SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE
SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES AND BEST PRACTICES

The following is an overview of social media basics that all Seminole State College employees are required to follow if they are an administrator of an SSC social media page. Remember, you are REQUIRED to have approval from the SSC Media Relations Office BEFORE creating and/or operating any social media sites for the college.

GUIDELINES

Be transparent. Always make sure you are honest about your identity and relationship to SSC. Be sure to state the purpose of any site or page created. When possible, provide contact information for individuals to connect with your group through other channels. When appropriate, clarify your position with SSC.

Be confidential. Be careful not to reveal confidential or proprietary information about SSC students, employees or alumni. Adhere to all applicable SSC, federal and NCAA privacy and confidentiality policies. All employees of SSC are subject to FERPA, HIPAA, and other laws mandating the nondisclosure of personal information.

Be respectful. You are representing SSC, so remain professional and in good taste. Social media sites are designed for two-way communication, and content contributed to a social media site may encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. As an administrator, you can and should respond when relevant, but consider how your response may reflect on you, your department and SSC. If you are unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, ask your supervisor.

Stay accurate. Get the facts straight before posting them on social media sites. When possible, link back to the original source. Review content for grammatical and spelling mistakes. If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly.

Connect thoughtfully. Connecting to other social media members and sites builds credibility and community but could also give the unintended impression that your site endorses a certain cause, group or person. Consider carefully who you "friend," "follow," link to or allow into your site and to what extent you will allow comments. Help the SSC community stay connected by linking back to the SSC homepage and other SSC social media sites. When possible, link to a SSC news source instead of an outside source.

It's a conversation. Talk to your readers like you would talk to real people in professional situations. It's okay for your comments to reflect your own personality, as long as it is respectful and in a manner that positively reflects SSC. Try to engage your audience with questions or content that is open-ended, invite response and encourage comments. You can also broaden the conversation by citing others who are posting about the same topic. Make sure you post in ways that easily enable sharing.

Keep it classy. Do not post offensive, obscene, racist, homophobic, sexist or sexually explicit language or photos. This type of content will not be tolerated and will be dealt with according to applicable SSC policies. As the administrator or manager of a site or page, it is your responsibility to ensure such content is removed immediately.

When in doubt, don't post. If you are concerned whether posting something is appropriate, go with your gut feeling and don't post the content. Take a minute to review these guidelines again and modify your approach accordingly. If you're still unsure, you might want to discuss your concerns with someone in authority. Ultimately, what you publish is your responsibility.

Do not speak or state a position on behalf of the College without prior approval. As a state–funded college, SSC cannot take a position on a variety of topics (i.e. political candidates, elections, etc.) and employees of the college are prohibited from stating any position on behalf of the college without prior approval.

BEST PRACTICES

Every digital media platform should be part of an overarching effort, beyond simply sharing information. Let the following guide you in these efforts:

What is your purpose? Any social media site should have an identified purpose. The information you provide should be unique and specifically geared toward your audience.

What is your plan? Creating an online presence takes time and dedication. Consider messages, audiences, goals and your strategy for keeping information timely. Creating a content calendar can also help organize postings and ensure that you won't forget to post new content.

Are you staying active? Social platforms open a portal for others to communicate with you. You must be prepared to respond to these posts as well as proactively engage with your audience to maximize the impact of your online efforts. It takes time and effort to maintain a successful and active social media page. Inactive accounts or sites can have a detrimental impact on your group's efforts and image and can be considered for removal upon review from the SSC Media Relations Office.

What should I share on my page? Remember, visuals are key! A photo or a short video is more engaging than a long post or article with no image. And, keep your text brief or provide a link to more information. Your audience will most likely stay engaged to "short and sweet" posts, rather than reading long, drawn out messages.

What content can I produce? As long as you are following all above SSC guidelines and best practices, you as the page administrator can post content as you see fit for your page. **The SSC Media Relations Office does require employees with new SSC social media accounts to receive a brief training/tutorial with a member of the Media Relations Department regarding video and live-streaming before posting any content on their page. Social media video content should remain brief – 30 seconds to a minute. Lengthy, in-depth video projects should be produced by the Media Relations Office.

How often should I post? Different social media platforms have different posting requirements for optimum success.

Facebook
Post once a day or less! If you have a large audience on Facebook you could probably get away with posting twice a day. Remember, the type of content you post matters. For example, posting a video or live video will have much more impact than if you post a link to an article.

Twitter
The average lifetime of a tweet is not long, so you can post several tweets a day without over engaging your audience.

Instagram
Typically, once a day is enough, but you can post several times a day as long as you have quality content. Also, consistency is key. If you post several times a day for a week and then don't post anything for a month, you are likely to lose your audience.