[MOUNT WACHUSETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES]

Updated: 4 February 2011 , Prepared by the Marketing & Communications Department

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Overview

Social media technologies and their ease of use make them attractive channels of communication. However, these tools also can open the possibility of unintended consequences. To enhance the effective use of these technologies, these guidelines draw upon examples of best practices from various institutions to outline the most appropriate use of social media. Due to the rapid changes in technology, this guideline may be reviewed and updated as needed.

Social media provides Mount Wachusett Community College's employees, students, alumni and others ("Users") an opportunity to interact online to exchange thoughts, ideas and experiences through discussions, postings, photos and videos. These guidelines address the use of Facebook, blogs, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, LinkdIn and other social networking sites and tools used by MWCC, its employees, and student and alumni groups affiliated with the college while performing their duties. This guideline does not seek to dictate the personal uses of social media by employees, students, or alumni. This document addresses the responsibilities and obligations associated with access to computer systems and networks owned or operated by Mount Wachusett Community College. Use of all social media through the College's computer systems and networks shall at all times adhere to the College's *Information Technology Acceptable Use Policies* and *Copyright Guidelines,* as well as social media sites' communications standards, applicable local, state and federal laws, ethics, and privacy and intellectual property rights. These guidelines govern the use of the College's computer resources for all social media activities in order to maintain standards of quality and relevance to our primary goals of teaching and learning, and our position as a community institution.

In professional roles, MWCC employees shall maintain the same behavioral standards online as are required in person. Therefore, the same policies, professional expectations and guidelines for interacting with students, parents, alumni, donors, media and other college constituents apply online as well.

The information contained in this document is not in any way an endorsement of personal use of social networking sites on work time or on work equipment. All use outlined here is intended for the interactions and participation on our MWCC sites and pages to enrich our student's and other stakeholder's online social network experience with MWCC. Unaccepted uses are strictly prohibited pursuant to the *Information Technology Acceptable Use Policies*.

Questions regarding the use of social media or this guideline should be referred to the Assistant Director of New Media at (978) 630-9458. Questions regarding the *"Information Technology Acceptable Use Policies"* should be referred to the Human Resources Department at (978) 630-9191 or 9160.

General Guidelines

Maintain Confidentiality:

All Users are prohibited from posting confidential or proprietary information about MWCC, students, employees or alumni. All Users shall adhere to all applicable college privacy and confidentiality policies. Examples of confidential information include student ID numbers, home addresses, SSNs, and contact information. Proprietary information includes quotation of copyrighted materials without proper citation or attribution, etc.

Respect Copyright and Fair Use:

When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the college. Permission to use or reproduce copyrighted works is required unless the intended use is clearly permitted under the "fair use" exemption. This includes music, art, literary works, copyrighted photographs or texts, video clips, audiovisual works and audio recordings. Questions regarding fair use or the *Copyright Guidelines* can be directed to the LaChance Library at (978) 630-9125.

Respect College Time and Property:

College computers and time while at work are reserved for college-related business as approved by supervisors and in accordance with the *"Information Technology Acceptable Use Policies."* Social networking not related to College business is prohibited and should be done on personal time using personal computers

supported by commercial network assets and not college or other State owned resources.

Do No Harm:

Let your social networking activities do no harm to Mount Wachusett Community College or to yourself and others whether you are conducting college social networking activities or personal social networking activities.

Understand Your Personal Responsibility:

Staff and faculty are personally responsible for the content they publish on social media sites, blogs, other websites, wikis, forums, or any other form of user-generated content. What you publish online will be publicly accessible for an extended amount of time. Be mindful of what you post and protect your privacy and the privacy of others.

Maintain Transparency:

The fine line between personal and professional activities on social media sites is blurred easily. Be conscientious about what you post and how you portray yourself. Be honest about who you are and what you represent. In personal posts, employees are strongly advised against identifying themselves as a MWCC employee. However, if an employee does identify him/herself as a College employee, the employee must be clear that the post is of a personal nature and does not represent the views of Mount Wachusett Community College.

Correct Mistakes:

If you make a mistake, correct it. Be open and honest; admit you've made an error. If you can correct the original post, do so and be clear that you are making a correction. If you need to add an amended post, do so.

Be Respectful and Professional:

If you are respectful and professional, even while disagreeing with a person or post, you will achieve greater results. View comments or concepts you disagree with as an opportunity for candid and respectful dialogue.

Be Involved and Use Etiquette:

If you participate in social networking sites, follow etiquette and contribute constructive content. Social media sites are not the place for domineering conversations, self-promotion, or spam postings. These types of behaviors are not tolerated and can result in your being banned from the sites where you use this behavior.

Communications Between Employees:

Personal Facebook profiles or other social media sites may not be used by supervisors or subordinates to communicate on official College business. When in doubt, contact the Human Resources Department.

Be Mindful; Think Before You Submit Content:

There is no expectation of privacy on any social networking sites. Search engines can index and display posts, content, remarks, and pages anytime after they have been published. There are archiving services that cache sites even if they have been taken down and replaced or updated. If you are having a heated reaction to content, take a moment to compose yourself in a respectful and professional way before you respond or act. Post only information, photos, images, and other user-generated content that you are comfortable being completely public and archived by third-party sites or services.

Social Media Guidelines When Posting as an Individual

Use A Disclaimer:

If you post content to any social networking site outside of MWCC that has to do with the college, its staff, or your work, use a disclaimer such as: "This post contains my own personal opinions and does not represent Mount Wachusett Community College's opinions, views, or positions."

Prohibited Use of MWCC Logos or Making Endorsements:

All staff, faculty, and employees are prohibited from using college logos, trademarks, or images on personal sites. Do not use MWCC's name or likeness to endorse products, causes, or political actions of any kind. Questions regarding proper use of MWCC logos and associated materials should be directed to the MWCC Marketing & Communications Department.

Don't Use Pseudonyms:

Do not pretend to be someone else or use fake names. Tracking tools enable supposed anonymous comments and posts to be tracked back to their origin.

Protect Your Identity:

While you should maintain transparency and honesty in your social networking interaction, be careful to not reveal confidential information about yourself that could be used to steal your identity. Never post your home addresses, home phone numbers, where your children go to school, or other information of a sensitive nature on social network sites.

Does It Pass the "Boston Globe" Publicity Test?

If the content you wish to post would not be appropriate for a face-to-face or telephone conversation, it is also not appropriate for social networking sites. If you would not be comfortable reading about your actions, comments, or content in the local paper or defending them in a Boston Globe interview, then do not post that content.

Be Respectful:

Use the same behavior that is expected of you while on campus. Don't use insults, slurs, obscenity, or inflammatory language at any time.

Social Media Guidelines When Posting On Behalf of Mount Wachusett Community College

Social Media Site Approval:

No one shall launch a social media account on behalf of a college department, student club or organization, or any other officially-sanctioned MWCC entity or activity without first obtaining approval from the Marketing & Communications Department. Administrators of sites created prior to this document will be provided with a copy for use and reference and must ensure the site complies with all policies and laws now and moving forward. Only authorized individuals may send or post messages on social networking sites on behalf of MWCC. Current social media administrators must correct non-compliant pages and sites within 30 days of receiving this guideline document.

Acceptable Use & Monitoring

All MWCC policies, including those related to harassment, discrimination, respect for diversity, retaliation, workplace violence, ethics, and conflicts of interest apply to all Users' postings and social media content.

MWCC reserves the right to monitor employee use of social media. As set forth in the *Information Technology Acceptable Use Policies*, employees may be disciplined for violating the confidentiality of MWCC, of fellow employees, posting harassing or defamatory content or other infractions of MWCC's normal workplace standards of conduct. This applies to postings and blogging occurring at any time.

Misrepresentation:

When an employee is engaged in social media activities for specific College-related business, the employee should include his/her name and official job title in all communications. When engaging in personal social media activities, employees must specify that they are speaking for themselves and not on behalf of MWCC. Employees should refrain from identifying MWCC in personally owned or controlled social media sites or personal commentary posted to social media discussions or pages, or their messages should have clear disclaimers that the views expressed are personal to the author and do not necessarily represent the views of MWCC. Employees are reminded that they bear personal responsibility for the content of their posts, blogs or other social media content.

Terms of Service:

Obey the Terms of Service of any social media platform used.

Use of Photographs:

All photographs to be used as official College posts shall be obtained from the College's Marketing & Communications Department.

Photographs posted on social media sites can be easily copied by visitors. Whenever possible, post images at 72 dpi and approximately 800x600 resolution to protect your intellectual property. Images at that size are sufficient for viewing on the Web, but are not suitable for printing.

For personal social media activities, MWCC employees are reminded that they should be respectful of co-workers, students, management, and other colleges and universities. It is recommended that you obtain authorization from individuals or colleges and universities prior to posting their picture, using their trademark, or identifying them by their name.

Monitoring Sites:

Social media demands a high level of responsiveness. Administrators are not required to be available 24/7, but are expected to monitor their sites and respond as necessary on a daily basis, Monday through Friday.

Social Media Comments:

MWCC encourages interaction from social media users, but is not responsible for comments or postings made by visitors.

MWCC asks that employees making comments on MWCC pages show respect for other users by ensuring the discussion remains civil. Employee comments and content are also subject to the site's terms of use and code of conduct.

MWCC reserves the right, but assumes no obligation, to remove content and/or comments that are not related to official college business and consistent with the college's mission. We also do not permit messages selling products or promoting commercial or other private for-profit ventures.

Negative comments can be handled with a careful response. Always try to:

- Provide a polite and friendly answer to the question/criticism
- Direct him/her to a source of information/assistance, or offer to assist if you can
- Remember that a negative comment is an opportunity to showcase MWCC

Guidelines for Use of Facebook on Behalf of Mount Wachusett Community College

Facebook is referenced as an example. These guidelines apply, however, to all social media sites.

MWCC's Official Facebook page:

The Marketing and Communications Department and Enrollment Services are administrators for the college's official page on Facebook. Those who wish to contribute information to the MWCC Facebook page as an official message from the college should email Sarah McMaster at smcmaster@mwcc.mass.edu or Carol Cullins at ccullins@mwcc.mass.edu.

Fans of the page, including students, representative of student clubs, faculty and staff, are also encouraged to post comments and announcements.

Creating and Managing a Facebook Page

Anyone who wishes to create a Facebook page or group for a college-affiliated department, program, club or organization, must first meet with Janice O'Connor, Director of Public Relations or Sarah McMaster, Assistant Director of New Media, for guidance about requirements outlined in this document. Ms. O'Connor can be contacted at (978) 630-9547 or joconnor@mwcc.mass.edu. Ms. McMaster can be contacted at (978) 630-9458 or smcmaster@mwcc.mass.edu.

Pages or groups created by a department or organization on behalf of the college must be created by authorized representatives of the college. The department's initial page creator must include a member of MWCC's Marketing & Communications Department as a page

administrator. While the PR director does not intend to actively maintain or monitor these sites, this designation will enable the Marketing and Communications Department to properly track college Facebook pages and respond quickly in the event of a problem, such as the unavailability or departure of the staff member who has administrative control of the page.

At present, Facebook page creators have super-administrator rights over the pages they create, however these rights can be transferred to additional administrators if needed though the submittal of a help ticket to Facebook.

To reduce the number of potential problems, it is recommended that the college Public Relations Director or Assistant Director of New Media be asked to create the page, solely for the purpose of maintaining MWCC ownership of the page. The administrators designated by the department or program will control content and maintain the page as described in this document.

To comply with Facebook terms of service and enable the college to track authorized college pages, any department or organization wishing to create a page or group must provide the Marketing & Communications Department with the name and contact information for the individual(s) who will be authorized by the department to administer the page on an ongoing basis.

Account Security:

The department's authorized page administrator(s) must maintain the security of his/her Facebook password and is fully responsible for all use of and any actions that take place using his/her account, including those that result from the failure to protect his/her user ID against unauthorized use. Any changes in the designated page administrator(s) must be promptly communicated to the Marketing & Communications Department. Departments may not register for more than one User account, or register for a User account on behalf of another individual, group, or entity. At all times, a department's authorized page administrator shall maintain with the Public Relations Director an updated Facebook password.

Graphics:

Facebook pages should feature the department, program or organization's official image or identifying mark, if one exists. If one does not, contact the Marketing & Communications Department to discuss creation of an appropriate mark. Departments and programs are encouraged to use photography to display campus beauty. All photos shall be obtained from the Marketing and Communications

Department. Users can submit images for approval that then become part of the library for any authorized site creator/administrator to draw from.

Collecting User Information:

Facebook may not be used to collect personal information of users. Facebook terms and conditions, as well as state and federal law, impose significant requirements and restrictions on the collection of personal information of users. In the case of minors, significant additional penalties can apply to violations.

Facebook Site Monitoring:

MWCC Facebook pages and groups must be monitored and updated on an ongoing basis by the department or units that create them to enable rapid response to any problems that may arise and to ensure an engaging, interesting environment for visitors. Minimally, pages should be reviewed on a daily basis, and ideally, they should be checked morning and afternoon. A stale or outdated page can be more damaging to the image of an entity than not having a page at all.

Social Media Best Practices

- Share information only appropriate for the public. Keep in mind that content posted may be distributed through the Internet and other media channels and may be viewed by the general public. If deleted or modified, older versions may continue to exist online.

- Content that promotes or depicts illegal activity, is threatening or harassing, includes obscenities, or defames a person is prohibited. In addition, the college's social media should not be used for political or commercial purposes.

- Strive for accuracy: Get the facts straight before posting them on social media. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors. This is especially important when posting on behalf of the College.

- Be respectful: Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments or discussions of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the poster and/or the College.

- Remember your audience: Be aware that a presence in the social media world is or easily can be made available to the public at large through the Internet. This includes prospective students, current students, current employers and colleagues, and peers. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not alienate, harm, or provoke any of these groups.

- Employees are reminded to use discretion when using social networking media. If unsure about how policy or guidelines apply to your posting or social media site, employees are encouraged to consult with their supervisor before taking action whenever possible.

Resources

In developing the College's social media policy and guidelines, the Office of Marketing and Communications drew upon a variety of excellent resources, including those made available through Holyoke Community College, Bristol Community College, University of Michigan, Ball State University and www.socialmediagovernance.com.

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