

## **Dominican University Social Media Policies and Procedures**

*Adapted with thanks from Tufts University Digital Communications*

<http://webcomm.tufts.edu/social---media---overview13/>

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Social media platforms are potentially powerful engagement tools that also pose risk to individuals and organizations if used improperly. These policies and guidelines are intended to instruct the Dominican University community on how to use social media for the benefit of the institution and navigate potential pitfalls that could harm individuals or the university.

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## **I. OVERVIEW: SOCIAL MEDIA AT**

### **DOMINICAN What is social media?**

Social media are internet---based platforms that enable people to create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. They have emerged as powerful communication tools by enabling:

- ☐ Conversations that previously were individual in nature to be shared simultaneously with one's entire network
- ☐ Organizations to share messages with their fans instantly
- ☐ Two---way, public communications between organizations and their constituents
- ☐ Individuals to control what information they get from and share with others.

### **Social media at Dominican**

Dominican's Office of Marketing and Communications manages the university's main accounts on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Vimeo, Google+, Pinterest and blogging platforms. These accounts share information and content that is relevant to all of our main audiences of prospective students, current

students, faculty, staff, alumni and the public, with a particular emphasis on supporting recruitment.

In addition, dozens of entities within the university have presences on these platforms. Many of these are official university accounts, meaning they represent the voice of the university, follow university brand guidelines and are overseen by a university employee. To learn how to start an official university account, read the Official University Social Media Accounts policy.

Accounts for individuals employed at Dominican and student groups are not in the purview of the university except when their use violates other policies as outlined in the faculty, staff or student handbook.

## **II. POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

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### **a. Official Social Media Accounts Policy**

Dominican University recognizes the powerful potential of social media for organizations and groups. The Office of Marketing and Communications manages several official social media accounts representing the university to a variety of audiences. In addition, OMC recognizes the need for entities within the university to communicate with their individualized audiences via these channels as well. However, it is important to remember that official entities of the university represent the university as a whole to those audiences, and there are significant legal and reputational risks to the university posed by inappropriate use of social media.

The following policy is intended to provide guidance for the use of official social media accounts by university entities including but not limited to schools, departments and administrative offices.

#### **Policy for Official Social Media Accounts at Dominican**

This policy applies to anyone authorized to represent official entities of the university on social media, including faculty, staff, and students responsible for contributing to accounts on behalf of a school, academic department, office or other official entity at the university. It does not pertain to use of social media by individual employees, students or student groups.

This policy governs both new and existing accounts on established social media platforms as well as the creation of accounts on new and emerging platforms. Given the quickly evolving social media landscape, this policy is intended as a living document that will be reviewed and amended as necessary to meet university needs.

## **Authorization of social media accounts**

The establishment of a social media account on behalf of an official university entity after June 1, 2014, requires the prior approval of the Office of Marketing and Communications.

### ***Procedures to create an official university social media account***

1. Consult with and obtain the approval of the dean, department chair, or administrative office head that oversees the entity to be represented by the account.
2. Contact OMC at [omc@dom.edu](mailto:omc@dom.edu) to schedule a consultation with the digital communications manager. This consultation is intended to determine the goals and purpose of the proposed account, as well as to discuss social media policies, strategy, messaging, and best practices.
3. Once approved by the digital communications manager and director of marketing, the account may be created with the following provisions:
  - a. Facebook
    - i. A regular university employee of the entity represented must be an administrator of the page. This requires the employee to have a personal Facebook profile.
    - ii. Provide OMC the names and up-to-date contact information for all individuals who will be given administrator access to the page. This information is helpful in case OMC needs to contact administrators for reasons related to management of the page.
    - iii. Student workers are allowed to administer official pages but may not be the sole administrator(s) and must be overseen by a regular employee.
    - iv. Add Sam Mazzuchelli ([omc@dom.edu](mailto:omc@dom.edu)) as a manager-level administrator of the page. This will give OMC access to the page if needed for emergency notification, removal of harmful material, or other situation requiring prompt attention.
    - v. Use only OMC-approved graphics for the cover photo and profile picture. These can be downloaded from [dom.edu/omc/guidelines-and-resources/social-media/graphics](http://dom.edu/omc/guidelines-and-resources/social-media/graphics).
  - b. Other social media platforms
    - i. A regular university employee of the entity represented must be responsible for managing the account.
    - ii. Student workers are allowed to administer accounts but may not be the sole administrator(s) and must be overseen by a regular employee.
    - iii. Share the username and password with OMC. If either is updated, share the updated credentials with OMC. This will give OMC access to the page if needed for emergency notification, removal of harmful material, or other situation requiring prompt attention.

- iv. Use only OMC---approved graphics for the profile picture/avatar. These can be downloaded from [dom.edu/omc/guidelines---and---resources/social---media/graphics](http://dom.edu/omc/guidelines---and---resources/social---media/graphics).

Managers of such accounts created prior to June 1, 2014 that have not been approved by OMC should seek approval of accounts retroactively. Account managers uncertain of whether an account should be considered an official account or who are uncertain whether their account has previously been approved should contact OMC to ensure compliance.

Official social media accounts will be listed in Dominican's online [social media directory](#).

### ***Standards for the operation of official university social media accounts***

#### ***Confidentiality***

Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Dominican, or Dominican employees, students, affiliates, or alumni that would violate such persons' rights to privacy under applicable federal and state laws and regulations such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) and university policies. Non---disclosure agreements that prohibit the university from disclosing information also bind its employees from disclosing such information.

#### ***Privacy***

Do not post anything to an official social media channel that should not be shared publicly. In particular, photos and conversations that occur in private and are easily recognizable should not be posted without the permission of the person/people involved. This does not include photos from the OMC---approved images archive or photos in which individuals are not clearly recognizable. People attending public events at Dominican are considered to have consented to appear in images of the event. Still, be sensitive to the needs of others. Keep in mind that for reasons of privacy or security, some students may not want it publicly known that they attend Dominican. Never share Social Security numbers, addresses or other private information. Remember that whatever you share may be public for an indefinite period of time, even if you attempt to modify or delete it. In addition, managers of social media accounts should fully familiarize themselves with privacy settings available for different platforms, which are highly customizable: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#). For most purposes, university accounts should post content openly and publicly.

#### ***Responsibility***

Use of social media on an official Dominican channel must be managed responsibly because it reflects on the university, its faculty, its students, its alumni, and its employees.

- **Emergencies and Crisis Situations:** In the event of an emergency or crisis situation, OMC reserves the right to share official university messages on any and all official university social media accounts. Managers of official accounts are asked not to share information during emergency and crisis situations independent of OMC or others officially designated to speak on behalf of the university during a crisis. During a crisis, it is important that all members of the community receive only consistent and accurate information. Providing false or inconsistent messages during a crisis is dangerous and could lead to harm. Official accounts are also asked to delete or postpone any previously scheduled tweets or posts during an emergency or crisis situation.
- **HIPAA/FERPA Violation:** Social media account managers should take steps in advance to prevent the exposure of confidential medical or student information. Confidential information should never be posted online. Photos should also be inspected closely before publication to make sure no confidential, personal information, such as Social Security numbers, addresses, or academic records, can be seen. Never publish a name or photo without that individual's permission.
- **Other Users:** Other users, including student groups at Dominican, may have different interests, attitudes and opinions than official Dominican social media accounts. Before retweeting or sharing content posted by others on official university channels, be careful that such content is accurate and reflects the university's position.
- **As an institution devoted to education and learning,** all information shared on social media should be truthful, accurate, and reflective of our mission. Never share false or misleading information through a university account.
- **Correcting Information:** If you unintentionally post something online that is incorrect, correct it visibly and publicly as quickly as possible. Doing so will earn you respect in the online community.

### *Coordination with OMC*

Individual university entities may have need or desire to launch social media campaigns that seem relevant only to their areas. Still, these campaigns should be coordinated with OMC to ensure that they accurately reflect the image of the university and do not conflict with university campaigns. For example, OMC leads university---wide campaigns for large---scale events, such as Commencement. Individual schools may wish to pass congratulations on to their graduates, which is a great use of social media. But these campaigns should not interfere or take away from the university---wide campaign. When launching a sustained social media campaign, university entities should check in with OMC to discuss the goals and tactics of the campaign, as well as how it should be coordinated with other university social media accounts.

### *Transparency*

To protect the Dominican name and build trust with users, social media accounts that are established on behalf of Dominican entities should be explicit regarding the nature of the relationship of such media to Dominican. Similarly, in keeping with

Dominican's non---profit status, social media should not be used for any private business or financial transactions including revenue from advertising, nor should any staff with administrative responsibilities realize any personal monetary profit from Dominican---related social media. Social media may be used for fundraising as long as a transaction does not occur on the social media platform itself.

Content shared via official Dominican social media channels, as well as pages or accounts that these channels like or follow, should reflect the mission and values of Dominican University. Official accounts should refrain from posting content and liking or following users or pages that reflect personal interests or that may be in conflict with our mission or values.

Official Dominican accounts should encourage engagement and interaction with and among followers; however, they should reserve the right to remove content that is spam, commercial, obscene, harassing or derogatory. If the social network allows for it in the "Bio" or "About" section, official accounts should post a disclaimer similar to this: "Third---party posts on this wall do not imply endorsement of that content by Dominican. We reserve the right to remove content that is spam, commercial, obscene, harassing, and/or derogatory." OMC reserves the right to remove content posted by anyone on official Dominican accounts that it deems to be inappropriate.

### **Copyright**

Dominican official accounts must follow principles of copyright law. This means being careful not to share information of any type that is protected under another party's copyright, including but not limited to text, photos and video. Materials posted online should be your property, in the public domain, have a Creative Commons license, or fall under fair use. For all other instances, you should seek permission from the copyright holder. Photos from Dominican's collections should only be posted with permission from OMC. Dominican often hires third---party photographers, and photos taken by them may require additional attribution. Contact OMC with questions about copyright or for helpful tips on finding public domain or Creative Commons---licensed content.

### **Terms of Service**

Official social media accounts at Dominican University must follow the Terms of Service set forth by the social media channels they are using.

### **Maintenance of Accounts**

Regardless of the platform, social media accounts require regular monitoring and posting to be effective. Unmonitored accounts can easily fall victim to vandalism, spam, or other harmful content. In addition, official accounts that are not regularly updated or that otherwise appear inactive reflect poorly on the university. OMC reserves the right to review, deem inactive, and remove accounts at any time. A concerted effort will be made to contact individuals responsible for managing the account before removing it.

## **Best Practices**

Official Dominican accounts should follow the best practices as outlined by OMC. In some cases, deviation from best practices is warranted, but failure to follow best practices to the detriment of the university may result in, but not be limited to, exclusion from official Dominican social media lists or platforms, lack of promotion from the main Dominican channels, and possible deactivation or deletion of the offending account.

OMC maintains a list of best practices guidelines and best practices at [dom.edu/omc](http://dom.edu/omc). Visit that page for a variety of useful resources and presentations.

## **Religious Content**

Dominican University is proud of its heritage as a Catholic Dominican institution. Sharing Catholic---themed content is acceptable. However, Dominican is also committed to fostering an atmosphere of religious tolerance and cooperation. Thus, when posting religiously themed content, refrain from engaging in any communication that may be interpreted as proselytizing or disparaging of any other religion. Respectfully acknowledging the traditions of other religions consistent with the spirit of our mission is acceptable as well.

## **Blogs**

While OMC does not create official university blogs, nor maintain/update/monitor blog content, any blogs representing official Dominican University departments need to follow guidelines in order to be linked on [dom.edu](http://dom.edu):

- Names of department blogs should clearly indicate the sponsoring department name
- It is the responsibility of blog owners to check content for spelling and grammatical errors, correct information and tone
- Blog content should provide a unique look at a topic, such as student experience, and not mimic or repeat [dom.edu](http://dom.edu) web content
- When referring to university policy, blogs should link to the corresponding page of [dom.edu](http://dom.edu); for example, a blog post about Title IX should link to the corresponding page on [dom.edu](http://dom.edu)
- For department blogs, OMC strongly recommends use of the university's brand standards for color and font
- Department blogs should clearly state the sponsoring department name and contact information, not the names and contact information of individual students, staff or faculty members
- OMC reserves the right to not link a blog to the university website if stated guidelines are not followed

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## **b. Guidelines for Employee Personal Use of Social Media**

Social media accounts for individuals employed at Dominican generally are not in the purview of the university except when their use violates other policies as outlined in the faculty or staff handbook.

The following are guidelines highlighting some of the university policies that may apply to employee use of social media. Please note that these guidelines are not an exhaustive list of policies that may extend to employee use of social media, and the university reserves the right to enforce any of its policies that it deems to extend into the use of social media.

### **Non---Discrimination Policy**

This policy protects all employees and students from discrimination of any kind based on race, color, gender, age, marital status, religion, sexual orientation, medical condition, national origin, veteran status or disability unrelated to the ability to perform a job (collectively, the Bases for Unlawful Discrimination), and outlines potential disciplinary action for employees who violate the policy.

This policy extends to cover prohibited conduct that takes place on social media. Any faculty member or employee who engages in such prohibited conduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination, depending on the seriousness of the conduct in question and surrounding circumstances. Please refer to the full policy in the faculty or staff handbook.



## **Academic Freedom**

College or university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of educational institutions. When they speak or write as citizens, teachers should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, teachers should remember that the public may judge the teaching profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence, teachers should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make a demonstrable effort to indicate that they are not speaking on behalf of their institution.

Please refer to the full policy in the faculty handbook.

## **Anti---Sexual Harassment Policy**

This policy protects all members of the university community from sexual harassment by other members of the community. It is possible that communication between members of the university community on social media may be considered sexual harassment, and may be condemned under the terms of this policy. Please refer to the full policy in the faculty or staff handbook.

## **Guidelines for Faculty and Staff Relating to Education Records**

A federal law, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA, also known as the Buckley Amendment) as amended, affords students certain rights concerning their student educational records. Students have the right to have some control over the disclosure of information from the records. Educational institutions have the responsibility to prevent improper disclosure of personally identifiable information from the records. This policy extends to transmission of students records via social media.

Please refer to the full policy in the faculty or staff handbook.

## **Privacy**

Users should take it upon themselves to familiarize themselves fully with privacy settings available for different platforms, which are highly customizable: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#). These privacy settings can be customized to control what content can be seen by different audiences.

## **Transparency**

In the spirit of transparency, employees are encouraged to disclose their affiliations with the university when contributing comments on a Dominican University social media platform.

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### **c. Guidelines for Student Personal and Student Group Use of Social Media**

Social media accounts for students and student groups at Dominican generally are not in the purview of the university except when their use violates other policies as outlined in the student handbook.

The following are guidelines highlighting some of the university policies that may apply to student use of social media. Please note that these guidelines are not an exhaustive list of policies that may extend to student use of social media, and the university reserves the right to enforce any of its policies that it deems to extend into the use of social media.

#### **Student Code of Conduct**

The Student Code of Conduct requires from students a high standard of respect for the rights and dignity of others and for adherence to the necessary policies established to give order to our daily lives. Dominican University expects responsible social conduct of students, which reflects well on themselves and the university.

Among the protections outlined in the Student Code of Conduct that may extend to student use of social media include the barring of:

- ☐ threat(s) to others
- ☐ harassment of others
- ☐ academic dishonesty
- ☐ commercial solicitation
- ☐ sexual harassment
- ☐ ethnic, racial, discriminatory or sexual joking and epithets
- ☐ sexual misconduct.

#### **Privacy**

Users should take it upon themselves to familiarize themselves fully with privacy settings available for different platforms, which are highly customizable: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#). Users can customize these setting to control what content posted can be seen by different audiences.

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### **III. BEST PRACTICES**

OMC maintains a list of best practices guidelines and best practices at [dom.edu/omc](#). Visit that page for a variety of useful resources and presentations.

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#### **IV. CONTACT INFORMATION**

For questions about using social media for university purposes, please contact:

Christine Chorostecki  
Digital Communications Manager  
[cchorostecki@dom.edu](mailto:cchorostecki@dom.edu)

Jim Winters  
Vice President  
Office of Marketing and Communication  
[jwinters@dom.edu](mailto:jwinters@dom.edu)

For questions about employee use of social media, please contact:

Roberta McMahon  
Director of Human Resources  
[rmcmahon@dom.edu](mailto:rmcmahon@dom.edu)

For questions about student use of social media, please contact:

Trudi Goggin  
Dean of Students  
[tgoggin@dom.edu](mailto:tgoggin@dom.edu)