should be assigned only to college employees, including qualified work-study students.

All sites must have at least 2 administrators, to ensure that there is a backup in case the primary administrator becomes unavailable. If desired, you can request that the Social Media Coordinator be listed as your secondary admin. Please contact socialmedia@tcc.edu for more information or to discuss how to meet this requirement.

Request a post on TCC's official social media

TCC's social media staff posts all college deadlines associated with registration and payment, all holiday information, school closings and news.

Any campus, division, office, organization or club of the college can request their news and events posted to TCC's official social media channels. **For best results, make your request at least ONE WEEK before you want it to appear.**

Send an email to the Social Media Coordinator at socialmedia@tcc.edu, with the information you want posted and the item will be considered for posting.

Include

- the deadline for posting
- sites where you want the message to appear
- campus, division, office or club associated with the message.

How-to and best-practice guides

For those who manage TCC-associated accounts or wish to start one, these trusted online guidebooks contain how-to tips and instructions for launching and maintaining a professional social media channel.

If you'd like to request additional social media training, contact socialmedia@tcc.edu.

- [Twitter Guide](#)
- [Facebook Guide](#)
- [Google+ Cheat Sheet](#)
- [LinkedIn Groups "How-To Video"](#)
- [About YouTube](#)
- [Flickr Tour](#)
- [Instagram for Business](#)
- [Instagram Hashtags](#)
- [Tumblr Quick Guide](#)

- [Pinterest Best Practices](#)

Legal and policy considerations

Follow all applicable state, federal, and university laws, faculty and staff handbooks, regulations, and policies, such as FERPA and HIPAA regulations. Any content and/or online activity created by a poster or site moderator that violates these ordinances, or contains/leads to the release of a student's private personal information is strictly prohibited and will be removed.

FERPA

Student information is protected by [FERPA: "The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\) \(20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99\)](#). The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education."

If you are an employee of TCC or provide work for TCC, do not engage in any conversations or post any information regarding student records, including but not limited to:

- Names
- admission status
- GPA
- Social Security number
- PeopleSoft number

If students request help, direct them to the Information Center or other secure phone or email resource.

HIPAA

Protect confidential medical records, as specified by [HIPAA](#): "The Privacy Rule protects all "individually identifiable health information" held or transmitted by a covered entity or its business associate, in any form or media, whether electronic, paper, or oral." Examples of protected information include:

- An individual's past, present or future physical or mental health or condition
- The provision of health care to an individual
- Past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to the individual.

Do not ask for, nor should an individual send, credit card or payment information, classified information, privileged information, private information or information subject to non-disclosure agreements via any social network internet communication service.

Read [TCC's privacy policy](#).

Copyright

You may not use text or images from another organization's website or social media channel without first obtaining permission. This includes grabbing images from internet searches.

"Copyright, a form of intellectual property law, protects original works of authorship including literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic works, such as poetry, novels, movies, songs, computer software, and architecture. Copyright does not protect facts, ideas, systems, or methods of operation, although it may protect the way these things are expressed." ([read more](#))

"Fair use" allows portions of others' work to be used without consent as long as the source is credited. However, "the safest course is always to get permission from the copyright owner before using copyrighted material." ([read more](#))

Policies

Familiarize yourself with TCC's [Social Media Policy 3301](#).

Employees and students who manage these pages must adhere to regular employee policies and standards of conduct. Please review the following:

- **Staff Handbook** (standards of conduct):
<http://www.tcc.edu/staff/classified/handbook/>
- **Faculty Handbook** (code of ethics):
<http://www.tcc.edu/faculty/documents/FacultyHandbook.pdf>
- **TCC's Student Handbook** (student code of conduct):
<http://www.tcc.edu/student-handbook/>

Obey the terms of use for your social media platform. These rules are constantly changing so it is your duty to stay up-to-date. Here are links to policies for some of the more popular platforms:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Google+](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [Wikipedia](#)
- [Wordpress](#)
- [Snapchat](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [Tumblr](#)
- [Instagram](#)

Want privacy?

Don't put it on social media, even if you are communicating via direct message or Facebook Messenger.

If you are a faculty member using social media as a means of communicating information to your students, use it as a supplementary form of communication and not the primary form of communication.

Comments

We do not block or filter comments. You will, from time to time, receive negative comments or criticisms. Don't take it personally.

Acceptable social media expression is:

- factual and accurate.
- is respectful of all members of the TCC community, including staff, faculty, students.
- free of obscenity, threatening language, and hate speech.
- free of workplace-related discussions and opinion.
- follows copyright law by containing publicly licensed content and content used by permission.

Respond to comments, posts, mentions, and other interactions in a timely manner and with accurate information.

If you need guidance in responding to negative comments, email socialmedia@tcc.edu

Writing for social media

Double-check EVERYTHING, with special attention to accuracy, spelling and grammar. Poor grammar and misspelling will reflect poorly on the college.

Posts should reflect the college's values of diversity and inclusion. Think twice about the value of the content and consider whether or not it may potentially malign a person or group.

Voice

Voice is how we describe ourselves and the words students use to describe us. Ideally, our social media uses language that people understand and relate to, and that reinforces our brand and reputation. We are:

- friendly
- approachable
- helpful

Remember that you are representing TCC and your office or organization. Do not post your personal information or personal updates. Do not engage in personal

communications under the guise of your TCC social account – an example would be a TCC “student center” making dinner plans with a friend.

Visual identity

Utilize available graphics to reinforce the college brand. Your social media icon/profile image for your entity should comply with TCC’s branding standards. It should either be a photograph related to your entity, an approved logo for your entity, or another appropriately branded image. [See the TCC Visual Standards.](#)

When creating graphics, [use official TCC colors](#) and abide by their correct use.

College communications

When TCC communicates as an institution, only the institutional accounts managed by the Office of Interactive Communications are authorized to speak on behalf of the college.

TCC social media contributors are not college spokespersons.

If you are unsure about whether a social media post will be perceived as a college announcement, check first with the Social Media Coordinator at socialmedia@tcc.edu.

Emergencies and critical incidents

Emergency communication is the purview of the Office of Public Affairs & Communications (PAC). The following applies to the use of social media in emergency situations:

- PAC will use the College’s institutional social media channels to deploy emergency messages
- Official TCC social media channels should share/re-post exactly what is posted by the College’s official social media channels
- TCC social media channels should **not** post their own emergency updates or versions that differ from what is posted by these communications.
- TCC social media channels should not interpret, add or delete language used by PAC.
- TCC social media channels should not share, re-post or otherwise repeat information that appears in external sources, including the media.

Best practices

Links

You are encouraged to link to source material whenever you are able. This will help reduce the possibility of misinformation and it will also drive traffic.

If you maintain a forum where people can post to your site (i.e. Facebook wall, blog comments, LinkedIn Group posts, etc.), include a link to our [Social Media Policy](#).

Analytics

It is recommended that you review your site's effectiveness once a month. This will help you understand how you can improve your communications to provide your audience with content THEY want. This in turn will help you grow your audience. Many social media sites come equipped with native analytics, but there are also plenty of free tools out there that can help (i.e. Hootsuite, bit.ly, etc.).

Content

If you do not post items of value, your audience will stop listening. Give them content they can share and/or that will help them succeed. Give them opportunities to flaunt their creativity or to do something fun. Every time you share a new post, ask yourself, "Would I find this valuable?" Also try to keep your language casual but professional. Ask yourself, "Would I speak to a friend like this?"

Engage with your audience through favorites, likes, retweets and comments.

Hashtags

Hashtags are words or phrases prefixed with a hash symbol (#). These phrases are searchable across a variety of social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest. We encourage the use of these TCC hashtags in order to make your content more searchable.

Hashtag	Used for
#tccva	Tidewater Community College
#tccgradXX (ie. #tccgrad16)	Commencement
#tccchesapeake	Chesapeake Campus
#tccnorfolk	Norfolk Campus
#tccportsmouth	Portsmouth Campus
#tccvb	Virginia Beach Campus
#tcccmve	Center for Military and Veterans Education
#tccvac	TCC Visual Arts Center
#goanywhere	TCC Alumni

Snapchat

Campuses and offices wishing to establish Snapchat accounts should first obtain authorization from the Office of Interactive Communications. The Office of Interactive Communications may require training for Snapchat contributors for authorization to be granted.

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All Snapchat accounts must have three administrators to ensure that there is a backup in case the primary administrator becomes unavailable. The Social Media Coordinator should be listed as your third admin.

To ensure quality content and audience growth, be sure to:

- post at least once a week
- limit stories to 5-10 snaps
- capture unique and original content – don't cover the same event twice
- try to tell a story with a beginning, middle and end, and don't let too much time elapse between snaps
- respond to snaps sent to the account through the chat feature in a timely manner
- record story analytics
- use TCC geofilters to showcase our brand

Since Snapchat does not come equipped with native analytics, be sure to record screenshot totals, average views and story completion rate for every story you publish. Story completion rate is the percentage of people who started viewing that story compared to how many of them saw the last part of a story. You can calculate the rate by dividing the last snap of a story by the first snap. Compare this recorded data over a monthly basis to measure audience growth and engagement.

Contact the TCC Social Media Team

Questions? Comments? Email us at socialmedia@tcc.edu.