MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY POLICY

Policy #:	
Name of Policy:	Social Media Policy

Date of Last Revision:	Dec 2024	Initial Date of Approval:		Initial Effective Date:	July 2017

Policy Owner	Director of Marketing
Policy/Chapter Sections	Definition Account Creation and Password Storage Faculty/Staff Usage of University Accounts Personal Use of Social Media Non-Compliance/Breach of Policy
Date of Next Review:	Dec 2027

1.0 PURPOSE

To encourage the use of social media by institutional users while making sure usage is in line with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and to provide protection to the University's reputation and members of its community.

While this policy primarily focuses on social media accounts that are University affiliated and University-managed, it will also provide general guidelines regarding personal use.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all University administration, faculty, staff, and students, and all such parties are expected to abide by the procedural guidelines outlined herein.

For purposes of this policy, "University Accounts" include the following University-affiliated and University-managed social media accounts:

   • Public-facing accounts (such as the University's Facebook and X/Twitter accounts).

   • Any other University department, program, or organization's social media account that is used for building engagement with members of the campus community and/or public.

The following accounts are not University Accounts:

   • Social media accounts/groups used in the classroom environment.

   • Personal social media accounts.

3.0 POLICY

<u>Definition</u>

Social media refers to technology tools and online spaces for integrating and sharing user-generated content in order to engage constituencies in conversations and allow them to participate in content and community creation. Social media includes:

- Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, X formerly known as Twitter, LinkedIn)
- Video and photo-sharing websites (e.g., YouTube, Instagram)
- Blogging sites
- Forums, discussion boards (e.g., Yahoo Groups, Google+, Google Groups), news article comments and online encyclopedias (e.g., Wikipedia)
- Other, similar technologies

Due to the rapidly evolving nature of social media and online technology, the list above is non-exhaustive, and this policy applies to other sites, including those that are emerging or have yet to be developed as of the effective date of this policy.

The purpose of this policy is to encourage the use of social media by institutional users while making sure usage is in line with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and to provide protection to the University's reputation and members of its community. While this policy primarily focuses on social media accounts that are University affiliated and University-managed, it will also provide general guidelines regarding personal use.

Nothing herein is designed or intended to be so far reaching that it might foreclose any legal rights of an employee or student, including an employee's right to discuss conditions of employment.

<u>Account Creation and Password Storage</u>

1. Creation of a University Account is subject to the following:

   a. The creator must be a university employee.

   b. The creator must submit a request for approval by completing the electronic Social Media Application ([Application Form](#)) which is sent to the University Relations and Marketing Department. The account should not be created until formal written approval has been received.

   c. Each University Account should have at least three administrators, one of which should be a staff member from University Relations and Marketing. These administrators and their contact information should be included in the request for approval.

   d. A request to create a University Account should include a proposed name for the account. Naming is important for consistency and brand unity. Whenever possible, "Missouri Southern

State University", "Missouri Southern," "MOSO" or "MSSU" should be listed before the department, program or organization name.

    e. University Accounts should feature proper University-approved logos and/or other photographs reflecting positively on the University's population and physical appearance. Acceptable University logos can be obtained through University Relations and Marketing. For guidance, please refer to the resources on the University Relations and Marketing webpage, which can be found at https://www.mssu.edu/university-relations-marketing/index.php.

    f. If it is discovered that a University Account has been created without proper approval as required above, the account will be subject to review and may be amended or removed.

2. All usernames and passwords or other login credentials established for access to any University Account are the property of the University. Employees responsible for maintaining, monitoring, and moderating university accounts that require the use of a username and password or other login credentials shall provide such login credentials to University Relations and Marketing, which will maintain a database of such login credentials. Any modification of usernames or passwords must be reported to University Relations and Marketing immediately upon such a change. This change will be reflected in University Relations and Marketing's login credential database. If a user's login credentials are the same as their personal login credentials (because their personal account is connected to the university account), they must make a member of University Relations and Marketing a co-administrator on the account (see 1c).

3. Administrators of University Accounts that have already been created as of the effective date of this policy must complete the electronic Social Media Application sent to the University Relations and Marketing to ensure there are at least three administrators for the account, with at least one being a staff member from University Relations and Marketing.

Faculty/Staff Usage of University Accounts

This section outlines MSSU's rules of engagement and expectations when using University Accounts on behalf of the University within the scope of their employment. This section does not apply to an employee's use of their personal social media accounts.

1. Account administrators should represent the University in a positive light. Be accurate, do not mislead others, and correct mistakes if they are made. Also, keep in mind that a non-active or poorly managed social media account can and will reflect negatively on the University.

2. Administrators of University Accounts must observe all other University policies while utilizing social media.

3. Do not disseminate confidential information. This is especially important in relation to HIPAA and FERPA statutes and regulations.

4. Be mindful of copyright and intellectual property rights of others as well as the University and adhere to university policies regarding those rights.

5. Have a plan. Administrators of University Accounts should consider their messages, audiences, and goals as well as strategies for keeping information on social media sites up to date. Accounts that have not published content in three months will be considered inactive and removed for public consumption. If Administrators desire to reestablish the account, they will be required to reapply. University Relations and Marketing can assist and advise employees with their social media planning.

6. Protect the institutional voice. Posts on social media sites should protect the University's institutional voice and brand by remaining professional in tone and in good taste.

7. Respect the opinions of others and use good judgment regarding content. MSSU will not tolerate content that is threatening, defamatory, illegal, obscene, infringing of intellectual property rights, invasive of privacy, profane, libelous, discriminatory, harassing, bullying, abusive, or hateful, in violation of university policy, or otherwise injurious or objectionable. The University reserves the right to take down any content it deems intolerable and remove the employee's administrative rights if necessary. However, the University does not intend this paragraph to limit opposing ideas and viewpoints in the course of legitimate social media interactions.

8. Strive for accuracy and give credit where credit is due. When using the thoughts, ideas, quotes, pictures, videos, etc. of other parties, give them credit for their work. Provide a link when necessary.

9. If using social media in the recruitment of potential student-athletes, do so in accordance with NCAA rules and regulations. Please contact University Relations and Marketing with questions.

10. Whenever possible under emergency conditions such as inclement weather, share the official university posts and messaging rather than creating new wording. This ensures consistent voice and information.

Personal Use of Social Media

This section applies to personal use of social media. It also outlines the potential impact of personal social media use to your employment or student relationship with Missouri Southern State University.

1. Think first, post second. Conduct that would subject an employee or student to discipline with the University if it occurred in-person can have the same consequences if it occurs in the realm of the internet and social media. Some examples include sexually harassing a student or colleague, discrimination, violating privacy policies or laws, defamation, and other conduct that is illegal or violates University policy.

2. Be mindful of copyright and intellectual property rights of others as well as the University and adhere to university policies regarding those rights.

3. Generally, employees should manage their personal social media accounts on their own time. There may be de minimis personal use of social media while utilizing University resources, but only to the extent such use does not hinder an employee's job productivity, the productivity of other

employees, or University programs and activities. However, it is acknowledged that faculty may choose to use their personal social media accounts in furtherance of their academic endeavors and employment with the University and this policy is not intended to hinder that option.

4. Computers, hardware, information technology accounts, and information technology infrastructure are properties owned and operated by the University. Employees and students do not have an expectation of privacy in their usage of them.

5. Employees and students are prohibited from using the Missouri Southern State University name, its logos or images to endorse a product, business or political candidate. Employees and students should also refrain from indicating themselves to be a representative of the University when they are not acting as such.

6. Due to a person's status at the University, there could be times when others may believe a personal opinion is actually a statement on behalf of the University. If an employee or student believes this may occur with their social media activity, the University encourages them to attempt to dissociate their opinions from those of the University by using a disclaimer. This could be a general disclaimer on their personal social media account, or a one-time disclaimer within a particular post where differentiation may be difficult. Here is a statement you can use in such situations: "The views expressed herein are my personal opinions and are not necessarily those of Missouri Southern State University."

7. Only authorized institutional staff members may recruit potential student-athletes. The University could be held in violation of NCAA rules and regulations if employees use their own personal social media accounts to contact potential student-athletes with whom they do not have close personal relationships in an attempt to recruit or entice them to attend MSSU.

Non-Compliance/Breach of Policy

Violations of this policy will result in a review of the incident and may include action under appropriate University discipline processes. Corrective action may involve a verbal or written warning, suspension or dismissal and/or termination of employment or privileges with the University. This section does not preclude disciplinary action for conduct that involves social media that also violates other University policies.

4.0 HISTORY

This policy may be revised, edited, changed or removed at any time with or without notice to applicable individuals.

December 2024 – updated to new format, added use of electronic application form, URM website address, and account removal criteria.

5.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

Social Media Application Form