**DePauw University Social Media Policy and Guidelines**

*A set of policies, coupled with guidelines and best practices for offices and organizations using social media across the DePauw University community.*

**Section I: Social Media Policy at DePauw**

*Sub-Section A: Introduction*

The social web has spurred an array of new tools that help people and organizations connect and converse in new, interesting, and powerful ways. Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and Vimeo – among others – have made it possible to share in dialogue, to engage and connect groups of people in ways that were not previously possible.

We encourage members of the DePauw University community to view the social web as an opportunity to initiate and participate in these conversations, particularly in ways that help serve, support and showcase the core components of the DePauw experience:

* A challenging and robust academic experience, known for the quality of its faculty and for its unique experiential opportunities.
* An engaging social culture driven by student organizations, music and the arts, athletics and a friendly, out-going personality
* The remarkable success of our graduates.

For members of the DePauw community who are interested in conversing and engaging in the social web, we ask that you follow the DePauw University Social Media Policy and draw upon a set of guidelines and best practices that are included in Sections II and III.

*Sub-Section B: Policies for All Social Media Sites, Including Personal Sites*

We ask all DePauw employees to adhere to the following general policies about sharing content in the social web:

* Protect confidential and proprietary information: Do not post confidential or proprietary information about DePauw, students, employees, or alumni. Employees must still follow the applicable federal requirements such as FERPA and HIPA, as well as NCAA regulations. Adhere to all applicable University privacy and confidentiality policies. Employees who share confidential information do so at the risk of disciplinary action or termination.
* Respect copyright and fair use: When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the University. Direct questions about fair use or copyrighted material to the copyright and intellectual property manager in University Libraries at 765-285-5330.
* Do not use DePauw logos for endorsements: Do not use the DePauw logo or any other University images or iconography on personal social media sites. Do not use DePauw’s name to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate.
* Respect University time and property: University computers, IT accounts, and time on the job are reserved for University- related business as approved by supervisors and in accordance with the [*University Electronic Communications and Acceptable Use Policy*](http://www.depauw.edu/files/resources/it-accounts-policy.pdf).
* Terms of service: Obey the Terms of Service of any social media platform employed.

*Sub-Section C: Policies for Institutional Social Media Accounts*

DePauw-affiliated social media channels differ from personal accounts used by DePauw employees and are an extension of the University. It is critical that they are up-to-date and reflective of current University priorities. University institutional social media accounts are intended to be used primarily for communicating official University business, including employee and student academic pursuits, and employee administrative, personnel, and/or business matters.

Before you create a separate social media presence for a specific office or organization, we encourage you to consider whether you might be better served to collaborate with DePauw’s existing channels. If, however, you choose to create your own presence, be prepared to establish goals and keep it updated regularly.

New and existing users should contact the Office of Communications as they establish their social media channel(s), particularly to ensure clear goal-setting and continuity in profile naming conventions and graphic needs. Not all requests for institutional social media accounts will be honored. In some cases, the Office of Communications may recommend alternative communication methods that would better serve the purpose of the request.

If you post on behalf of an official University unit, you are expected to adhere to the following policies:

* Establish an account shepherd: All Institutional pages or accounts must have a full-time appointed employee who is identified and equipped to be responsible for content. If appropriate, this individual may manage a team of staff members or students who also contribute content, driven by direction by the account shepherd.
* Use a DePauw email address: Any Institutional social media page or account that you establish must have a DePauw address as its primary account identifier. Where possible, these accounts should be attached to a general DePauw email address (president@depauw.edu or webteam@depauw.edu etc.) rather than to an individual person’s email address. Policies about use of these pages or accounts are governed by the *University Electronic Communications and Acceptable Use Policy.*
* Acknowledge who you are: If you are representing DePauw when posting on a social media platform, acknowledge this.
* Have a plan: Departments should consider their messages, audiences, and goals, as well as a strategy for keeping information on social media sites up-to-date. The Office of Communications can assist and advise you with your social media planning.
* Link back to the University: Whenever possible, link back to the DePauw Web site. Ideally, posts should be very brief, redirecting a visitor to content that resides within the DePauw Web environment. When linking to a news article about DePauw, check first to see whether you can link to a release on the DePauw News and Media Site instead of to a publication or other media outlet.
* Protect the Institutional voice: Posts on social media sites should protect the University’s institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. No individual DePauw unit should construe its social media site as representing the University as a whole. Consider this when naming pages or accounts, selecting a profile picture or icon, and selecting content to post—names, profile images, and posts should all be clearly linked to the particular department or unit rather than to the Institution as a whole.

**Section II: Social Media Guidelines**

*Sub-Section A: Guidelines for Logo, Graphics and Usernames on Official Accounts*

Usernames, graphics and avatars are central to the University’s online identity in the social web and – to the extent possible – it is crucial that official University channels demonstrate visual and rhetorical continuity.

Users are highly encouraged to use “DePauw” in their username, rather than “DPU.” While DPU is a familiar acronym on-campus, it is less familiar to the general public. Example: The DePauw University Libraries Twitter handle is @DePauwLibraries rather than @DPULibraries.

As graphics / logo / username questions arise, users are strongly encouraged to contact the Office of Communications for guidance.

*Sub-Section B: Guidelines for Facebook*

Facebook provides opportunities for organizations to create specific groups or fan pages within the Facebook network. Depending on the organization’s goals, both groups and fan pages can be useful. There are, however, a number of practical differences between the two that may lead users to choose one option over the other.

Facebook groups tend to be useful for relatively small communities, wherein the members feel a very strong affinity. Administrators and members of groups have the option to directly message all group members. This can be highly effective for engaging members, but can also be received poorly by members who do not show a strong affinity to the group or organization.

Facebook fan pages tend to be useful for larger communities, or for organizations who would like to engage with a larger population of users who are interested in the organization, but may not possess a particularly strong affinity for it. Whereas users must “join” Facebook Groups, they need only “Like” a fan page. Posts from administrators of fan pages appear within the Facebook feeds of its fans.

*Sub-Section C: Guidelines for Twitter*

Twitter accounts for offices and organizations may be created by those who will be responsible for generating and maintaining content, but new users are encouraged to coordinate with the Office of Communications regarding profile names, page branding and avatar selection.

*Sub-Section D: Guidelines for Video*

The University maintains an official presence on YouTube and Vimeo. Offices producing video and/or those interested in producing video be shared in the social web should contact the Office of Communications (specifically Jonathan Coffin at jonathancoffin@depauw.edu) to discuss how best to coordinate efforts.

**Section III: Best Practices**

* Have Goals: The more clearly you can articulate why you’re engaged in the social web, the more likely you’ll be able to sustain your engagement. What do you want your social media presence to accomplish? Do your goals line up with your ability to meet them? Remember that setting one or two central goals – and nailing them – may be better than biting off a huge list of goals that are not realistic.
* Think Twice Before Posting: Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect both on the poster and the University. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created, and comments can be forwarded or copied. If you wouldn’t say it at a conference or to a member of the media, consider whether you should post it online. If you are unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, ask your supervisor for input or contact the Office of Communications.
* Add Value: Always ask yourself how you can add the most value when it comes to your participation in the social web. Can you be a thought leader, or an influencer on a particular issue or discipline? As a simple rule, write and post about what you know. And if you post about something in which you are not an expert, that’s okay too, just be sure to make it clear to your readers.
* Use Appropriate Punctuation: Remember that your use of punctuation can influence the way your audience perceives the tone of your posts. Except in extremely rare instances, exclamation points should be avoided. Additionally, #hashtags should primarily be used for their intended purpose for content aggregation.
* Be Accurate: Please check your sources, carefully edit posts, and verify any links included within the copy of your post.
* Be Transparent: Remember that the social web thrives on honesty and transparency. Always be honest about who you are and about the positions you represent.
* Share *and* Create: Remember that you mustn’t always share only content you created. Share links to content of interest to your discipline or field. You can contribute to the conversation just as much as a content aggregator as you can as a content creator.
* Be Respectful: Understand that content contributed to the social web could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the poster and/or the University and its institutional voice.
* Remember Your Audience: Be aware that a presence in the social web is, or easily can be, made available to the public at large. This includes prospective students, current students, current employers and colleagues, and peers. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not alienate, harm, or provoke any of these groups.
* Your Views are Your Own: On personal sites, if you identify yourself as a DePauw faculty or staff member online, it should be clear that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the institution.
* Remember that it’s a Conversation: Remember to engage and converse in ways that you would talk to real people, with your personality. The social web is built for harnessing multiple (even hundreds or thousands) voices, so don’t be afraid to participate. And never forget to listen.
* Respond When Appropriate: Remember that engaging in the social web will occasionally result in negative feedback in addition to positive feedback. Be thoughtful about when and how you engage negative comments. As a general rule, consider engaging to correct facts or share additional information, but be cautious about engaging in public debate on official social media platforms.