

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

### **PURPOSE**

These policies are for the purpose of providing information about the general guidelines and framework for the creation, use, and maintenance of social media by students and employees of Southwest Texas College. The stated policies are intended to maximize opportunities for educational growth, encourage the development and improvement of education programs and improve the effectiveness of instruction at all levels, in accordance with the Policy Handbook.

### **ARTICLE I: DEFINITIONS**

- A. "Social Media" is a category of websites and online media, in which users communicate, participate, share, network, and interact online. Social media websites include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, MySpace, LinkedIn, Friendster, Plaxo, Twitter, Blogs, YouTube, Bebo, and Flickr. For convenience, the term "social media" is used throughout this Policy and is intended to be construed broadly to comport to the principles set forth herein.
- B. "Employee" for the purposes of this Policy only, refers to every individual employed by the College, whether faculty or staff, salaried or hourly, or full-time or part-time.
- C. "College time" includes all time during which an employee of the College is being compensated for his or her work. For hourly employees, "College time" includes all hours during which the employee is on the clock or clocked in. For salaried employees, "College time" includes the time in which the employee is expected to perform duties pursuant to his or her employment with the College.
- D. "Constituents" include actual and potential online social media users and participants, including but not limited to current and prospective students, alumni, employees, donors, and members of the community.
- E. "Professional Use" refers to the use of social media in connection with employment by the College or as an official representative of the College.
- F. "Personal Use" refers to the use of social media for purposes other than those in the capacity as an employee or representative of the College.
- G. "Users" are individuals who access social media, email accounts, and other technology resources through an account or electronic device provided by, maintained by, or authorized by the college.

## **ARTICLE II: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USE**

The College recognizes that online social media can be used to connect with constituents in many positive ways. However, the nature of online social media warrants certain caution. When using online social media, whether personally or professionally, employees of the College should be aware of the following:

- A. Users shall exercise discretion when posting onto social media sites that could reflect negatively on users or the College.
- B. Information posted on social media sites may continue to stay online even after it has been removed from the original social media site.
- C. Anything posted online is available to anyone in the world the moment it is placed online, even if access to the social media site is limited.
- D. By agreeing to a social media website's terms of service, the user may be granting permission for the online social media site to republish content, or share information with advertisers, third parties, and law enforcement, among others.

## **ARTICLE III: EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USE**

The College recognizes that the use of social media has far reaching implications and may create risks for users of social media as well as the College. In consideration of these risks, the College expects its employees to adhere to the following policies regarding social media:

- A. Users shall exercise discretion when posting onto social media sites that could reflect negatively on users or the College.
- B. Users shall be discreet, respectful, and as accurate as possible in posting content onto social media sites.
- C. Users shall be aware of their association with the College. If the user identifies himself or herself as an employee or student of the College on the social media site, any content posted by that user shall be consistent with the provisions of this Policy and all other policies and procedures of the College, including the Student Handbook and/or the SWTX Employee Handbook of Policies and Procedures.
- D. Users shall not post any content onto a social media site, which discloses confidential or proprietary information of the College.
- E. Users shall not post content on social media sites, which violates any laws of the United States or the State of Texas, including but not limited to HIPAA, and FERPA.
- F. Users shall take ownership of content posted to a social media site, and should refrain from making anonymous posts.
- G. Users who choose to use social media should do so in compliance with applicable College policies and procedures, including the Student Handbook and/or the SWTX Employee Handbook of Policies and Procedures.

## **ARTICLE IV: EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

The College acknowledges social media may be used by employees to enhance instruction; inform constituents about College activities and developments; build online communities for educational purposes; and share other relevant information between constituents.

- A. An employee shall notify his or her Division Chair, Dean or Director in advance, of the intention to use a social media website on which the employee will represent the College in an official capacity. The Division Chair, Dean or Director must approve, in advance, such a request from an employee.
- B. Employees maintaining a social media site for professional use are responsible for all content posted by the employee.
- C. Employees maintaining a social media site for professional use shall check the pages regularly to ensure the content is in compliance with the provisions of this Policy. It is recommended that social media sites for professional use be checked three (3) times each day.
- D. Employees maintaining a social media site for professional use are responsible for removing prohibited content from the site within a reasonable time after it is first posted. The following non-exhaustive list includes content which is prohibited from social media sites for professional use:
  1. Threats
  2. Gambling
  3. Obscene language and/or imagery
  4. Language or imagery depicting underage drinking, illegal drug use, or other inappropriate behavior
  5. Harassment
  6. Commercial use for personal financial profit
  7. Personal social relationships unrelated to College matters
  8. Content in violation of federal or state law
- E. Employees using social media sites for professional use shall include the following disclaimer:

*"Southwest Texas College accepts no responsibility or liability for any data, text, software, music, sound, photographs, images, video, messages, or other content generated by users and publicly posted on this site."*
- F. Each social media site maintained for professional use shall place the following statement in a conspicuous manner on the main page:

*"To report any concern about the content on this site please contact the Division Dean or the College President."*
- G. Upon termination of the employment relationship with the College, employees maintaining a social media site for professional use shall transfer maintenance of the site to the department.

## **ARTICLE V: POLICIES GUIDING PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred with the use of online social media. By virtue of identifying oneself as an employee of the College, employees may act as a representative of the College. If an employee of the College chooses to create or participate in social media, the College expects each person to conduct him or herself with professionalism, courtesy and integrity. Nothing in this Policy is intended to discourage or prohibit an employee's use of social media sites. However, all uses should be consistent with guidelines and conform to the provisions set forth herein.

1. The College recommends employees using online social media for personal use include on the site the following disclaimer:
  1. "The views expressed on this site are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer." Accessing social media during working hours shall be limited as follows:
2. Accessing social media during working hours shall be limited as follows:
  1. Hourly Employees are prohibited from accessing and utilizing social media sites for personal use during College time. This includes accessing these sites with any technology, including but not limited to college computers, PDAs, cell phones, Blackberries, and/or iPhones.
  2. Salaried Employees shall not access social media sites for personal use during College time if such access interferes with the employees' performance and/or completion of his or her job duties as an employee of the College. This includes accessing these sites with any technology, including, but not limited to college computers, PDAs, cell phones, Blackberries, and/or iPhones.
3. Employees are responsible for all content posted to the social media site by the employee. The College will not indemnify an employee for any loss or liability arising out of content posted on a social media site by the employee.
4. Employees are responsible for reading and complying with the terms of service for any social media site.
5. Employees are prohibited from posting any content, which plagiarizes work of the College or College employees. Employees are required to comply with copyright laws in posting content on social media sites.

## **ARTICLE VI: ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- A. This Policy is intended to govern employee use of social media in accordance with all other policies and contracts between the College and its employees. To the extent this policy conflicts with the Master Contract, the provisions of the Master Contract control.
- B. Failure to comply with the guidelines set forth herein may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Procedure for discipline under this Policy will be in accordance with applicable provisions of the Policy Handbook and Master Contract.
- C. Should any part of this Policy be rendered or declared invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidation of such part or portion of this Policy should not invalidate the remaining portions thereof, and they shall remain in full force and effect.

### **Recourse for misuse and/or non-compliance**

The guidelines in this document include steps to be taken to determine if users have misused SWTX computing resources. The protection of the rights of individuals accused of violating this policy statement applies.

Individuals who misuse SWTX computing resources, or do not comply with the written policy of SWTX are subject to one or more of the following:

- A. Temporary revocation of SWTX computing resource access
- B. Permanent revocation of SWTX computing resource access
- C. Disciplinary action taken by the appropriate administrative authorities up to and including expulsion of students or termination of employment for faculty and staff
- D. Subpoena of hardware, software, and data files
- E. Prosecution under applicable federal, state, or local laws and/or ordinances
- F. Possible legal sanctions, including fines and imprisonment

### **Report violations or request for additional information**

Violations, complaints, questions, or requests for additional information should be directed to the Information Services Department.