A) Policy Statement. The university recognizes the importance of social media as an evolving technology to communicate relevant information and enhance the university’s reputation and profile.

B) Purpose. To provide guidance for current and future use of official and affiliated university social media sites.

C) Scope. This policy applies to individuals including university faculty, staff, volunteers and students, including student employees, who create or contribute to official or affiliated university social media sites.

D) Definitions.

1. “Social Media” - Internet-based applications, websites, platforms, blogs, wikis, networks, and mobile-based technologies that enable users to create and share information.

2. “Official university social media site” - Any social media sponsored, controlled, or managed by a university college, school, department, program, office, or unit.

3. “Affiliated social media site” - Any social media created as part of an individual’s work or university responsibilities or by a university-sponsored organization as part of its activities.

E) Parameters.

1. The university’s office of marketing and communications shall establish, and when appropriate, revise, guidelines and/or best practices for university-sponsored and affiliated social media sites. (Please refer to the office of marketing and communications webpage.)

2. University sponsored and affiliated social media sites and postings are subject to all applicable state and federal regulations such as FERPA, copyright rights, university policies, guidelines, and best practices established by the office of marketing and communications, and “The Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct.”

3. Individual departments, colleges, programs, or administrative offices may establish additional guidelines specific to their areas of study or responsibilities. However, these guidelines must be reviewed and approved by the university’s office of marketing and communications prior to implementation.
Here's where to find what you’re looking for…

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Social Media Guidelines:

The social media guidelines are a set of rules and regulations put in place to ensure a positive brand identity and reputation for Youngstown State University across social media. All colleges, departments, organizations, units, chapters, groups, and affiliations of Youngstown State University are expected to adhere to these guidelines.

Account Registration

To create an account, please contact the Social Media Coordinator in the Office of Marketing and Communications. Once your account is up and running, you'll want to stay current with the University's social media team. Doing so will ensure that your account is listed as an approved social media account, and placed in the social media directory. Each account must be registered as soon as possible. If there is a change in administrative privileges, please update your registration each academic year.

Remember, all YSU accounts are the property of the University. Therefore, upon graduation, retirement, termination, etc., all administrative rights must be turned over to the Office of Marketing and Communication. Because of this, all accounts are required to have at least two administrators (one faculty or staff member), and accounts are to be registered under YSU email addresses.

Register Account

Content Guidelines

1. **TERMS OF SERVICE.** Be mindful of the terms of service (TOS) of each social media network. Most of these include prohibiting the use of copyrighted materials, zero tolerance policies with harassment and threats, privacy policies, etc. Violation of the network’s TOS may result in a suspension of your account by the social network.

2. **BE CAREFUL WITH WHAT YOU POST.** Do not use profanity, expletives, display alcoholic beverages, promote substance abuse, openly bash Youngstown State and the surrounding area, or argue with someone through a YSU affiliated account. Doing so will result in disciplinary action.

In addition, we have our own opinions about a wide array of topics. **It's important to remember that when engaging as a YSU account, your views are not those of the University.** As a public university, we remain neutral to respect all faculty, staff and students we serve. Also keep in mind that any issues you have with administration do not belong on YSU affiliated accounts. Discussing University-related issues on affiliated accounts is not allowed.
3. **DON'T FEED THE TROLLS.** A troll is someone who will try their hardest to get you to engage in an argument or combative conversation with them on social media for their enjoyment. Do not give in. In this scenario, ignore and move forward.

4. **NEGATIVE FEEDBACK ISN'T ALWAYS NEGATIVE.** If someone messages, tweets or comments to you regarding a situation they’ve encountered that has upset them, please respond in a respectful manner. Some situations may not warrant a response, however there are instances where we learn from mistakes. Our followers want to know that we see them and are listening to what they have to say.

**Remember Your Posts Are Public**

As a public institution, our communication records are subject to the Ohio Open Records Law. Please keep this in mind when posting to social media networks on behalf of the University.

**Branding**

The use of the Youngstown State University logos (including the block Y, legacy logo, Youngstown State University logo, and Pete the Penguin) are not to be used unless given proper permission from the Office of Marketing and Communications. Below is a list of resources to build your profile with approved branding.

- Profile Photos
- Cover Photos

Don’t see your area? Request a profile or cover photo.

**Communicating a Crisis**

When something occurs on campus that has people talking, we ask (kindly) that you don’t. Our communications team has a plan in place to handle a crisis situation, and we cannot jeopardize this process by having rumors flowing on social media — especially from our own accounts. In this situation, we ask all YSU accounts to go silent and stop any scheduled posts from being published while the situation is ongoing. Be sure to follow the main Youngstown State University Facebook and Twitter pages for updated information. If you receive anything incriminating to your specific social media channel, send that to Campus Police and University Marketing ASAP.

**Contact**

*Katie Burdette*
Social Media and Communications Coordinator
Youngstown State University
Office: 330-941-2251
Best Practices:

Getting Started

First and foremost, identify the person(s) that will be running the account(s) for your area. Keep in mind, each account must have at least one faculty or staff administrator, and the email address registered to the account should be shareable with all admins.

Second, you'll need to decide who your audience is.
1. Am I using it to communicate important dates, deadlines, etc.?
2. Am I using it to market and grow our program or organization size?
3. Am I sharing news about what our students are doing?

Third, decide which social channel fits your message best. Not sure how to choose? Use this guideline:

Facebook:
- Community: faculty/staff, alumni, donors, community members, some students
- Content Suggestions: sharing stories (news, events, accomplishments, etc.)

Twitter:
- Community: prospective and current students, alumni, community members
- Content Suggestions: memes (within guidelines), trends, replying back to tweets builds rapport, sharing stories

Instagram:
- Community: prospective and current students
- Content Suggestions: photo or video (no flyers or graphics, these are not accessible), sharing student perspectives through takeovers, utilizing stories

These are the top three platforms we typically engage with users, but know there are a number of new and emerging social media channels emerging each day. It’s highly recommended to start with one social channel and grow a fan base of followers who consistently engage with your content before moving on to the next platform.

Fourth, reach out to University Marketing to get registered.
Not too familiar with social media yourself and need some assistance? No problem! We’ve got you covered. Our Social Media & Digital Marketing Coordinator will sit on the account as support for the first two months. Vetted into a social media account already and need some help growing your audience? Just shoot us an email and we’ll get you set up with an appointment!

**Students Running Your Account?**

Awesome! They are the prime demographic to engage with the followers we are trying to reach. However, we know that students eventually graduate, and if they created the account, chances are the password will leave with them. It is important for **one faculty or staff member** to also act as administrator for all social media accounts so that passwords remain protected.

**What Happens If We Lose Our Password?**

Please let University Marketing know. In the event we can help recover through the social media channel, we will do so. **Please note that any account that does not post within a one year period will be asked to update the content or get rid of the account.**

**Register Account**

**Brand Standards**

**Using Our Logo**

Before you hop over to Google and image search the YSU logo, reach out to us. We’re very protective of our band, and logos often change slightly over the course of a few years. What you find on Google can be severely outdated, and we want to be sure we have a consistent brand look and feel across all platforms. **Email us** and we’ll get you a logo or profile photo to use for your accounts that fits our brand standards.

**Content Guidelines**

We know the power of social media sometimes takes over — but what happens when you get questions or comments you aren’t prepared for? Take a look at our social engagement flowchart to help decide how you should best respond.
Naming your account

Try to use ‘Youngstown State University’ over ‘YSU’ as you’re able. You can use YSU in the handle (example: @ysu______). Now that we’re reaching outside of our five county area, many people know of us as ‘Youngstown State University’ over YSU. This will help your account be more accessible and show up in search results.
Personal account with YSU in the name?

Cool! Thanks for wanting to identify yourself as someone who goes to/plays for/loves Youngstown State University. However, this means you’ll want to keep all the above guidelines in mind when posting. It’s not that bad though, just remember — what happens on the Internet, stays on the Internet. These just ensure you’ll have a nice, clean social footprint.

Crisis Ahead

As we chatted about in the social media guidelines, this can be a critical time for our campus community. When a situation occurs, all YSU affiliated social media accounts are to remain quiet to give the main account an opportunity to get proper alerts and updates pushed out to the public without interference. Statements that are crafted by University accounts without authorization will be asked to be removed. Official statements from the University should only be shared or retweeted, and not copy/pasted or edited. Remember that all eyes will be on us when something happens, so if you find that the general public typically affiliates your account with YSU, please keep these guidelines in mind out of courtesy. Thanks!

Monitoring

Watching what your audience is talking about and staying up-to-date on messages is crucial to running a successful social media account. Social listening (monitoring) is a commonly used tool to help do both of those things in one fair swoop. Where do you start? Platforms like Hootsuite have free dashboards that allow you to register up to three accounts. From there, you can publish posts and track mentions, comments and messages.

Strategy

Figuring out how you want to utilize your social media account is important. Rather than going into it without a clear plan, the Social Media team will sit down with your department or college to identify clear goals and content strategies for your accounts. Not sure how Facebook should differ from Instagram? We’ll help you sort it all out. You can request a meeting by emailing social@ysu.edu.

Getting the word out

There are so many cool things happening around campus on a daily basis, and we want to highlight them. Let us know! We don’t know what we don’t know, so we rely on you to tell us. Send interesting stories over to our communications team, or social media highlights to social@ysu.edu. Remember that our social media accounts are seen as an outward facing marketing tool. This means that internal communications for students, faculty and staff may not be posted to our social media channels at the discretion of our Social Media & Digital Marketing
Coordinator. The majority of our followers are the general public, and we want to keep them engaged and coming back for more content!

Have a different social media channel you’re using and need some helpful tips? Email, tweet, DM, comment (or however you’d like to get in touch) your questions and we’ll help you out!

Also, keep in mind that social media platforms are constantly changing. What worked a year ago most likely doesn’t work as well today. Stay connected with us, we’ll keep you social.

Contact

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Youngstown State University  
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keburdette@ysu.edu