

Policy Number: 711

Policy Title: Social Media

POLICY:

Social media created to represent Georgia Perimeter College must follow established rules of Internet posting. Faculty may not use social media to assess student work, communicate grades, or as part of an assignment requiring active student participation.

PROCEDURE:

Social media is defined as “media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable communication techniques. Social media is the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue.” (Wikipedia) All information posted on a GPC-related social media sites must be in compliance with the [GPC Website policies and procedures](#) and adhere to all applicable institutional and legal privacy, confidentiality and property policies and laws, follow acceptable social behaviors and comply with federal and state regulations, such as [FERPA](#), [DMCA](#), and [HIPAA](#) regulations.

Section 1: Laws, Regulations, and Policies that Govern What You Can Post Online

This section outlines governing regulations that apply to all users of Georgia Perimeter College social media when posting material online. In some cases, violations could lead to disciplinary action or termination.

- 1. Protect confidential and proprietary information:**
Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Georgia Perimeter College students, employees, or alumni. All persons must follow the applicable federal requirements such as [FERPA](#), [DMCA](#), and [HIPAA](#) regulations, and adhere to all applicable institutional and legal privacy, confidentiality and property policies and laws.
- 2. Respect copyright and fair use:**
When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the College.
- 3. Use Georgia Perimeter College intellectual properties only with permission:**
No user may establish social networking sites that use the Georgia Perimeter College logo or other intellectual properties such as photography, video, artwork, and publications copyrighted to the College without authorization from the College. It is a violation of social networking site policies to represent an institution without authorization. The Marketing and Public Relations department at GPC must be contacted if you wish to start a social networking page or to use the college’s intellectual property.

4. **Disseminating official information:**

The department of Marketing and Public Relations and other designated offices are responsible for posting and publishing online official information on behalf of the College.

Section 2: Guidelines for Institutionally-Sponsored and -Moderated Social Media Sites

These guidelines apply to institutional accounts that are set up, maintained and moderated by Marketing and Public Relations on sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. These guidelines also apply to department-moderated social media sites.

1. **Institution-moderated social networking sites:**

Georgia Perimeter College has institution-moderated social network sites managed by the department of Marketing and Public Relations staff. These sites can be used by the college community to disseminate information to various audiences including prospective students, donors, alumni, and visitors of the College. Individual departments may choose to establish a department-moderated site when these institution-moderated sites are not applicable for their needs. Departments are required to contact the Marketing and Public Relations team at pubrel@gpc.edu to register these sites.

As part of the social media framework, GPC maintains an official presence on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/gaperimetercollege) (www.youtube.com/gaperimetercollege), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/georgiaperimetercollege) (www.facebook.com/georgiaperimetercollege) and [Twitter](https://www.twitter.com/gpctweets) (www.twitter.com/gpctweets), for content sharing. These sites are maintained by the Marketing and Public Relations office with content produced or endorsed by the college to inform audiences about the mission, programs of study and activities at the College. Other departments and offices may submit content to these official sites through the Department of Marketing and Public Relations. MPR will make and post the content changes as appropriate.

2. **If you operate a department-moderated social networking site:**

Before creating a department-moderated social media site, the site administrator must contact the Marketing and Public Relations Department to get approval, initial training and to submit the Social Media Inventory Form used to track sites related to the College. Departments should also consider their particular audience, message and goals and have a strategy for keeping information on their social media site up-to-date. The intention and purpose of the department-moderated sites should be specific in order to protect the College's institutional voice. Efforts should be made to cross-link to institution-moderated sites managed by Marketing and Public Relations and/or to College content on www.gpc.edu when relevant. Whenever possible, use of images, pictures, graphics and posted content must directly relate to the particular department or activity to avoid confusion with institution-moderated sites.

3. **Administrative access to GPC-sponsored social media sites:**

A member of the Marketing and Public Relations team will be included as an administrator on any social networking site that is moderated and maintained as an official presence of the college. There are several important reasons for this. We are assured that these networks are managed when staff members leave. This practice also

allows us to communicate efficiently during an emergency and it allows us to track usage and quickly remove content that violates this policy. Site administrators are still responsible for their social media networks and the MPR administrator typically serves as a monitor.

4. **Instructional use of social media sites:**

Faculty do not need to use our official presence on various social media sites and can use these tools to support teaching and learning activities. However, faculty should not use social media for academic purposes such as assessing students' work, communicating grades, or requiring a student to use social media for their course work, but may use it for general information purposes.

5. **Official Student Clubs and Organizations:** may create a social media presence in consultation with the group's advisor using social media or other web technologies as applicable. Students should consider their particular audience, message and group goals and have a strategy for keeping information on their social media sites up-to-date. These social media sites should also be registered through the department of Marketing and Public Relations at pubrel@gpc.edu so that we can moderate and promote them in other media. Use of images, pictures, graphics and posted content must tie back clearly to the particular group or activity to avoid confusion with institution-moderated sites.

Section 3: Posting Online and When Using College-Moderated Sites

This section provides guidelines for all users of Georgia Perimeter College social media when posting material online.

1. **Understand how your role may impact how others interpret what you say:**

If you choose to list your work affiliation on a social network or identify your association with the College, then you should regard all communication on that network as you would in a professional network. What you publish online should never be attributed to the College and should not appear to be endorsed by or originating from the College, unless you are authorized to officially act in this capacity on behalf of the College. All social media sites must include the disclaimer "This site is not an official publication of Georgia Perimeter College."

2. **When using College e-mail to register for a social media site:**

You are accountable for all activity conducted with your College e-mail address or when identifying yourself as a member of the College community. The "@gpc.edu" address attached to your name may indicate to others that you are acting on the College's behalf so be clear when that is not the case.

3. **Know the terms of service of your social media platform:**

Be sure to understand and follow the terms of service of any social media platform you use. You are personally responsible for compliance.

4. **Be accurate and transparent:**

Have the facts before you post. If you post inaccurate information then correct it quickly. Social networks are successful when they offer authentic and direct communications via user-generated content. Social networks are interactive with a two-way flow of information. If you are representing Georgia Perimeter College when

posting, acknowledge this *by including your name and job title or department as a signature to your post.*

5. Respect others' privacy:

Do not post private information concerning others such as student data or contact information. Please exercise good "[netiquette](#)." Social networks are in the public realm and are not appropriate venues for the discussion or dissemination of private matters. It is important to remember that all employees are subject to the same laws, professional expectations, and guidelines when interacting online as we would in-person with students, parents, alumni, donors, and the media.

Additional care must be taken when participating in GPC-sponsored and -moderated social media sites. The below "best practices" (i.e. items 6 through 8) particularly apply to our moderated sites that are set up to reach specific audiences to carry out mission critical functions from fund raising to admissions.

6. Consider the intended audience when posting:

College moderated sites are frequented by prospective students, alumni, friends, and other interested parties. The College encourages thoughtful social media interaction and does not seek to censor contributions to these sites. However, profanity, racist, sexist, or derogatory remarks, content that incites hate or encourages unethical or illegal activities, comments on litigation involving the College, spam and off-topic remarks may be removed and the user could be banned from further participation on the site.

7. Be relevant and respectful:

Be thoughtful, accurate, relevant and respectful on GPC-moderated sites. Our GPC-moderated social networks are successful when members contribute thoughtful and relevant content. Have a comment? Post it. Have a suggestion? Tell us about it. Have a different opinion? State it, respectfully. Want to offer a unique perspective? Share it. Want to air a grievance? Take care to ensure that your statements are relevant and do not violate confidentiality and others' privacy. Social networks are often not the best forums for raising grievances that might be better addressed in other venues or handled privately.

8. Link to other College material:

Ideally, posts on College-moderated sites should be brief; redirecting a visitor to content that resides within the GPC College site at www.gpc.edu whenever applicable.

Section 4: Information Security Concerns Regarding Social Media at GPC

Risks include:

- Exposure and compromise of sensitive data – any data on these networks is at risk
- Identity theft and privacy issues
- Violation of laws and regulations (e.g., FERPA, HIPAA, DMCA)
- Prevalence of malware
- Unauthorized persons speaking for GPC (or giving the appearance)
- Damage to brand and public image – no control over how information is used or who uses it
- Loss of ownership of data – social networks state that you have no right of ownership

- Intellectual property infringement – e.g., copyright infringement, trademark infringement, right of publicity
- Defamation or trade libel – false, deceptively misleading statements of facts posted about an individual or company could be the basis for legal action

Section 5: Process for Resolving Concerns and Conflicts

Social media technology is evolving and no policy or procedure can address all of the particular situations and circumstances that may arise. Users can contact the Marketing and Public Relations team at pubrel@gpc.edu for guidance.

Approved by GPC Policy Council