

Social Media

University Operations – Information Services

EWU Policy 203-04

Authority: EWU Board of Trustees

Effective: May 19, 2011

Proponent: Marketing & Communications

Purpose: This policy prescribes university standards for creating and maintaining social media venues related to the administrative, operational, or instructional activities of Eastern Washington University. It includes standards and guidelines for communicating or otherwise participating within social media venues.

History: This policy is new. It was adopted by the EWU Board of Trustees (BOT) on May 19, 2011.

Applicability: This policy pertains to all faculty, staff, students and other members of the university community.

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CHAPTER 1 – GENERAL

1-1. General

Eastern Washington University encourages the responsible use of social media to support its objectives, goals, operations, instruction and sanctioned business endeavors to include professional networking, distribution of University news, and other information sharing.

Eastern uses social media to support engaged and transformative learning and to foster positive and enriching interaction with the University community and the general public within the scope of the University's mission.

The policy provides rules and guidelines designed to encourage the use of social media as a business tool while ensuring that any interactions on behalf of EWU are conducted consistent with applicable laws and represent the best interests of the University and its members.

1-2. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

Social Media refers to providers or services that use the Internet for blogging, microblogging, photo sharing, video sharing, podcasts, wikis, discussion boards, mashups, virtual worlds, and networking.

Social Media Network Site is defined as an external website or service based on an architecture of participation where users contribute to the sites content. Examples include, but are not limited to: Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube.

Department/Unit refers to colleges, schools, departments, units, and other academic or administrative entities of Eastern Washington University. It includes faculty, staff and employees of the University when acting in an official capacity. It also includes Student Clubs and Organizations that are registered with the EWU Student Organizations Office.

Affiliated Site is defined as a non-instructional social media venue that is developed and maintained to support the administrative, operational, or marketing needs of a university department/unit. Affiliated sites are intended to present a web presence for the university that is open to the general public.

Instructional Site means any social media site or venue that is developed and used, at the direction of a faculty member, for teaching and learning activities related to an academic course or program. This includes library programs designed to support instruction.

1-3. Office of Marketing and Communications

a. The Office of Marketing and Communications (MARCOM) has overall responsibility for the University web presence. MARCOM will:

- (1) assist departments/units with social media needs/issues as requested;
- (2) provide training, as needed, related to social media and this policy;
- (3) maintain a register of Affiliated Sites; and
- (4) advise university leaders on matters related to social media.

1-4. Violations

Violation of this policy by University employees, students, or student clubs may result in disciplinary action, up to, and including, termination, dismissal or charter revocation. Employees are subject to disciplinary action under related collective bargaining agreements and/or university policies. Students who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action under the Student Conduct Code.

CHAPTER 2 – SOCIAL MEDIA SITES / VENUES

2-1. General

EWU reserves the right to monitor all content posted to its social media sites and may remove any content including, but not limited to, content that it deems discriminatory; harassing; threatening; obscene; defamatory, slanderous, false, or misleading; a violation of copyright or privacy laws, a violation of Washington State Ethics or privacy laws, or otherwise injurious or illegal.

2-2. University Sites

Eastern Washington University maintains an official presence on a variety of social media and content sharing sites that can be used by the campus community to disseminate information to various audiences including prospective students, donors, alumni, and visitors.

Departments/Units and other persons or groups who wish to contribute content to these University social media sites may contact MARCOM for assistance. MARCOM services as the primary point of contact for all University Sites.

2-3. Affiliated Sites

Departments/Units may develop an Affiliated Site when University sites are insufficient or inappropriate to support their needs.

Departments/Units shall manage social media sites under their control to maintain a positive and professional appearance which promotes the interests of the University. This includes monitoring and removing or modifying content that violates this policy or that is otherwise inappropriate.

Affiliated sites should be easily identifiable and clearly represent the organization/activity to which they relate. Affiliated sites should also include links to related pages on the University website.

Affiliated Sites shall be coordinated through MARCOM. The MARCOM web team will provide assistance, as needed, in order to satisfy identification and brand recognition standards.

Affiliated Sites will have at least one designated account administrator who has primary responsibility for maintaining the site.

2-4. Instructional Sites

Faculty members often use social media to support teaching and learning activities. Faculty may freely develop and use these instructional sites to support their academic courses and programs. Instructional sites are not subject to registration or identity standard requirements. Maintenance and content management of instructional sites is at the discretion of the faculty.

2-5. Unaffiliated Student Sites

Unregistered student organizations are welcome to create social media accounts; however, they will not be officially recognized by EWU.

CHAPTER 3 – PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

No one shall use University or affiliated social media accounts to transmit information or knowingly connect to sites for an unlawful or prohibited purpose. Such purposes may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Disclosure of privileged, proprietary, or confidential information about the University, its staff or its students that is protected by privacy laws or other legal provisions (see EWU Policy 203-01, Information Security);
- Disclosure of official information without proper authorization (MARCOM and other designated offices are responsible for posting and publishing online official information on behalf of the University);
- Disclosure or other use of intellectual property without proper authorization (also see UGS Policy 435-040, Patents, Copyrights, & Royalties);
- Transmission or posting of any content that is threatening or obscene;
- Violation/infringement of copyright laws;
- Violation of federal or state discrimination laws or of related university policies;
- Sexual harassment;
- Defamatory, slanderous, false, misleading or illegal statements; and
- Any other activity that violates the State Ethics law, RCW 42.52, or the university Appropriate Use Policy, UGS 590-060-140.

CHAPTER 4 – REPRESENTATION

4-1. Individual Representation

Individuals who post content to or otherwise interact with any social media site are responsible for their postings. If employee postings are outside the scope of their employment, e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, infringement of copyright, etc. they may be held personally responsible.

4-2. University Representation

What you post online shall not be attributed to the University and shall not appear to be endorsed by or originating from the University, unless you are authorized to officially act in this capacity on behalf of the University.

Do not use the EWU name to promote any opinion, product, cause, or political candidate.

The use of a University e-mail address may indicate to others that the individual is acting on behalf of the University. Individuals should be clear when that is not the case.

APPENDIX A – SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

- **Respect individual privacy.** Do not disclose private information about University employees, faculty, students, alumni or other members of the university community. Social networks are in the public realm and are not appropriate venues for the discussion or dissemination of private matters.
- **Use good judgment.** Be thoughtful, accurate, relevant and respectful. It is important to remember that we are subject to the same laws, professional expectations, and guidelines when interacting online as we would in-person with students, parents, alumni, donors, and the media. Generally try to avoid airing grievances. Social networks are often not the best forums for raising grievances that might be better addressed in other venues or handled privately.
- **Be accurate and transparent.** Have the facts before you post. If you post inaccurate information then correct it quickly.
- **Consider the intended audience when posting.** University social media sites are frequented by prospective students, alumni, friends, and other interested parties.
- **Be courteous.** Never resort to personal attacks, harassment, cultural insensitivity, or discrimination in expressing your opinions in a social media setting. The University encourages thoughtful social media interaction and does not seek to censor contributions to these sites. However, profanity, racist, sexist, or derogatory remarks, content that incites hate or encourages unethical or illegal activities, comments on litigation involving the University, spam and off-topic remarks may be removed and the user could be banned from further participation on the site. EWU may also remove any content that it deems a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, or is otherwise injurious or illegal.
- **Use appropriate citations.** When using or posting online material that includes direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos, or videos, always include citations. Provide a link to the original material if applicable.
- **Remember that your interactions are not private.** The Internet is an unsecured, publicly accessible network. Users should have no expectation of privacy in the use of Social Media Network sites and other Internet resources. Users should take into consideration the lack of anonymity and should exercise sound judgment, including considering whether usage may impact work performance, University operations, or morale. Information maintained on the site may be deemed a public record and subject to disclosure as provided by the Washington State Public Records Act. Additionally, University community members should recognize that the University's Record Retention and Destruction Policy may also apply to this information.
- **Social Media Platform.** Know the terms of service of your social media platform. Be sure to understand and follow the terms of service of any platform used.