



# Policy on the Use of Social Media

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Montclair State University recognizes and supports the principles of academic freedom and the First Amendment rights of employees and students to speak on matters of public concern as private citizens through social media. This Policy is intended, in a manner consistent with those principles and rights, to set forth the University's expectations and employee and student responsibilities in regard to the use of existing and emerging social media communication technologies.

## **2. DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media, as used in this policy, refers to all forms of on-line tools or services through which virtual communication is created allowing users to publish commentary and share information, ideas, personal messages and other content, including but not limited to, blogs, wikis, and social networking sites (which include, but are not limited to Facebook, Youtube, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Instagram, Pinterist, Flipboard and Twitter).

## **3. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR THE UNIVERSITY**

Webpages and social media identified with the University must be consistent with the University's Web Publishing Guidelines and shall be used only to support an authorized University or student function, group, or event.

All other webpages and social media: 1) shall not display video, audio, photographs, written text or any other material created by or for the University unless authorized by the University in writing; 2) shall not directly or indirectly suggest that the communication is associated with the University or that the University endorses the views or opinions expressed in the content; and 3) if linked in any way to the University's website or information technology system, must explicitly state that the material provided is the individual's own and is not associated with the University and does not express the views or opinions of the University.

## **4. PROHIBITED USES OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Webpages and social media that are identified with the University shall comply with the following:

1. Expressions of speech that constitute libel are prohibited. Libel means speech that intentionally or negligently makes false statements about an individual, group or entity that causes injury to his/her/its reputation; and speech that maliciously makes false statements about a public official causing injury to his/her reputation.
2. Expressions of speech that are obscene and not protected by the First Amendment are prohibited. Obscenity means a depiction or description, in a patently offensive way, of sexual conduct or excretory functions that, when taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value or that the average person, applying contemporary local standards, would find, when taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interests.
3. Expressions of speech that constitute harassment or discrimination under New Jersey or Federal law are prohibited.
4. Expressions of speech that are directed to inciting or producing imminent violence or other breach of the peace and are likely to incite or produce such action are prohibited.
5. Expressions of speech that reveal information protected from disclosure by New Jersey or Federal law, including confidential student information, protected health information, confidential personal information, personal financial information, or confidential research data are prohibited.
6. Expressions of speech that violate the rules and procedures issued by the New Jersey Ethics Commission governing State employees are prohibited. For example, speech that would promote or endorse a product or event, vendor, political party, political candidate, or a personal cause is prohibited.
7. The use of film, photographs, logos, or other material that violates the copyright, trademark or intellectual property rights of the University or others is prohibited.
8. Digital and audio recordings of live or on-line classroom instruction may be published on Social Media by University employees in the course of their official duties, consistent with applicable University policies. However, digital and audio recordings of live or on-line classroom instruction may not be published by University students on Social Media without the prior written consent of the relevant faculty member(s) and the University.

## **5. EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY**

University employees and students shall have an expectation of privacy in computer related infrastructure, storage equipment and other devices consistent with the University's Policy on Responsible Computing.

The University will not require a current or prospective employee or student to disclose whether he or she maintains a Personal Social Media Account, nor will it require a current or prospective employee or student to provide or disclose a user name or password, or provide the University access to a Personal Social Media Account in order to access any electronic information. A Personal Social Media Account is

defined for the purposes of this Policy as one that is not identified with the University and is not created or maintained by, and does not use, University websites, networks, equipment, or technology.

## **6. GUIDELINES FOR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

The University's Office of Communications has created a web page with advice and recommendations for posting to specific popular Social Media sites and it can be found here:

<http://www.montclair.edu/university-communications/social-media/>.

The following are a list of best practices that should be followed by any employee or student who is authorized to use Social Media on behalf of or in connection with the University:

1. **Think twice before posting.** Privacy does not exist in Social Media. Be aware that Social Media content can easily be made available to the public at large. If an employee is unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, the employee should consult with his/her supervisor or contact the University's Office of Communications. If a student is unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, the student should consult with the Office of the Dean of Students.
2. **Be accurate.** Verify facts before posting on Social Media. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors.
3. **Be respectful and professional.** Content should reflect the University's voice by being professional and respectful of others in tone.
4. **Protect photographic property.** Photographs posted on social media can easily be appropriated. Consider using a watermark to protect any intellectual property in them. The Photography Policies on the Office of Communications webpage should be consulted before posting photographs on any Social Media.

## **7. VIOLATIONS**

Employees who violate this Policy may be subject to disciplinary measures, consistent with any applicable collective bargaining agreement, up to and including suspension, dismissal, and termination. Students who violate this Policy may be subject to discipline in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## **8. RELATED POLICIES AND LINKS**

- Policy on Responsible Use of Computing
- Data Classification and Handling (Safeguarding Sensitive and Confidential Information Policy)
- Web Publishing Policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- Academic Policies – Academic Freedom

**8. REVISIONS**

This policy was last revised on September 17, 2014