POL-U6500.02 USING SOCIAL MEDIA AT WESTERN

This policy applies to all University faculty, staff and students.

Definitions:

Social Media: External websites or services based on participant contributions to the content. Types of social media include blogs, micro blogs, social and professional networks, video or photo sharing, and social bookmarking. Examples of social media sites are YouTube, Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, Pinterest, Tumblr, Instagram, LinkedIn, Google+, etc.

Directory: A website directory located at https://social.wwu.edu/. It is a digital aggregator and record repository for Western’s official social media accounts.

Official Social Media Accounts: Social media accounts listed in the directory that are sponsored by the University and officially represent the University, or a University division, college, unit or program.

Account Administrators: University employees or student-employees who manage, monitor and maintain official social media accounts as a part of their job duties or as a means to accomplish their official University responsibilities.

Department Heads: Academic department chairs and deans, directors of academic and non-academic units, and others who have direct oversight responsibility for official social media sites within their area.

Posts or Comments: All text, images, videos, audio, website hyperlinks and any other information published, posted and/or distributed through social media.

1. University Recognizes the Benefits of Social Media

Western has a thriving social media community with a wide array of accounts representing various aspects of our University. Western uses social media to enhance its communication and engagement with students, faculty, staff, alumni and others to support the University’s strategic plan.
2. **University Recognizes Freedoms**

The University recognizes both academic freedom, as expressed in the Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement and Faculty Handbook, and freedom of expression, as protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and Washington State Constitution, as it pertains to the use of social media.

3. **Only Official Social Media Accounts Represent the University**

Only official social media accounts may:

   a. Represent the University on social media;

   b. Use the Western logo or brand as part of their profile image (insert template link); and

   c. Utilize University funds for social media advertising.

4. **University Communications Approves the Official Social Media Accounts Listed in the University Social Media Directory**

The Office of University Communications and Marketing maintains a directory of the University’s official social media accounts at [https://social.wwu.edu/](https://social.wwu.edu/).

Account administrators of official social media accounts must satisfy the following requirements:

   a. Complete the *Social Media at Western* training; and

   b. Make a reasonable effort to monitor posts and comments on their social media sites.

Employees who wish to establish new university social media accounts must seek approval from the appropriate department head using the Western Social Media E-Form.

Employees and student-employees may contact the Office of University Communications and Marketing for assistance with official social media questions and access to additional training and reference resources.

University employee or student personal social media accounts are not official social media accounts.
5. **Department Heads Responsible for Account Administrators and Official Social Media Sites**

Department heads are responsible for supervising the activities of their employees and student-employees who are account administrators. Department heads should communicate regularly with account administrators regarding social media content and correspondence.

6. **Official Social Media Accounts are Subject to Public Records Disclosures and Records Retention**

Social media records prepared, owned, used, or retained by the University may be subject to the State of Washington Public Records Act and may be disclosed under a public records request- [RCW 42.56.010(1)](https://app.leg.wa.gov律/RCW/42.56.010). There is no expectation of privacy when using a social media site.

Account administrators of official social media accounts must ensure that the contents of the site are properly archived and retained as required under the applicable records retention schedule and in consultation with University Archives and Records Management.

7. **Users of Social Media Responsible for Posts and Comments**

Faculty, staff and students (“users”) using social media are responsible for their posts and comments on any social media site, including official social media sites, personal social media sites and the sites of others.

The following non-exhaustive list of University policies, and federal and state regulations, apply to faculty, staff and students using official social media sites, and may apply to their use of personal social media sites and the sites of others, depending on the nature of such use:

- **Discrimination.** Users may not engage in actions that constitute discrimination, including harassment and bullying, on the basis of a legally protected characteristic [POL-U1600.02](#).

- **Sex Discrimination.** Users may not engage in actions that constitute sex discrimination, which includes sexual misconduct. Sexual harassment, gender harassment, and sexual violence are forms of sexual misconduct [POL-U1600.04](#).

- **Student Educational Records.** Users may not disclose student educational records or personally identifiable student information that violates the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa.html)) [POL-U7100.01](#).
- **Mandatory Title IX Reporting.** All University faculty, staff (except confidential support professionals), resident assistants and graduate teaching assistants are responsible employees and must promptly report sexual misconduct, including sexual violence, to the Title IX Coordinator POL-U1600.04.

- **Social Media Account Provider Rules.** By joining a particular social media network or service, users agree to abide by that provider’s terms of service, so they must be followed. Users should review those terms carefully.

- **Illegal Activity.** Users may not engage in illegal activity or encourage the illegal activity of others.

- **Personal Health Information.** Personal health information privacy must be maintained by all users. Users may not disclose information that may be used to identify patients or their health condition and remember that even de-identified information may be recognized by patients, their families, or their employers HIPAA.

- **Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights.** Users must preserve the copyright and intellectual property rights of others. POL-U4520.03, POL-U4520.04.

- **Western Logo and Brand.** The University owns and controls its name(s) and other marks, logos, insignias, seal, designs and symbols. Unauthorized use of these logos and brands is prohibited by the University Brand Central.

- **State Ethics Laws.** Users of social media are subject to the University policy and State of Washington regulations regarding the use of University resources for the private benefit or gain of faculty, staff or another person, or for the purpose of assisting a political campaign for election of any person to any office or for the promotion of or opposition to any ballot proposition The Ethics In Public Service Act, Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Chapter 42.52.

- **Student Conduct Code.** Student users of social media are subject to the Student Conduct Code Students Rights and Responsibilities Code Chapter 516-21 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC).

- **Employment Contract.** Faculty and staff users are subject to their terms and conditions of employment with the University.

Violations of any University policy, or federal or state regulations, by faculty, staff or students while using social media will be treated similarly by the University to violations of University policy, or federal or state regulations in any other applicable setting.

Users may use this policy and the University’s Social Media Guidelines for reference.