Social Media Guidelines

ABOUT THESE GUIDELINES

These guidelines govern the publication of and commentary on social media by faculty, staff, and student organizations of Genesee Community College ("GCC"). For the purposes of these guidelines, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wikis, and social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube. These guidelines complement any existing or future College policies or guidelines regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the Internet.

What Do the Guidelines Cover?

GCC faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to publish or comment via social media in accordance with these guidelines. You should observe these guidelines when:

- You identify yourself as a member of the GCC faculty, staff, or official student organization (other than as an incidental mention of place of employment on a personal account created independently of the college and on topics unrelated to GCC).
- You use College computers, networks, or Internet access.
- You provide authoritative information or commentary about GCC or its programs.

Social media can make a powerful and positive impact on open exchange, learning and creativity. If you use social media as a platform for conveying information or commentary about your program, class, or organization, it is vital that you:

- Practice responsible engagement, as a reliable, ethical, responsible, and timely representative of the college.
- Observe all relevant policies, procedures, laws, and safety rules.

These guidelines will help you become familiar with emerging best practices in the rapidly expanding space of online media, and use online media as a valuable part of your role at GCC.

SOCIAL MEDIA DEFINED

"Social media" refers to a wide variety of interactive media using text, pictures, video, and audio. Traditional mass media are produced in static form, and read or studied by recipients. Social media turns recipients into participants, enabling them to comment on, and contribute to, content almost instantaneously. Examples of social media: blogs, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube.

GENESEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE IDENTITY

In 2011, Genesee Community College completed a two-year branding and identity study that resulted in the development and introduction of a new College logo under GCC's brand essence of "Beyond Expectations." In addition, the Marketing Communication office developed and released a Brand/Identity Standards Manual. This 50-page document reviews the proper use of the College's logo and other core identity marks, approved color palettes and fonts, guidelines for photography and imagery, as well as tips on getting publicity. The manual is available on the Intranet: Genesis/College Life/MarCom or by contacting the MarCom Office at extension 6116.

SOCIAL MEDIA DOs AND DON'Ts

When you use social media on behalf of GCC, or in your role as a member of the college community, keep these "DOs and DON'Ts" in mind.

DO Be Interesting

Some suggestions:

- Write about what you know.
- Be colloquial. Remember that social media communication has some of the characteristics of speech and some of the characteristics of writing.
- Be fast. The ability to publish your thoughts quickly is a great benefit of social media. Aim to publish posts or comment about breaking news or current happenings without delay. (However, at the same time, if you're in doubt about a post or something "just doesn't feel right," wait a while before posting it or ask someone else to look at it before posting).
- Seek dialogue.
- Engage your audience by posting questions, factoids, human interest material, surveys, informative tips, puzzles, and other content designed to create dialogue.

DO Devote Time to Social Media

If you plan to use social media to convey information or commentary about your college activities:

- If you're a member of the GCC staff, be sure you have your supervisor's OK before you take on any ongoing social media responsibilities as part of your work duties.
- Check your social media page or site at **least five times a day**, and respond or comment as appropriate.
- Arrange to maintain coverage over **weekends, holidays, breaks, and anticipated important and active days**. Remember that questions, positive and negative comments, and requests don't take breaks.
- Plan to post **new content every few days**. Dynamic ever-changing social media keeps your audience intact. Static, neglected media reflects poorly on the College.
- Be sure that you have time to manage your social media page or site, and that you don't neglect other responsibilities while doing so. Social media maintenance is required each day, often more than only skimming a page. Social media managers must continuously be searching for new, interesting content as well as interacting with users on a constant basis.
- Remember who your audience is and post at appropriate times so that they will see your content.

DO Disclose Your Role

When posting or commenting online, be sure to:

- Use your real name.
- When using college computers, use your college e-mail address.
- Include your title or role.
- Provide contact information**.**

DO Maintain 100% Honesty

Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty - or dishonesty. So:

- Be accurate and complete in anything you publish.
- Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading.
- If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out.
- Be cautious about disclosing personal details.
- If you make an error, be upfront about your mistake and correct it quickly.
- If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so.

If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material, or a defamatory or inappropriate comment), be sure to notify the Marketing Communications Office immediately.

DO Respect Your Audience

The public in general, and GCC's faculty, staff, and students, reflect a diverse set of customs, values, and points of view. So:

- Be yourself, but maintain a tone of respect in all posts and comments.
- Remain consistent with content on the GCC web site.
- Take responsibility for your views and opinions, and make it clear to your audience that you are speaking for yourself, not for the entire College.
- Respond respectfully to anyone who posts comments you disagree with. Have a "thick skin," and be prepared for negative responses or comments.
- Always avoid personally offensive comments, ethnic slurs, potentially defamatory statements, insults, arguments, and obscenity. Be careful about objectionable or inflammatory topics, such as politics and religion.
- If you maintain staff/supervisor or faculty/student relationships online, these should function in the same manner as offline relationships.
- Post the College's "Respect Policy" on your site or page, and remove posts or comments that violate the policy.

DO Respect Copyright and Trademark Laws

Today's copyright laws were created with print media in mind. Copyright law as it relates to online media is still emerging. So follow some general rules of thumb:

- Never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and always attribute these quotes to the original author/source.
- When paraphrasing or discussing material drawn from another source, always attribute the material to the original author/source.
- When possible, link to others' work, rather than reproduce it.
- Avoid reproducing any corporate logo or trademark.

DO Stay Safe

- Avoid disclosing personally identifiable details, such as home addresses, birth dates, or financial information.
- Report any actual or suspected hacking, impersonation, or online fraud to the Public Safety Office for referral to law enforcement authorities.
- Maintain privacy settings appropriate to your program, class, or affinity group.

DO Adhere to spelling and grammatical rules

- Use a spell checker – and manually proofread anything you post before it goes up.

- When in doubt about usage, consult the social media section of the Associated Press Stylebook.

DO Publicize your channel

Having a social media presence is completely nulled when there are no users to interact with.

- Remind your audience that you are on social media.
- Provide incentives for following/subscribing to your social media channel.
- Encourage your audience to participate and engage with you on your social media channel.

DON'T Commercialize

Don't:

- Promote or criticize any business organization.
- Endorse or criticize a product.
- Seek money or payments for any purpose.

DON'T Engage in Controversy or Crisis Communication

Refer controversial inquiries or posts to the Marketing Communications Office.

DON'T Always Respond to Every Negative Comment

Some comments are blatantly explicit, target a specific demographic, or are inappropriate, but most negative comments root from an upset user "venting" online. It is important to decipher the difference between these two comments. Remember that users have the right to their opinion.

- Remove a comment if it violates GCC's Respect Policy (ie is sexual harassment, includes inappropriate language or racial slurs, etc.)
- Not all negative comments warrant a response.
- Ensure that if you do respond to a negative comment, it will not make the situation worse.
- Do not remove a comment only because it gives you "bad press."

DON'T Make Comments to the News Media

Reporters, editors, commentators, and bloggers follow social media closely. If you're contacted by a member of the news media, refer the inquiry to the Marketing Communications Office. This includes any request for comment from a blog or web site. The MarCom Office will advise you whether you should respond directly, or whether MarCom should issue a response or statement.

DON'T Engage in Political Activity

Genesee Community College is a public organization, and we are generally prohibited from engaging in political or partisan discourse. When posting content in connection with the College and/or using College hardware, software, or networks, avoid:

- Partisan positions
- Political endorsements
- Promotion of legislation

DON'T Tell Secrets

It's perfectly acceptable to talk about your work or college activities, and have a dialog with others, but it's not okay to publish confidential information. Confidential information includes things such as:

- Private student, staff or faculty information, grades or records Procedure #409.
- Information protected under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act and Procedure #247 – Confidentiality Procedures.

Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see. Google has a long memory.

Creating a Social Media Presence at Genesee Community College

As of September 2013, Genesee Community College maintains an official presence on the following social media sites:

- Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/GeneseeCommunityCollege
- Twitter: http://www.twitter.com/sunygcc
- Google+: https://plus.google.com/u/0/106591535455655496601
- YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/sunygcc
- Flickr: http://www.flickr.com/sunygcc
- Ustream: http://www.ustream.tv/user/sunygcc

Before you create a social media page, we encourage you to consider:

- Time dedicated to the page as well as on and offline promotion.
- Amount of interesting and unique content relevant to your audience.
- Who will be responsible for your page.
- The quantity of your potential followers.

In order to have your content displayed to several thousand social media users, please send your content to marcom@genesee.edu for appropriate and effective sharing.

If you feel that you have an adequate amount of unique content as well as the time to dedicate to maintenance, you can create your own social media presence. Doing so means:

- Being prepared to **monitor the page daily**, including weekends, holidays, breaks, and anticipated "high traffic" days.
- Posting new content and keep it fresh every few days.
- Responding to inquiries within 24 hours. The web doesn't stop when you leave the office or classroom and neither should your commitment to monitor and respond via social networks. A social media page with little activity reflects poorly on your department and on the college as a whole.
- Recruiting a "backup manager" and well-defined "succession plan" for the point you leave the College or are unable to perform your social media duties.
- Ensuring model/consent release forms have been completed and signed by the subjects of any photos or videos. In the case of minors, a parent or guardian signature must also be obtained in advance. Model consent/release forms are available in the Marketing Communications Office.

GCC presences on social media sites are considered to be an extension of the official Web site, and most guidelines that apply to the Web site (such as Brand and Identity guidelines) will also apply to your social media site.

Student Clubs/Organizations: The advisor(s) of any student club/organization must have administrative access to their club's social media account(s), with authority to review, monitor and, if necessary, change content.

To ensure the continuity of GCC's online identity, if you are exploring the creation of your own office or administrative department presence on a social media site, please first contact the Web and Social Media Coordinator in the Marketing Communications Office. The Web and Social Media Coordinator will help you:

- Discuss the social media process and requirements.
- Complete a new media checklist to help you determine if you should develop your own social media account or utilize one of the College's primary sites; identify your site goals and content strategy; determine your anticipated audience; and designate one or more backup site managers.
- Address profile naming conventions, and graphics needs.

SOCIAL MEDIA SITES AND UTILITIES

Facebook
http://www.facebook.com/GeneseeCommunityCollege

Facebook is a social networking website intended to connect friends, family, and business associates. It began as a college networking website and has expanded to include anyone and everyone.

Facebook Fan Pages will be created by the Web and Social Media Coordinator. Administrator privileges for the page will be granted to the person or persons responsible for updating the page. A member of the Marketing Communications Office must always hold an administrator position on any Facebook Page.

The profile (or avatar) images for all GCC Facebook pages will maintain a consistent graphic identity and must be coordinated through the Marketing Communications Office.

GCC Facebook Groups may be created with the assistance of the Web and Social Media Coordinator at any time and those that use College graphics should be coordinated with the Marketing Communications Office.

Pages are designed to be the official representation of brands and organizations on Facebook, where groups are user-generated. Benefits to using a Page over a Group include:

Page	Group
- Content appears in the newsfeed of those who "like" the page. - Facebook Insights: allows you to see analytics of who, what, and where clicks come from. - Vanity URL: the ability to have facebook.com/geneseecommunitycollege instead of a long string of letters and numbers. - Anyone can "like" a page - Comments that users make on a page are not easily viewed by other users who "like" the page.	- Content is only visible to members of the group. - Members must actively be added (or request to be a part of) a group. - No analytics are provided. - Groups can be public or private. - Users can easily engage in conversation on the group wall.

To avoid confusion, you should not create both a group and page.

Twitter
http://www.twitter.com/sunygcc

Twitter is a social networking and microblogging service that allows you answer the question, "What are you doing?" by sending short text messages 140 characters in length, called "tweets", to your friends, or "followers."

Before creating your account, contact the Web and Social Media Coordinator to discuss naming conventions and to consider whether you would be better served by working with the Marketing Communications Office to utilize GCC's primary Twitter account. Twitter accounts may be created by the individuals responsible for posting updates. When possible, use a department e-mail address or alias when registering the account to ensure that a point of contact can always be reached.

Flickr
http://www.flickr.com/sunygcc

Flickr is an image and video hosting website, web services suite, and online community. In addition to being a popular website for users to share and embed personal photographs, the service is widely used by bloggers to host images that they embed in blogs and social media.

GCC maintains one primary Flickr account. If you have photos from a College event you would like to post to the official Flickr feed, contact the Web and Social Media Coordinator.

YouTube
http://www.youtube.com/sunygcc

YouTube is a video-sharing website on which users can upload, share, view and comment on videos.

GCC creates multiple "playlists" on its channel to neatly organize videos of similar content for users.

If you would like a video posted to GCC's YouTube channel, contact the Web and Social Media Coordinator.

Ustream
http://www.ustream.tv/user/sunygcc

Ustream.tv is a website which provides a platform for live video streaming of events online across a diverse network of channels.

If you would like to live stream an event using the GCC Ustream account, contact the Web and Social Media Coordinator.

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