



ALVIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SOCIAL MEDIA STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Social media is changing the way we communicate, offering a new model to engage with students, alumni and the world at large. These guidelines will be adjusted as issues and new practices arise in conjunction with the overall communication goals of the college.

The Social Media Standards and Guidelines is published by the Marketing Department at Alvin Community College. For more information related to topics in the guide, contact the Marketing Department.

INTRODUCTION

The following standards and guidelines have been developed to support staff and faculty to participate in many forms of marketing communications, represent ACC well, and serve our many students, constituents and community in increasingly timely and helpful ways. In this document you'll be provided with examples of naming practices, key definitions used in a social media environment, and best practices once your account is live. Social networking sites, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat have become an integral part of everyday life for millions of people around the world. Social media is becoming an increasingly important aspect of how we interact with our audiences. Properly used, social networking sites can be valuable parts of our efforts in reaching out to prospective students, while maintaining a connection with current students.

These standards and guidelines address use of all forms of social media sites maintained by ACC and its departments as well as participation in social media by ACC employees. It is important to understand that interactions through social media can be of great benefit but also can create issues for the College. Due to the risks involved, including loss of control over brand and content, misuse of electronic communications, and internet security threats, it is imperative that official use of social media sites by College employees adhere to appropriate standards and guidelines.

OBJECTIVES

Social media is a term used to describe a variety of Web-based platforms, applications and technologies that enable people to socially interact with one another online. Some examples of social media sites include Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, blogs and other sites with content generated by both the owner and the audience. Social media also allows for easy sharing and re-purposing of existing content, thereby expanding the reach of your work and enabling others to share it with their friends and networks.

Social media key definitions.

- Hashtags – a word or phrase preceded by a hash (#) and used to identify messages on a specific topic; can be used as a search feature
- Likes - Instead of writing a comment for a message or a status update, users can click the "Like" button as a quick way to show approval and share the message. Facebook recently added a "Love," "Haha," "Wow," "Sad," and "Angry" button.
- Favorite – Sparks interest of other online users to start a conversation or comment on the tweet; Twitter's version of liking a tweet/post.
- Retweets - when someone on Twitter sees your message/status and decides to re-share it with their followers.
- Mentions – A reply to another user with the preceding @ symbol attached to the beginning of the username.
- DM - short for direct message, and it is used to send a private tweet to a person you are following.
- Story – a short video or photo that last 24 hours before expiring (Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook)
- GIF - A form of computer image that moves as an animation, because it consists of frames, like a movie with no sound.
- Memes - Used to describe a thought, idea, joke, or concept to be shared online. It is typically an image with text above and below it.
- Tagging – Publically connecting with a person(s) via an account and sharing that with your followers.
- Blog - a personal website or web page on which an individual/organization records opinions and links to other sites on a regular basis.
- Groups - a community of people and friends to promote, share and discuss relevant topics, specifically on Facebook

ACC will use social media sites to encourage and to create dialogue between the College and its target audiences, thus building relationships and supporters.

For the College

- Build an online community of supporters for ACC
- Create relationships with existing and potential students as well as faculty, staff and the community
- Increase enrollment and maintain retention of current students
- Increase brand engagement and visibility within the community

For academic Departments

- To find opportunities (internships, job leads) for current students
- To assist with assessment
- To maintain connection to alumni and help foster connections among alumni

For student Groups (Example: SGA, Culinary Arts Club, Running Club)

- To communicate with members (events, communications, pictures)
- To recruit members
- To offer value – make a difference in another person's life

Parameters That Will Be Used To Measure Success

- Participation – the extent to which users engage with ACC's content
- Influence – the size of the user base subscribed to your content
- Web traffic – the amount of unique visitors, page views to ACC's web site

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

By participating on social media profiles and websites officially administered by ACC, it is understood that user-generated content on college social media profiles or websites does not reflect the opinion or interests of ACC or its offices and must not be inappropriate in nature (see below). All participation and user-generated content appearing on ACC social media profiles is subject to this agreement.

We ask all participants on ACC social media profiles and websites to act appropriately and respectfully with the other participants in our online community. We ask that all participants on ACC's social media profiles refrain from derogatory content which includes but not limited to: Content which is illegal, blatantly profane, violent, sexual, pornographic, discriminatory, or otherwise defamatory. All content deemed inappropriate will be removed at the discretion of ACC Marketing and Media administrators.

All content posted on pages and websites administered by ACC is subject to applicable copyright laws. Users may only post content of which they are the owner(s) or have written or licensed permission from the copyright owner to share the content (i.e. under an attribution Creative Commons license).

ACC accepts no responsibility or liability for any data, text, software, images, videos, messages, audio, or other content, which is generated by and posted publicly by users other than ACC in its official capacity. ACC accepts no liability or responsibility whatsoever for the content of any target third-party site linked from this page.

Who can create an ACC social media account or page?

Employees of the College are not permitted to create individual department accounts or pages without approval and assistance from the Marketing and Media Department. Our department reserves the right to enforce the deletion of any unapproved social media pages, accounts, or sites.

Creation & Maintenance of ACC-Affiliated Social Media Accounts

The Digital Marketing Specialist in the Marketing and Media Department maintains ACC's official institutional accounts and pages. To maximize the effectiveness of these pages, the College will limit the number of supplemental ACC-affiliated accounts and pages on all social media platforms based on user need and value. The preferred method for College departments wishing to promote their information and services is to do so through the main ACC accounts.

Consider before you commit.

- Do you have time to post fresh content to your site daily or at least a couple of times a week?
- Can my (and my audience's) needs be met through the main ACC pages?
- What does my audience need?
- Do you have a big enough audience to engage with?
- Do you have a few minutes every day to check your site for comments and make thoughtful comments on those of others?
- Who are we talking with on our profile?
- What do our fans want to hear or see?
- To what should we reply and how often should we reply?
- How often should we post content?
- Who will the administrator be?

If any of these sound difficult or you're unsure of the answer, reconsider committing to social media at this time. When it comes to the Internet, **old content = no content**.

Profile Names

It is important to appropriately name social media profiles, both to encourage search engine optimization and to avoid confusion with other ACC entities.

Be sure to identify ACC as well as the individual department or program when creating a profile name. Do not use the same or closely similar titles to other Alvin departments and programs. Because profile names cannot be changed in some instances, it is required that page administrators request the approval of the Marketing and Media Department before assigning a profile name. Please email profile name to marketing@alvincollege.edu.

Examples:

Facebook: *Alvin Community College – Student Activities*
 Alvin Community College – Running Club

Twitter/Instagram: *@ACCStudentActivites*
 @ACCRunningClub

The above naming model is a safe way to ensure search engine optimization and compatibility with other departments and programs.

Profile Photo

You'll need a profile photo created for your social media site. Please email marketing@alvincollege.edu to request the profile photo to be sent to you. Do not adjust, stretch or tamper with the photo. Club pages are able to use other images as profile photos.

Privacy

Audiences expect and require confidential and private matters to remain that way. On platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter, the College requires that *ACC accounts refrain from following or friending students*. This ensures that our student's content remain private.

Never reveal personal information about people such as current locations, home addresses, phone numbers, or other information about a student, faculty member, employee, or other community member in any fashion. Never reveal confidential, proprietary, or otherwise private information about any person, organization, or ACC and its students, employees, or alumni.

Be mindful of existing federal laws such as HIPPA and FERPA which prohibit disclosure of certain personal information. In addition, remember to practice good ethical judgment.

If permission is given through an official ACC photo release, departments and programs may tag photos, videos, and other items to individual users or groups. Tagging can potentially engage and invite others to participate with ACC social media pages.

Administration

At least two administrators should be appointed to each social media profile or website. One must be an ACC staff member or faculty. In addition, the Digital Marketing Specialist **MUST** be assigned as an Administrator. Students that are added to a Page should be added as *Editors only*. They should understand these standards and proper action on the web. It is the staff/faculty administrator's responsibility to remove any former employee's access to pages for security purposes upon departure.

Stay active and Connected

All pages associated with the College are required to post **at least once a week**. One benefit of utilizing social media is the ability to share information almost instantly with a global audience. Respond quickly to messages, new developments, announcements, or emergencies with relevant information. Offering your audience a small amount of accurate information quickly will be more appreciated and valuable than a full report after the event. Make regular comments on interesting posts to your site and on other sites. If you see another ACC account post that's important to students and the community, immediately share/repost/retweet.

Solicitation Policy

Solicitation is the sale or offer of any property or service, whether for immediate or future delivery, and the receipt of or request for any gift or contribution. The College has the right to remove such posts from ACC-affiliated accounts and pages.

Have a Policy in Place

Not all comments your site receives will be positive. Respond to negative comments professionally and by providing additional information that may help resolve the issue.

As a proactive measure, post a disclaimer on your site stating you reserve the right to remove inappropriate comments. Then, be diligent about removing comments containing vulgar language, those that attack any group or individual and those that are obviously spam.

Disclaimer Example

"The purpose of this Facebook page is to further ACC's vision and mission, support student learning and staff professional development, and enhance communication with students, staff, and community members. Users are expected to use the site only for those purposes. ACC maintains that by creating this official Facebook page, and allowing for public comment, this page is not intended to create a limited public forum or otherwise guarantee an individual's right to free speech. Any views and comments expressed by users on this site are those of the users and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ACC. Any user's reference to a specific commercial product or service does not imply endorsement or recommendation of that product or service by ACC. All users are personally responsible for the content of their posts and ACC is not responsible for the content of external online platforms. Users are expected to communicate in a respectful, courteous, and professional manner. This site is regularly monitored and any inappropriate posts will be promptly removed. Improper posts, including those that are obscene, libelous, or so incites people as to create a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts, violation of ACC rules, or substantial disruption of the ACC's orderly operation. This may also pertain to posts that are not related to the stated purpose of the site, including, but not limited to, comments of a commercial nature, political activity, and comments that constitute discrimination or harassment."

However, deleting comments that might be critical of ACC is not generally advisable. It is much better to respond or allow another member of the community to respond and sometimes to ignore than to delete. For communities to develop trust, it is important that users feel that you are willing to listen to concerns and able to allow for difference of opinions. Remember, social media is for conversation and discussion. Facebook page administrators should feel prepared and confident to steward conversations on a variety of topics and should get input from a trusted advisor when unsure how to effectively respond to any topic.

Enforcement

Complaints or allegations of a violation of these standards will be processed through ACC's articulated grievance procedures, Student Conduct Code or resolution of controversy. Upon determination of a violation of these standards, ACC may unilaterally delete any violating content, and terminate the user's access. It is the user's responsibility to demonstrate and/or establish the relevance of content in the event that a content complaint is made official. Users retain the right to appeal actions through ACC's grievance process or resolution of controversy.

BEST PRACTICES

The keys to success in social media are being honest about who you are, being thoughtful before you post, and respecting the purpose of the community where you are posting.

- **Be Responsive**
Users engage with business accounts via social media to get a quick response. Responding to inquiries quickly is one of the most important parts of maintaining a page or profile.
- **Be Accurate**
Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It's better to verify information with a source first than to have to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible; after all, that's how you build community. If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly. This will earn you respect in the online community.
- **Be Respectful**
You are more likely to achieve your goals or sway others to your beliefs if you are constructive and respectful while discussing a bad experience or disagreeing with a concept or person.
- **Be Engaging**
Participation is the key in the development of a community using social media. Ask questions, encourage interaction, allow fans to contribute to your fan page. Be sure to select topics that will spark some feedback and discussion. Be creative and have fun.
- **Be Consistent**
Update frequently. Avoid using "I" in posts. Instead, use "ACC," "The college" or "we."
- **Consider Your Audience**
Social media often span traditional boundaries between professional and personal relationships. Use privacy settings to restrict personal information on otherwise public sites. Choose profile photos and avatars carefully. Be thoughtful about the type of photos you upload.
- **Think**
There's no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it's wise to delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed.

- **Maintain Confidentiality**

Do not post confidential or proprietary information about ACC, its students, its alumni or your fellow employees. Use good ethical judgment and follow ACC policies and federal requirements, such as FERPA, HIPPA and the Health Insurance Security/Privacy.

- **Be Aware**

You are legally liable for what you post on your own site and on the sites of others. Individual bloggers have been held liable for commentary deemed to be proprietary, copyrighted, defamatory, libelous or obscene (as defined by the courts). Employers are increasingly conducting Web searches on job candidates before extending offers. Be sure that what you post today will not come back to haunt you.

- **Deleting Comments**

Don't delete a comment just because you disagree with the commenter's point of view. Comments are an important part of the conversation and a foundational aspect of social media. People will disagree with you from time to time. However, you can (and should) monitor social media for which you are responsible, and you may delete any comments that are abusive, obscene, obviously spam or have links to irrelevant or inappropriate blogs or websites.

- **Photo/Video Posts**

Increasingly, photos and video are being posted online to our accounts by individuals. In considering whether to use those materials, do your best to verify their accuracy and when in doubt, do not publish them.

CRISES MANAGEMENT

How do you avoid a crisis?

It is not always possible to avoid a crisis, but here are some helpful hints that can at least enable you to catch it early on.

Monitor

It is important to monitor your social media pages on a daily basis. This will insure that you are alerted of any issues.

In the event of a crisis concerning a post of a comment, video or picture that contains derogatory content on a social media page that represents ACC, we have developed the following guidelines for approaching the situation. If you are unclear as to what kind of action to take, please contact the Digital Marketing Specialist.

Removing a Facebook Comment or Post

In most cases, it is best to leave comments and posts visible to users, even if we don't necessarily agree with them. However, there are some instances where posts or comments may be deleted or hidden. If the post or comment is offensive or uses derogatory language, an admin should take a screenshot and then delete the post.

Banning Users

In the situation that a user is commenting on multiple posts within a short amount of time, admins may consider banning a user. For instance, if they're commenting about a topic that does not relate to the post, admins may delete that comment immediately. After three or more comments not related to a post, admins may ban users from the page. By doing so, that user will no longer be able to comment or like posts. In addition, their comments will be hidden from other users.

Provide the link: <http://www.facebook.com/terms.php>

Steps to consider before removing a post:

- Determine that a violation of Facebook privacy has occurred
- Take a screenshot of the post
- Print the post and physically mark up the actions taken
- Delete the post
- Send any history of actions taken to marketing@alvincollege.edu

ACC PLATFORMS

ACC is excited to participate on social media and other online channels with students, staff, friends, and community members. Our mission is to be of value to our students, alumni, staff and faculty.

OFFICIAL PLATFORMS

- **Facebook** - Alvin Community College
- **Twitter** - @accnews
- **YouTube** - ACCNewsClips
- **LinkedIn** - Alvin Community College
- **Instagram** - @alvincollege
- **Snapchat** - AlvinCollege

OTHER ACC PLATFORMS

Facebook:

- Alvin Community College – Alvin Community Band
- Alvin Community College – Anthropology, Psychology, Sociology
- Alvin Community College – Athletics
- Alvin Community College – Career Services
- Alvin Community College – Continuing Education Workforce Development
- Alvin Community College – Court Reporting
- Alvin Community College – Criminal Justice
- Alvin Community College – Culinary Arts
- Alvin Community College – Culinary Arts Club
- Alvin Community College – Dental Assistant Program
- Alvin Community College – Diagnostic Cardiovascular Sonography
- Alvin Community College – Dual Credit
- Alvin Community College – English
- Alvin Community College – Foundation
- Alvin Community College – Gay Straight Alliance
- Alvin Community College – Government
- Alvin Community College – HART
- Alvin Community College – History
- Alvin Community College – Honors Student Organization
- Alvin Community College – Industrial Programs
- Alvin Community College – Music
- Alvin Community College – Office Administration
- Alvin Community College – Pharmacy Technician Certification
- Alvin Community College – Respiratory Care Program
- Alvin Community College – STRIVE
- Alvin Community College – Student Activities
- Alvin Community College – Study Abroad

- Alvin Community College – Theatre
- Alvin Community College – The College Store
- Alvin Community College – Visual Arts
- Alvin Community College – Veteran’s Club
- Alvin Live

Twitter:

- @ACCAdvising
- @ACC_Chef
- @AlvinCollegeSGA
- @ACCDualCredit
- @ACC_Softball
- @ACCTheatre

Instagram:

- @alvincollege
- @alvinculinaryarts
- @acc_cewd
- @accmusicdepartment

Snapchat:

- @collegestoreinz