# Washtenaw Community College's Social Media Policy

## Introduction

Washtenaw Community College recognizes the value of social media applications and supports their use. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. Because social media blurs the line between personal voice and institutional voice, WCC has crafted guidelines for both students and WCC employees to help clarify how best to enhance and protect personal and professional reputations when participating in social media to ensure the college's best interests are represented.

WCC faculty, staff and students engaging in social media are expected to act with honesty, integrity and respect for the rights, privileges, privacy, sensibilities and property of others. By doing so, individuals are expected to adhere to and abide by all applicable laws as well as college policies and rules.

Social media is defined as a platform located on the internet or accessed through mobile application that facilitates the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks.

At no time should an employee or student create content that can be viewed as hateful, vulgar, defamatory, offensive, harassing or an incitement of violence.

## WCC Official/Professional Profiles

WCC employees and students authorized by their dean or department supervisor may use social media to post on behalf of the college, including but not limited to: a social network profile or departmental and student organization pages. Officially recognized WCC social media accounts developed to represent the college will be listed in an online directory by the Office of Marketing and Communications. Social media sites affiliated with WCC must have a minimum of two employees as administrators on the site. This may include two members of the same department or one member of a department and a member of the Marketing and Communications staff.

WCC encourages freedom of expression and recognizes the value of diverse opinions. However, the college has the right to monitor social networking sites and may perform activities -- which may include deletion of posts or comments -- necessary to ensure the integrity, functionality and security of the college's electronic resources. Page administrators have a responsibility to remove comments, images, or other material deemed inflammatory, vulgar, or otherwise inappropriate, especially when they appear to threaten the welfare or safety of the poster or others.

In addition to Washtenaw Community College's Computing Resource Usage Policy (Board of Trustee's policy no. 8022), an employee's personal use of the college's electronic resources to access social networking sites is to be limited to activities which are essential to or consistent with the employee's job duties or the performance of the department.

## Best Practices

Whether on a personal or professional page belonging to a student or employee, Washtenaw Community College offers the following best practices as guidelines to posting content on social media sites:

**1. Be respectful:** Always be fair and courteous to coworkers, students or other individuals. Avoid posting information or statements that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, threatening, obscene, intimidating, harassing, or disparaging to others. Also, be respectful of copyright and trademark laws, including logos.

**2. Be honest and accurate:** Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Remember that the internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about WCC, faculty, staff or students or other individuals working on behalf of WCC. Check information with its source before posting.

**3. Be transparent:** If you participate in or maintain a social media site on behalf of WCC, clearly state your role and goals. People may view what you post as coming from WCC and what you say directly reflects WCC. If you are posting on behalf of WCC on an authorized WCC page, personal opinions should be kept separate.

**4. Be responsible:** What you write is ultimately your responsibility, even while not on campus or involved in a campus activity.

**5. Maintain Confidentiality:** Do not post confidential or proprietary information about WCC, its students, alumni, faculty, staff or other individuals associated with the college. Use good ethical judgment and follow WCC policies as well as state and federal laws, such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

## Investigations

In response to concerns or complaints or information provided by individuals, WCC may look at social networking sites and take appropriate action to stop and prevent recurrence of inappropriate or threatening behavior.