

The University of Toledo
Counselor Education Program
Social Media Guidelines

Social Media Definition

Social media includes the use of web-based technologies that allow the exchange of user-generated content. Users can interact with content on other users' pages, and they can participate from tablets, computers and mobile devices. Social media is an important method of interaction and collaboration between students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni, and others. Examples include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram, Snapchat, Instant Messaging systems, blogs, and other personal accounts.

The social media guidelines described here will apply to all personnel (faculty, professional staff, support staff, students, and alumni) connected to The University of Toledo's (UT) Counselor Education program. Designated Student Social Media Representative and professor(s) are the only persons with authority to post media on behalf of the program. The term of appointment for the Student Social Media Representative is one academic year, renewable upon agreement of the Program Director for Counselor Education. The professor(s) designated to be in charge of social media will be identified by the Program Director.

Informed Consent

- Social media of former, current, and prospective students may be reviewed by faculty of the program for purposes of admission into programs of study or to monitor student progress.
- Program representatives may connect with students on social media strictly through program sanctioned venues for educational/instructional purposes only and at their own risk. Program representatives will not connect with students on social media for non-professional purposes (e.g. "friending," "following," etc.) to avoid confidentiality, privacy, and boundary issues.

Access

- The designated professor(s) and Student Social Media Representative will evaluate individuals requesting a connection to any programmatic social media. Individuals who are current faculty, students, or alumni of the program, and current undergraduates of the university will be allowed the connection. All others will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine appropriateness (e.g., Chi Sigma Iota [CSI] Chapter Facebook page for CSI members only).
- If content violates UT policies or guidelines, the designated professor(s) and/or Student Social Media Representative will be contacted, will remove the content, and will request

the person who posted not to post similar content in the future. When possible, posts must be pre-approved by Student Social Media Representative or professor(s). If the posting violation is egregious, the person who posted the content may be banned from future participation. The Program Director will be asked to handle extreme cases that violate this policy.

- Postings must follow federal requirements such as FERPA, HIPAA, NCAA regulations, profession-specific ethical codes (e.g. ACA, NASP, and NASPA), as well as university privacy and confidentiality policies.
- Copyright and fair use statutes must be followed. Any questions related to copyrighted material should be directed to staff at the Carlson Library, Main Campus, The University of Toledo. They can be reached at (419) 530-2324.
- University computers and time on the job are reserved for university-related business as approved by office supervisors.

Content Guidelines

- The designated professor(s) and Student Social Media Representative reserves the right to remove any content deemed to be inaccurate, inappropriate, offensive, or otherwise vicious (e.g. cyberbullying). Further, the designated professor(s) and Student Social Media Representatives may respond to such behavior(s) by revoking posting privileges, removing such students from the site, and incorporating such postings into retention decisions.
- It is not allowable or permissible to post confidential or proprietary information about UT faculty, staff, students, employees, alumni, or any information about activities in field placements such as practicum and internships.
- All policies, procedures, and guidelines regarding university trademarks, names, and symbols apply to social media networking sites. Policy # 3364-45-02 states that “the use or reproduction of the university seal, the name, official logotypes and official symbols for any purpose is prohibited without written permission UT faculty or from the Associate Vice President of Marketing and Communications.” Direct questions regarding appropriate use of should be provided by phone to (419) 530-2410.
- If you identify yourself as speaking on behalf of an employee or student representative of UT in a social media communication, personal opinions and viewpoints should not be included. Be mindful that even through a personal profile, you identify yourself as an employee or student representative, others may not acknowledge this distinction.

Social Media Etiquette

- Your personal activities on your social media page are not subject to the ethics code of profession-specific national associations. However, if you use a social media outlet to

establish a professional identity or to attract, connect, or interact with potential or current clients and colleagues, this presence has now become part of your professional activities. Legal and ethical provisions would then apply to these activities, so it is critical to be aware that professional relationships come with legal and ethical responsibilities that do not cease to exist just because you are on a social networking site.

- Use good judgment before you post something. Remember that privacy does not exist in the world of social media; therefore, consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known as well as the reflections on the people or content involved.
- Remember who your audience is. Be aware that a presence in the social media world is, or easily can be, available to the public (e.g. prospective students, current students, colleagues, peers, parents, even clients). Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not alienate, harm, or provoke identified groups.
- Strive for accuracy to avoid posting content that is untrue, skewed, or otherwise incorrect.
- Review content for spelling and grammatical errors.
- Once content is posted on the internet, it continues to exist even if deleted from the account.

Conclusion

While different social media outlets become available each day, one thing remains clear, social media has a distinct presence in our daily lives. Despite its advantages and disadvantages, it is imperative that profession-specific educators understand the vast nature of just how powerful these communication tools have become. With this knowledge also comes the need to mitigate against potential ethical and legal dilemmas by outlining the rules and guidelines for the Counselor Education program.

A policy on social media and designating users on behalf of the department to monitor its implementation are necessary for profession-specific programs to utilize the advantages of social media, yet control for legal and ethical pitfalls. Programs need to be strategic, thoughtful, and elaborate regarding its use so that concerns can be greatly minimized. For each profession to continue its advance, social media must be included in that vision and embraced.

PLEASE NOTE: *This policy was adapted from the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK)'s "Department of Counseling and School Psychology Social Media Guidelines" by Jared Rose, Allison Arnekrans, Robin DuFresne, and Leslie Neyland on 9/16/14*

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