COLLEGE of CHARLESTON

OFFICIAL POLICY

3.2.2	College of Charleston Social Media Policies and Guidelines	08/01/2025

Policy Statement

The College of Charleston encourages the use of social media as an electronic medium for connecting with students, employees, alumni and supporters.

Social media platforms are dynamic methods for communicating and having engaging discussions about current events, issues, achievements, organizations and people. This policy defines the rules and procedures for employees who manage College-affiliated social media accounts as well as for College of Charleston employees and students who identify their professional affiliations with the College on their personal social media accounts.

Policy Manager and Responsible Department or Office

Office of Marketing and Communications – Director of Social Media and Digital Communications
Office of Marketing and Communications – Executive Director of Strategic Communications

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Policy

Policies and Guidelines:

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and students who identify their professional affiliations with the College on their personal social media accounts.

Scope and Jurisdiction:
This Policy shall apply to all students, faculty, and staff of the College. Given the ceaseless nature of social media, this policy applies at all times that an individual is associated with the College. For students, this policy applies upon admission until graduation or cessation of enrollment, including during any breaks and in-between semesters. For faculty and staff, this policy applies upon acceptance of employment until termination of employment, including any breaks and in-between semesters.

Departments/Offices Affected by the Policy

All departments/offices.

Procedures Related to the Policy

I. College of Charleston-Affiliated Social Media Accounts

Procedures for Establishing and Administering Social Media Accounts:

1. Establishing a College-affiliated social media account requires approval from your department or supervisor and the Director of Social Media and Digital Communications. Only College of Charleston employees authorized by their school, department or unit may serve as a content "owner" or "administrator" for College-affiliated social media accounts. The Director of Social Media and Digital Communications reserves the right to revoke a unit account, if managed inappropriately.
2. The Director of Social Media and Digital Communications will maintain a list of social media accounts (and administrators).
    a. Account examples include, but are not limited to, department or unit accounts, associations or student ambassadors representing the College brand.
    b. All athletics-related accounts, including individual teams, are supervised by the Director of Athletics Communications and Creative Content.
3. Ensure that at least two employees within that campus unit always have administrative access to a social account, as this ensures security. Changes in the administration of College social media accounts must be communicated to the campus unit (i.e. school, academic department or office's administration) and the Director of Social Media and Digital Communications. If an employee or student leaves the College, they must immediately be removed as an administrator of the account.
4. College of Charleston social media accounts must comply with the College's Brand Manual.
5. Designated social media administrators must attend meetings of the Campus Social Media Committee on a regular basis to stay up to date on policy, campus happenings and social media platform updates.

Posting on Behalf of the College of Charleston:

Sharing College of Charleston news, events or promoting faculty, staff and student activities through social media is an effective way to engage with College audiences. In addition to the general guidelines discussed above, employees creating or posting on social media accounts on behalf of the College of Charleston should adhere to the following guidelines:

Be Accurate

- Make sure you have all the facts before you post. All research, data reporting and analysis made public on the internet should be verified for accuracy. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible.

Understand Your Posts are Public

- If you have any questions about the appropriateness of the material you are considering posting to a university social media account, please check with your supervisor or communications representative or the Director of Social Media and Digital Communications. The College is a public state agency, and employee communications may be subject to the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

Do Not Post About Confidential Matters

- Do not post proprietary information about the College of Charleston, including sensitive or personal information about students, alumni or employees. Remember that most records related to students are protected from disclosure under the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Disclosing any personally identifiable student education records through social media is a violation of FERPA. Information collected in connection with research may be protected under a Nondisclosure Agreement, research protocol or other applicable law or agreement. Any protected information must not be disclosed through social media. Do not share university-related information that is not a matter of public record. Do not post or comment about legal matters or when the topic being discussed may be considered an emergency or crisis.

Be Transparent

- You are posting as a representative of the College of Charleston and your department or unit. College-associated posts could be perceived as official positions of the College, so post responsibly and respectfully toward others in your community.
- All press releases, statements on behalf of the College and media notifications – with the exception of sports information, which is supervised by the Athletics Director – must be released through MarComm.
- The Office of Marketing and Communications must be contacted before any information is released to the media concerning internal or external matters that affect the College.
- College-affiliated social media accounts must "pin" the following disclaimer: "The views expressed here reflect the [dept. name/school/etc.] and do not necessarily reflect those of the College of Charleston." (OR) "This account is officially recognized by the College of Charleston; however, the views and opinions expressed on this page are not necessarily those of the College."

Responding to Negative or Hateful Comments

- The College of Charleston is committed to fostering an educational environment that allows for freedom of speech and expression in accordance with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. When you find yourself disagreeing with others, be respectful of others' opinions and keep your comments appropriate and polite. Having thoughtful discussions on important topics is a great way to build your community and is a very important aspect of having a successful social media account.
- DO NOT remove posts that are merely critical, angry or represent a different opinion. Respond to negative comments professionally and provide any additional information that may help resolve the issue or correct misinformation.
- The College of Charleston and affiliated accounts reserve the right to remove posts or comments that:
  - include violent, obscene, profane, hateful or racist comments;
  - use obscene language;
  - are out of context (i.e. not related to the purpose of the page at issue);

• incite violence or create harm by their utterance;
• threaten or defame any person, group of persons, or organization;
• disclose personally identifiable information, such as addresses or phone numbers;
• include copyrighted material;
• are commercial in nature;
• incite illegal activity; and
• solicit, advertise or endorse a third-party business or service.

- When a post is suspected of violating one or more of these guidelines, the account administrator must immediately notify the Director of Social Media and Digital Communications to seek further guidance.
- If you have concerns about specific comments or posts, please contact the Director of Social Media and Digital Communications.

Raising Money via Social Platforms

- Charitable contributions to or on behalf of the College of Charleston Foundation or any other 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to support the College, cannot be solicited, nor can they be accepted, unless approved in advance by the Foundation.

Get Approval to use Copyrighted Material and Trademarks

- Be sure you have permission to use third-party images and other materials that you, your department or the College does not directly own.

Don't Be Afraid to Ask for Help

- If you receive a question you cannot answer, kindly respond that you are researching the answer to the question/comment and will respond when you have the correct information. It is better to say that you don't know rather than ignore the inquiry or provide information that may be inaccurate.
- Do not hesitate to ask for help or report questionable social media posts to the Director of Social Media and Digital Communications.

II. Personal Employee and Student Social Media Accounts

College of Charleston employees and students who choose to make their College affiliation visible on their personal social media accounts are encouraged to exercise their First Amendment rights and to engage in professional social media conversations that are in accordance with College of Charleston Codes of Conduct (See Employee Code of Conduct and Student Code of Conduct). The following guidelines should be reviewed and kept in mind by employees and students when using personal social media accounts.

Be Transparent

- Representation of your personal opinions as being endorsed by the College or any of its organizations is strictly prohibited. You may not use the College's name or likeness to promote any opinion, product, cause, or political candidate.
- Represent yourself accurately and be transparent about your role at the College. Do not speak on behalf of the College. Indicate that your posts represent your personal views and not the opinions or positions of the College of Charleston. Make it clear that you are expressing your personal opinions by adding "views expressed are my own" to your profile and/or post. The College also reserves the right to publicly state that an employee's or student's personal posts are not a reflection of the university's official position. As members of the College of Charleston community, be thoughtful about how you present yourself on online networks. By identifying yourself as a member of the College family, your words may reflect on other College of Charleston students, faculty, staff, administrators, donors, etc. There is no such thing as anonymous posts or comments. Remember, even if you choose not to list your relationship with the College, it is likely that others can still identify your place of employment or enrollment through public information or other lawful means. Be mindful of what is considered appropriate behavior. Anything considered inappropriate offline is likely inappropriate online, too.

Be Responsible

- You are responsible for what you post on your own social media platforms and on College of Charleston channels. Do not disclose financial or confidential student, faculty, staff, athletic, research or institutional information. Do not share university-related information that is not a matter of public record. Act responsibly in your posts and other communications. Contact the College's Director of Social Media and Digital Communications for guidance of if you have questions.

Related Policies, Documents or Forms

Employee Coode of Conduct
Student Code of Conduct

This document does not affect other College policies that might apply to the use of social media, including, but not limited to the following policies:

- Acceptable Use of Information Technology
- Copyrighted Photography
- Privacy
- Website Content Policy and Guidelines
- FERPA/Privacy Policies

- Employee Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct
- Media Relations: Press Releases, Public Statements, Communicating with the Media, Opinion Essays and Letters to the Editor

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Issue Date: August 1, 2025 **Date of Policy Revision:** July 29, 2025	**Next Review Date:** August 1, 2030

POLICY APPROVAL
(For use by the Office of the Board of Trustees or the Office of the President)

Policy Number: 3.2.2

President Date: August 1, 2025