Title/Subject:  **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

Applies to:  ☒ faculty    ☒ staff    ☐ students    ☒ student employees    ☐ visitors    ☐ contractors

Effective Date of This Revision:  December 7, 2020

Contact for More Information:    University Communications

☐ Board Policy    ☒ Administrative Policy    ☐ Procedure    ☐ Guideline

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**BACKGROUND:**

Social media enables Central Michigan University (CMU) to share important information with students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, donors, fans, corporate partners and community stakeholders. Social media is extremely effective when used strategically, as each platform allows CMU to engage, educate and entertain audiences in different ways.

Due to its wide use and many formats, social media is often how people first connect with CMU. Thus, it is imperative that all registered CMU social media channels representing CMU uphold the university's brand standards, support university goals and maintain brand trust through uniform social media standards.

**PURPOSE:**

Establish universitywide standards for the use, creation, operation and management of official social media accounts that represent Central Michigan University.

CMU college, department and service unit accounts representing the CMU brand must comply with this policy. This applies to accounts created before and after the adoption of this policy. Completion of the previous protocol does not exempt current accounts from policy compliance.

Regardless of who created the account, accounts operating under the CMU brand and representing CMU are university property. This excludes accounts not administered by a university employee, including those of registered student organizations or online communities.

**DEFINITIONS:**

- Content: Any information that is communicated on a social media channel.
- Emergency situation: Any situation that poses a significant threat to operations or has negative consequences.
- KPI: Key Performance Indicators, a standard term for metrics and analytics derived from social media.
- Social media newsletter: Regular newsletter shared by University Communications and sent to all registered social media account managers, ensuring communication on a regular basis.
- Official accounts: Social media accounts that are sponsored, endorsed or created on authority of the university or any of its colleges, departments or service units. They are allowed represent the university when in compliance with the official social media policy.

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- Personal accounts: Social media accounts that represent your individual opinions, thoughts or concerns.
- Service unit: Area designed to specifically support the students, faculty and staff at Central Michigan University.
- Social media directory: Public listing of all official social media accounts that meet the requirements of the social media policy and are authorized to represent CMU.
- Social media manager: Designated employee or staff member responsible for monitoring official CMU social media platforms; creating content; maintaining compliance with laws, regulations and policies; and overseeing others who help with day-to-day social media management.
- Social media moderators: Designated student interns, graduate assistants or other employees or staff who assist social media managers in day-to-day social media management. On accounts representing CMU, interns and graduate assistants may be designated only as social media moderators.
- Social media platform: Any website or application that enables users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. This includes, but is not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, Snapchat, WhatsApp, LinkedIn and TikTok.
- Social media strategy worksheet: A document that provides social media managers and moderators with clear goals and benchmarks to guide their social media strategy.
- Strategy: A formal approach to using and managing social media and collecting metrics to make informed choices on how to spend university time and resources.
- University Communications: The office responsible for promoting CMU through strategic communications and marketing, both in print and online.
- Universitywide official best practices and procedures: Supplemental materials designed to help further support social media efforts at CMU.
- Unofficial accounts: Social media accounts that are run by organizations with university ties but do not represent the university. This includes accounts of registered student organizations or online communities not administered by a university employee.

**POLICY:**

**Use**

PART I: Expectations and responsibilities for official accounts

This policy establishes two roles — social media manager and social media moderator — for the maintenance and operation of all CMU official social media accounts. These roles are further expanded upon in *Management, Part I,* of this policy. To be registered as an official account, CMU service units, departments and colleges must have individuals designated to these roles.

Social media managers and moderators who operate official accounts must adhere to standard practice and procedures. Managers and moderators act as representatives for the university and their respective units, departments and offices, and are expected to maintain the following expectations on official accounts:

- Official accounts will have proper spelling and grammar.
- Content will follow recommended guidelines for brand voice and tone.
- Social media managers and/or moderators will respond to all relevant/nonspam direct messages on all platforms within a 24-hour period during workdays.
- Social media managers and/or moderators must post to Facebook and Instagram a minimum of three times a week and on Twitter every other day to maintain minimum activity standards. Minimum activity for additional accounts is defined in CMU social media best practices and procedures.
- Social media managers and/or moderators will annually collect and review KPIs to assess platform performance and return on university time invested in managing said account.
- Official accounts will adhere to each social media platform's terms of service, community standards and other basic rules provided by the social media platform.
- Official accounts are expected to maintain all CMU Brand Identity Standards and other instructions, as defined in CMU social media best practices and procedures that are created to support this policy.

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**These are the general expectations of an official account.** If a service unit, department or college is unable to follow these expectations, University Communications will meet with the appropriate person(s) to review account status, determine support necessary and develop an action plan.

If expectations are still not being met after this process, University Communications may submit a *Request for Account Deletion* to the vice president of University Communications/chief marketing officer. The vice president will review the request and issue a notice to the appropriate person(s) on action needed.

PART II: Personal social media accounts

All CMU employees are encouraged to exercise sound judgment when participating in social media activities on personal accounts. It is important for university employees to consider how their conduct online may reflect on CMU.

**CMU's recommendations for employees' personal behavior on social media**

1. **Avoid using unapproved CMU likenesses or images in your personal accounts.** This includes, but is not limited to, your social media name, handle and URL. CMU's logos and registered trademarks (such as the Action C) are the property of Central Michigan University; they should be used only in circumstances where they are provided for public use in the manner intended.
2. **Avoid posting CMU-owned photo and video assets as personal content without permission.** We encourage employees to share posts on social media made by CMU accounts. However, university employees who have access to university photo and video assets should refrain from posting them on their personal sites presenting them as personal content that they have created in their free time unless they obtain permission from the appropriate office.
3. **Employees are accountable for their personal conduct online.** CMU respects First Amendment rights and encourages free speech by all university employees. Remember that students, colleagues, and supervisors often have access to your publicly published content. It is contrary to CMU policy to disclose information that is not intended for dissemination outside of CMU. It is illegal to disclose information that is protected by FERPA, HIPAA or other laws. CMU is not responsible for, and does not support, any post made by a user whose public positions are counter to the mission or interests of CMU.
4. **Let CMU spokespersons engage with negative content.** You may come across negative conversations regarding CMU on social media. Unless you are a university-designated spokesperson, you should refrain from giving the appearance that you are acting in the capacity of a CMU employee speaking on behalf of CMU. If you see something of particular concern, we recommend that you contact University Communications immediately at ucomm@cmich.edu.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

PART III: Official accounts during emergency situations

Emergency situations may occur at any time. **As soon as managers and moderators become aware of an ongoing situation, they should immediately pause any planned social media posts.**

University Communications is responsible for communicating on behalf of the university during an emergency situation. Follow the lead of CMU's primary channels by only sharing their social media communications. Do not share posts from news outlets or other external sources.

Managers and moderators may encounter content online that risks evolving into an emergency situation. Examples include public harassment, threats or rumors that cause concern. In these circumstances, contact University Communications immediately. Do not create a statement or respond in any way without consulting University Communications.

**Creation**

PART I: Account creation

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CMU employees who wish to create a social media account on behalf of CMU or use social media to conduct CMU business must communicate and receive approval from their unit's supervisor(s), designated communications staff (if applicable) and/or dean (if applicable).

After receiving approval from the appropriate individuals, the next step is to contact University Communications at socialmedia@cmich.edu with the request to create an official account.

The requestee must fill out a *Social Media Worksheet* and have a consultation with University Communications before completing the following:
- Onboard into the universitywide social media content management tool.
  For more information, see *Operation, Part I,* of this policy.
- Create a full month of content as defined by University Communications social media strategy.
- Complete additional training sessions as required by University Communications staff. Mandatory training includes basic social media management at CMU, training on the universitywide social media content management tool, and brand building on social media.
- Register all managers and moderators within University Communications' social media newsletter.

Upon completion of all requirements, accounts will be authorized and listed in the official social media directory. University Communications will follow up with social media managers on a regular basis throughout the first year to support and assess strategy.

If a social media manager or moderator will no longer have oversight of an account, please see *Management, Part 1,* of this policy for next steps.

Accounts predating this social media policy are expected to complete a *Social Media Strategy Worksheet*, complete mandatory training and register all managers and moderators with University Communications by the end of the 2020 fall semester.

PART II: Social media strategy

The *Social Media Strategy Worksheet* is required for all official accounts, as it provides managers and moderators with clear goals and benchmarks to guide their social media presence. Worksheets are updated and reviewed yearly to assess account growth, health and opportunities for improvement.

Accounts predating this social media policy are expected to complete a *Social Media Strategy Worksheet* by the end of the 2021 spring semester.

If an account does not comply and continues to represent a service unit, department or college, University Communications staff may submit a *Request for Account Deletion* to the vice president of University Communications/chief marketing officer. The vice president will review the request and issue a notice to the appropriate person(s) on action needed.

PART III: Compliance with official CMU procedures and best practices

University Communications will update the universitywide official procedures and best practices on an annual basis, based on brand standards, universitywide goals and platform updates. These resources will be available to all CMU social media managers and moderators.

These procedures and best practices will include direction on how to strategically approach the following:
- **Hashtag strategy:** Social media managers and moderators must consult with University Communications on approved or disallowed hashtags and additional guidelines.
- **Groups, forums and other online social communities:** Participant-driven social communities (Reddit, Discord, Facebook Groups, etc.) are defined primarily by their user-generated content and are generally less structured than a university-managed social media channel. CMU social media managers and moderators OR employees who engage with these communities are expected to adhere to CMU policy, procedures and best practices when participating.

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Exceptions to the best practices and procedures will be made at the discretion of University Communications based on platform and industry best practices.

PART IV: Social media account registration

All official social media accounts, as well as corresponding social media managers and moderators, are required to be registered with University Communications. Registration will be reviewed annually to ensure that accurate contact information is available in case of emergency.

Registration will follow the university's fiscal year, and resubmission is required beginning July 1 each year. These deadlines will be communicated in early May to all registered accounts via the social media newsletter.

To be registered, accounts must do the following:
* Provide University Communications with updated contact information for all social media managers and moderators.
* Complete a fiscal year audit to review the *Social Media Strategy Worksheet* and reassess strategy, goals and objectives.
* Update University Communications about the number of users and accounts representing the department, unit or college for the upcoming fiscal year into the social media management tool.

Accounts that have not completed registration by July 15 of each year will be removed from the social media directory until all steps of registration are completed.

If an account continues to represent a service unit, department or college and has not re-registered by July 31 of each year, University Communications will meet with the appropriate person(s) to review account status, determine support necessary and develop an action plan.

If after this process, expectations are still not being met, University Communications may submit a *Request for Account Deletion* to the vice president of University Communications. The vice president will review the request and issue a notice to the appropriate person(s) on action needed.

**Operation**

Part I: Use of social media management tool

Social media management software provides managers one platform to access multiple social media accounts. It also offers advanced features including automated reporting, social listening and more. Managers will be able to access in-depth reporting tools, create a standardized labeling system to assess engagement with posts by topic and better track online conversations.

Having a standardized cross-campus platform also will assist managers in knowledge and skill sharing while creating a more cohesive social media presence representing CMU.

**All official social media accounts are required to utilize CMU's social media management software.** All accounts are to be onboarded and using the platform by the end of 2020-21 fiscal year.

As part of the onboarding process, all managers and moderators will be required to complete a training session on the platform with University Communications.

Part II: Analytics and metrics

Analytics and metrics must be reviewed annually. These reviews will ensure that an employee's time spent managing/moderating university platforms is worth the service unit, department or college's investment.

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As noted in *Creation, Part 1,* of this policy, managers and moderators must complete additional training through University Communications. Basic training will include overview of beginning analytics through native platforms and the universitywide social media management tool.

**Management**

PART I: Social media roles and responsibilities

*Social media managers*
Social media managers are responsible for ensuring factual accuracy, editorial quality and upholding university brand standards on official accounts. They must be staff or faculty who have the capacity to dedicate time to social media every day.

Every official account must have a minimum of two registered managers and a maximum of four. As the official contacts for accounts, managers must be registered with University Communications and comply with all policies and procedures in place.

Managers may employ social media moderators to help with the day-to-day maintenance and are responsible for the oversight, training and actions of these team members.

Managers who no longer oversee social media on behalf of CMU and wish to unsubscribe from these communications before the re-registration date should email University Communications at socialmedia@cmich.edu.

Any new social media manager onboarded partway through the year must register with University Communications to receive additional training and information before being given password access to any accounts.

*Social media moderators*
Social media moderators may assist the social media managers in content creation, social listening and other tasks but may not be the sole individuals responsible for an official account. Social media moderators can be faculty, staff, students or graduate assistants.

***Students or graduate assistants cannot be social media managers, only social media moderators.*** While social media management is a great learning experience, their time with CMU is short-term, and they have less responsibility to the brand.

PART II: Security protocols

Security protocols will differ based on individual platforms and changes to terms of service. However, these are best practices that all managers and moderators should follow.

All passwords must comply with the CMU Office of Information Technology's password standards.

*Social media management system security protocols*
- Multifactor authentication is required to be in place for all users of the social media management system.
- Passwords for the social media management system should be unique to this system (not used anywhere else).

*General social media platform security protocols*
- All accounts must be created using a shared or general email address accessible to more than one person (i.e., socialmedia@cmich.edu). Email addresses already established are preferred.
- Passwords and logins to social media platforms should be maintained by managers and their direct leadership.
- Passwords and logins to social media platforms must be shared with University Communications so accounts can be added to the university-established social media management system.
- Passwords to social media platforms should be changed when a person with access is no longer employed with the university.

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- If your account is idle for more than three months, it becomes an easy target for hackers. If you are having difficulties meeting university guidelines and strategies, contact University Communications for consultation.
- Avoid third-party apps when possible. The exceptions are the social media content management system designated by the university and password manager apps approved by Office of Information Technology.

*Facebook security protocols*
- To ensure account access, all official accounts must be owned by Central Michigan University within Facebook Business Manager.
- Managers or moderators may not create accounts that defy Facebook's Terms of Service to serve as administrators. If you have concerns, contact University Communications.

PART III: Legal compliance

Managers and moderators are expected to abide by the terms of service when utilizing social media platforms, as well as all requirements set forth by CMU's Office of General Counsel.

In addition, managers and moderators shall adhere to the following:
- o **Refrain from promoting third-party products, events and businesses.** Official accounts should not promote third-party products, events and business, to avoid the appearance of an official CMU endorsement. This also includes sharing or promoting fundraisers, GoFundMe accounts, petitions, etc.
- o **Contests must meet platform terms of service.** Contests on social media platforms must meet each platform's terms of service and comply with university policies and regulations. If you are interested in hosting a contest, please contact University Communications at socialmedia@cmich.edu.
- o **Be mindful of copyright and intellectual property rights**. If it is not your content, do not post it or otherwise present it as your own. When using others' content, link to the original content wherever possible; in all cases, you must make sure to tag and give appropriate credit to the original creator of the content.
- o **Do not engage with others regarding university matters over any social media platform.** If a student, parent or community member contacts you with questions or concerns, invite them to call or email your area directly to maintain privacy, or refer them to the appropriate office.


*Central Michigan University reserves the right to make exceptions to, modify or eliminate this policy and or its content. This document supersedes all previous policies, procedures or guidelines relative to this subject.*