



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
PLATTEVILLE

Social Media Policy and Guidelines

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Social Media Policy

These guidelines govern the creation of university-related social media accounts by employees of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville (but do not apply to personal accounts of any kind). For these purposes, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wikis, social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Foursquare, etc. These guidelines are in addition to and complement any existing university policies regarding the use of technology, e-mail and the internet.

UW-Platteville employees are free to create, publish or comment via a university-related social media account in accordance with these guidelines. UW-Platteville employees are subject to these guidelines to the extent they identify themselves as a UW-Platteville employee (other than an incidental mention of place of employment in a personal blog or social networks on topics unrelated to UW-Platteville).

Creation of a social media account carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary.

If you create a UW-Platteville social media account, you must:

- 1. Notify University Information and Communications–Public Relations.** Contact the director of social community with the name and contact information for the individual(s) who create, operate and maintain your social media presence, as well as the URL for your account. Call Sarah P. Miller at (608) 342-1217 or send an e-mail to millersara@uwplatt.edu.
- 2. Use a university-approved account name and photo.** This ensures adherence to UW-Platteville's visual identity guidelines and proper branding.
- 3. Give account access to at least one UW-Platteville faculty or staff member.** A university employee must have access to your account, even if you intend to have a student administer it.

Engagement

UW-Platteville social media platforms prohibit abuse, discrimination or harassment by or toward students, employees, and the greater community on the basis of sex, race, religion, color, creed, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age or any other prohibited basis defined by federal or state law or UW-System policy. Posts, comments, tags, photos or any other interaction of this nature will be removed from official sites, and disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator.

Confidentiality and Security

Social media posts that contain confidential or proprietary information about UW-Platteville, its students or prospective students, alumni, donors or employees are prohibited. Employees must follow the applicable federal requirements such as FERPA and HIPPA, as well as NCAA regulations, and adhere to all applicable university privacy and confidentiality policies. Employees who share confidential information do so at the risk of disciplinary action or termination.

Accounts must adhere to the laws of copyright and fair use, including the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and the university.

Sensitive information such as phone numbers, Pioneer Passport numbers, Social Security numbers, payment information, etc., may never be collected, transmitted or shared via social media. Do not upload, post, transmit, share, store or otherwise make publicly available on any platform any private information of any third party, including addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, Pioneer Passport numbers, Social Security numbers, payment information, etc.

Posting content that could create a security risk for UW-Platteville is prohibited. Examples include but are not limited to images of childcare facilities, restricted-access research areas and information technology facilities.

Media contact regarding UW-Platteville and our current students, employees, alumni or donors must be referred for coordination and guidance to the Office of Public Relations or the UW-Platteville public information officer.

Social Media Guidelines

Overview: What is Social Media?

Social media is a term used to collectively describe a set of communication tools designed to foster interaction, discussion and community, and that have a significant impact on institutional reputation.

In an institutional role, employees need to follow the same behavioral standards online as they would in real life. The same laws, professional expectations and guidelines for interacting with students, parents, alumni, donors, media and other university constituents apply online as in the real world.

Because social media blurs the line between personal voice and organizational voice, UW-Platteville has developed the following guidelines to help clarify how best to enhance and protect professional reputations, as well as the reputation, brand and image of the university when participating in social media, as well as to ensure appropriate and effective use of these media. These guidelines apply only to university-related social media accounts and not to personal usage of any platform. Remember, you are speaking on behalf of your department, office or program – no one speaks on behalf of the university except the Chancellor and those designated by the Chancellor's office.

These guidelines will evolve as social media evolves.

Key Principles:

- Social media is about conversation, connection and community. It is not just a broadcast channel or a marketing tool.
- Authenticity, honesty and transparency are key.
- Social media allows you to hear what people say about you and to respond. Listen first, speak second.
- Put thought before action. Think through your goals and plans before starting them. Make sure you have the time and resources to be useful, relevant, compelling and engaged.

Social media: Should We or Shouldn't We?

There is no right or wrong answer to this question, but you should consider why you want or need to do this. "Because everyone else is doing it" is neither effective nor true, and may do more harm than good. Ask yourselves:

- What are our communication goals? Are we already meeting our goals through another medium?
- Who is our audience?
- What are we trying to tell our audience? What are we trying to get them to do?
- What is the best way to reach this audience?
- How will this benefit the university?

(The **social media planning guide** can help walk you through some of these questions.)

Whatever your answers, it is always a good idea to try out a social media platform as a personal user before adopting its usage for university purposes. Do your homework. Observe how people and organizations communicate on different platforms. Learn and understand the etiquette of each community – it is not the same across platforms. Watch and listen before speaking up. This will help you better gauge if social media is right for your department, office or program's goals and give you some ideas as to how you might use social media to meet those goals.

Do we have time to manage a social media platform?

Above all else, being successful with social media takes time. In addition to maintaining a regular posting frequency, you also must listen and engage. Remember, simply setting up a Facebook page isn't enough – you have to do something there. By first determining your goals and assessing how valuable social media is in reaching them, you can determine how to allocate time and resources.

If you are unsure about whether social media is right for you, feel free to contact UW-Platteville's director of social community to discuss your options.

Which social media platform is best for us?

Facebook – For those looking to build awareness, have conversations, share photos

Twitter – For those looking to engage an audience with high frequency, and those available to respond with some immediacy and engage in conversation

YouTube – For those with robust video assets to offer consistently over time

LinkedIn – For those able to jumpstart discussion among groups and offer content valuable to professionals in their field

How do we set up a social media presence?

As with any communications or marketing initiative, planning a social media strategy takes a lot of work. The **social media strategy template (PDF)** walks through some of the questions to address as you implement a social media plan. And our **social media style and branding guide** and **best practices and guidelines** will help guide you in the implementation of your strategy.

Social Media Best Practices

These guidelines were developed to provide everyone at UW-Platteville with basic guidance on how to best use social media towards communication goals, both as the owner of a university-related account and as a user/contributor. The suggestions and best practices outlined here can help your office, department or program use these platforms effectively, protect your reputation and follow university guidelines.

For information about style, branding and visual identity, please consult our **social media style and branding guide**.

- **Responsibility**
- **Respect and Civility**
- **Transparency, Representation and Endorsements**
- **Presence and Maintenance**
- **Community Building**
- **Longevity and Long-term Success**

Responsibility

- The cardinal rule: think twice, publish once. If you wouldn't say it to the Chancellor or your grandmother, don't say it online on behalf of the university.
- There's no such thing as a truly private social media site: search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date, comments can be forwarded or copied and archival systems save information even if you delete a post.
- Once you publish something using social media, you lose a degree of control over your message. Be certain before you post something that you are prepared to share it with a potential audience of millions.
- Strive for accuracy. Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible.
- Protect the institutional voice. Posts on social media accounts should protect the university's institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste.

No individual UW-Platteville unit should construe its social media account as representing the university as a whole – University Information and Communication will maintain the official university account in any given social media platform.

- Be the first to respond to your own mistakes. If you make an error, admit it up front, and correct it quickly and visibly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so.
- If you manage a social media account, discuss with your supervisor when you are empowered to respond directly to users and when you may need approval.
- Obey the terms of service of any social media platform you use on behalf of UW-Platteville. It is your responsibility to know and understand these terms.
- Be aware that by posting university content to some platforms (like Facebook), you authorize that company to make copies of that posted content and use it for virtually any purpose. Additionally, copyright claims could be asserted against the university if a department, office or program posted a photo or video in which a third party claims a copyright.
- If, as a member of the UW-Platteville community, you notice engagement in a UW-Platteville organizational unit's social presence that is inappropriate or in violation of these guidelines, please notify the director of social community (see **Need Help?** for more information).

Respect and Civility

- As a member of the UW-Platteville community, it is vitally important that you engage in thoughtful and respectful dialogue. The public in general and the UW-Platteville community reflect a diverse set of customs, value and points of view. Don't say anything contradictory or in conflict with the UW-Platteville website. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (see the **social media engagement policy** for more information), but also consideration of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory, such as politics and religion.
- If users post criticisms of your department, office, program or the university itself, do not outright delete or suppress such postings if they are valid points to consider.

Let the comments stand. Correct misinformation, but don't engage in heated arguments. Often, the community will correct itself and step in to correct inaccuracies or defend your area or the institution. If this happens and is sufficient to resolve the issue, there may be no need for an additional response.

- To the best of your ability, delete irrelevant, vulgar or abusive posts immediately. See the **social media policy** for more information.
- If you are very concerned about a post or question whether or not a post should be removed, contact the UW-Platteville director of social community or the public information officer for advice. Likewise, steer clear of posting about controversial topics.
- Know the rules. Be mindful of the terms of service for each social media platform, as they may provide guidance in addressing certain posts or comments: [Facebook Terms of Service](#), [Facebook: Reporting Abuse or Policy Violations](#), [Twitter Terms of Service](#), [YouTube Terms of Service](#), [LinkedIn User Agreement](#), [Foursquare Terms of Service](#).

Transparency, Representation and Endorsements

- Colleges, schools, departments, offices or programs that create a social media account should use "UW-Platteville" in conjunction with the name of the entity.
- When creating your account, note in the description that it is the official presence of your department, office or program. List the name, e-mail address and phone number for each administrator of your account.
- You may only make an account in the name of a recognized UW-Platteville entity if you are authorized to represent that entity.
- If you identify yourself as a member of the UW-Platteville community via your personal social media presence(s), you must clarify that you are sharing your views as an individual, not as a formal representative of UW-Platteville. It is good practice to include the sentence, "All views here are my own" or "Views expressed here are not necessarily those of UW-Platteville" in your social biographies. In addition, never conceal your identity for the purpose of promoting UW-Platteville through social media.

- Don't speak outside of your expertise. If someone asks you a question that you cannot answer, try to direct the person to the proper resource (providing a university phone number, email address or webpage often helps).
- Postings by the community on university-run social media accounts (e.g. Facebook page postings, YouTube video comments) do not imply endorsement of that content by UW-Platteville. For instance, if a business or other commercial venture posts an irrelevant advertisement or solicitation on your Facebook page, delete it.
- You may not use the UW-Platteville name to promote or endorse any product, cause or political party or candidate.

Presence and Maintenance

- It's extremely important to be present and responsive on your university-related social media account. Establishing and then deserting a social media account reflects poorly on the university; dilutes our online brand; and causes more damage to the image of a school, college, department, program or office than no account at all.
- Stay on top of your account(s) by monitoring replies and comments. Check at least once daily, and respond promptly. Be aware that this may mean occasionally dealing with something in your off-hours, on evenings and weekends. If you are unsure about the best way to monitor your account(s), contact UW-Platteville's director of social community for tips and suggestions.
- When posting photos or videos, keep the same professional tone in mind as when you write.
- Frequency of updates depends on the platform and how much content you have. Use an editorial calendar to schedule content creation and publication, and then find a balance. Be careful not to post too infrequently or too often – there are downsides to both. Experiment with frequency and adjust according to the engagement of your audience. Always remember to respect their time and attention – an audience is a privilege, not a right.
- You may consider giving multiple people in your department, office or program access to post if you feel that will help the account remain more up-to-date. Students may not be named sole administrators of university social accounts. Facebook

allows for multiple administrators on a page; however, each administrator must have a personal Facebook account and must be a real person. Creating a fake or “dummy” account for use in administering pages is a violation of Facebook policy and may result in the loss of all accounts associated with that page.

- Measurement and analytics are key to assessing your success in social media. When sharing links via social media, use a service such as bit.ly to create shortened, trackable URLs. Study the data provided by the respective analytics functions in Facebook (Insights), YouTube (Insights), etc.
- Determine relevant statistics and track them over time. Match analytics information against content and engagement to determine what caused certain results. Use this information to better understand your audience and to inform content decisions.

Community Building

- Be personable and accessible. Having a personality and a voice will help you build your audience.
- Once you have established your social media presence, cross-promote on various platforms, both online and offline. If you have a brochure, drive people to your social media accounts, and vice versa.
- Connect with other social media practitioners at UW-Platteville. Visit our social media webpage at www.uwplatt.edu/social to see other university accounts and build relationships with colleges, schools, departments, offices and programs that align with your audience or interests. Share content and link to each other’s accounts.
- Don’t judge your success solely on numbers. While it is tempting to use views, fans or followers as a metric by which to assess your engagement in social media, it is not the ideal (or the only) measurement. In social media, quality is more important than quantity. Engaged fans and followers are what matter most.
- Success with building community via social media is a process, not an end result. You must be present and engaged consistently over time.

Longevity and Long-term Success

- Schedule regular evaluations of your effort and success based on the plan you outlined in the **Social Media Planning Guide (PDF)**. Expect to recast your account's content and strategy often.

Social Media Style and Branding Guide

Please consult University Information and Communications or UW-Platteville's content manager for additional guidance. (See **Need Help?** for contact information.)

General

- Consider how your social media presence not only ties back to your web presence, but also helps extend it. Do you use consistent branding, colors, tone, images, graphics, etc.? Does the content you share via social media match what is on your web page?
- Consider using a consistent name across platforms (e.g. youtube.com/UWPlattevilledepartment, facebook.com/UWPdepartment, twitter.com/UWPdepartment).
- You may not use the university's main wordmark or seal as an avatar, background image or profile image. Use of the UW-Platteville Athletics logo is only granted through University Information and Communications.
- This style and branding guide is aligned with the UW-Platteville Visual Identity System, which can be accessed online at www.uwplatt.edu/publications. Please contact University Information and Communication for university visual identity and branding guidelines; information on approved logos, wordmarks and other images; or if you have any questions or need assistance with visual identity and branding issues.

Twitter

Avatar

- When you upload your user image, it will only show as a 48 x 48 pixel avatar when seen via Twitter on the web or a client (like Hootsuite), but users can click on the image to see a larger version. So, instead of uploading a 48 x 48px image, upload a larger version (e.g. 300 x 300px).

- Only use images that are in the public domain, that UW-Platteville owns the rights to or has the license to post on the web, or provided by the UW-Platteville Office of Photography.
- If you are promoting the identity behind the Twitter account (e.g. Katherine in Prospective Student Services), you may consider using a photo of the individual as the avatar.

Header photo

- Upload an image that is 1252 x 626 pixels.
- Only use images that are in the public domain, that UW-Platteville owns the rights to or has the license to post on the web, or provided by the UW-Platteville Office of Photography.

Name

- Limit is 20 characters.
- Include the university name along with your college, school, department, office or program name.
- If you are promoting the identity behind the Twitter account, you may include that name (Katherine in Prospective Student Services).

Twitter handle/@username

- Limit is 15 characters.
- Should align with your name if possible (e.g. UW-Platteville Department of Humanities could be “UWPHumanities”) while still conveying meaning (e.g. “UWPHuman” has no obvious meaning).
- Athletics groups may use “Pioneers” in place of “UW-Platteville” (e.g. “PioneerHoops” or “SoftballPioneers”)
- Even if you are publicizing the identity behind the Twitter account (e.g. Katherine in Prospective Student Services), you may consider keeping a non-personal name (e.g. @UWPStudents) in case of staff turnover, change of roles/focus, etc.

Background image

- Twitter background images should be 1600 x 1200.
- Don't make the background too busy, as only the borders of it will typically be visible around the main well and sidebar.

Colors

- Contact UW-Platteville Publications Office for guidance on the university's primary color palette. Do not attempt to create your own UW-Platteville colors or to modify the official colors in any way.

Location

- Use University of Wisconsin-Platteville or UW-Platteville, Platteville, WI.
- If you have room, consider adding your building name.

Bio

- Limit is 160 characters.
- If you are representing a UW-Platteville entity, be sure to include the full name and description in the Bio field. You may also identify yourself as the official Twitter presence for your college, school, department, office or program. If space allows, consider sharing hours during which the account is actively maintained and/or a contact e-mail address for additional questions.

Website

- This should link to your web page on the <http://www.uwplatt.edu> domain.

Voice/tone

- Tweets cannot exceed 140 characters, so brevity is crucial.
- Some abbreviations are okay (e.g. ampersands, using numerals instead of spelling out numbers, easily understood abbreviations like "prof." or "univ.," etc.) but try to

avoid text-speak (e.g. “where r u going 2 skool?”), as your account represents the university.

- Be consistent in your voice and tone. Keep in mind that this can be challenging if multiple people are managing the account.
- Be earnest and enthusiastic! Everyone at UW-Platteville is excited about something, whether it’s a club, a research project or just a beautiful day. Exude that enthusiasm.
- Twitter is often said to be a conversational medium, but what does that mean?
 - Be friendly, engaging and responsive.
 - Find opportunities to be inclusive (“you,” “we,” “us”).
 - If someone asks a question and you don’t know the answer, be honest and say you don’t know but you will either find out or point them to someone who does.
 - Don’t be afraid to be expressive, when appropriate. This could mean exclamation points, emoticons – all in moderation!
- Cross-posting
 - Avoid posting the same status updates on both Facebook and Twitter. Some dashboards (e.g. Hootsuite, Tweetdeck) allow you to post the exact same text and links to both platforms at once. Here are some reasons why you should NOT do this. You have different audiences, and they are different mediums, and cross posts from Facebook to Twitter often get cut off because of Twitter’s 140-character limit. This often annoys users of both platforms.
- Twitter-specific protocol
 - When you reply to a tweet, only you, the recipient and mutual followers will see that reply in their tweet stream. However, anyone who goes to your Twitter account webpage can see all the replies and tweets, even if they do not have Twitter accounts.
 - If you want to reply but also allow other people to see the response, precede the @username with an unobtrusive character, such as a period (.@uwplatteville Way to go, Pioneers!”)

- Before using a hashtag, go to search.twitter.com and type it in to make sure it is not already claimed for something that is perhaps not how you intend to categorize your tweet.
- Regularly check your followers and remove any spam or otherwise inappropriate accounts that may be following your account.

Facebook

Category

- Companies and Organizations > University

Username (facebook.com/username)

- You can select a custom username. There is no longer a minimum fan requirement for creating a custom username.
- Once selected, this cannot be changed, so choose wisely.

Page name

- Include “UW-Platteville” in your page name. Avoid “UWP” unless space is a consideration and there is no other option.
- Check with University Information and Communication for any additional branding guidelines.
- If you have fewer than 100 fans, you can change your Facebook name. There is no way to change the name of your page if you have more than 100 fans.

Page profile image

- Your profile image should be something recognizable, distinctive and relevant to your department, office or program, (e.g., a photo of your building, a portrait of your group in action, etc.).
- Facebook requires a profile photo that is at least 180 pixels wide, though height can vary. Be sure to add a cover photo as well. Cover photos must be at least 720px wide.

- Only use images that are: in the public domain, that UW-Platteville owns the rights to or has the license to post on the web, or are provided by the UW-Platteville Office of Photography.

Voice/tone

- Be clear and succinct. Facebook status updates have a 420-character limit, but generally speaking, your updates should be well below that limit. Shorter is better.
- Avoid abbreviations, shorthand and text-speak. Double-check your spelling and punctuation.
- Be consistent in your voice and tone. Speak professionally but conversationally.
- Be earnest and enthusiastic! Everyone at UW-Platteville is excited about something, whether it's a club, a research project or just a beautiful day. Exude that enthusiasm.
- To spur engagement with your content, consider ending your posts with a question (e.g. "Dr. Smith's new book got a great review in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Have you read it? What do you think?")
- Be sure to monitor comments to posts. If a question comes up in the comments, respond in an open, conversational manner. If criticism arises, adhere to the policy you have established for your page in handling such situations and respond in a serious (but not mechanical) tone. Avoid escalating the situation or "having the last word." Sometimes people just need to vent. Don't take it personally.

Website

- If you paste in a URL, you can then delete the URL after it has populated (showed up in the box beneath your text). Avoid leaving the long, gobbledygook URL in with the rest of your text, and do not post a URL alone.

About

- This text will appear on the top of your page. It should include a short description of your department, office or program, a related web page and any relevant contact information.

Cross-posting

- Don't cross-post between Facebook and Twitter. You have different audiences, and they are different mediums, and cross posts from Facebook to Twitter often get cut off because of Twitter's 140-character limit. This often annoys users of both platforms.

Resources

- **List of official UW-Platteville accounts**
- **UW-Platteville social media listserv**
- **Need Help?**
- **About the Social Media Guidelines**
- **Social Media Planning Guide (PDF)**
- **Social Media Strategy Template (PDF)**

List of official UW-Platteville accounts

Facebook: www.facebook.com/UWPlatteville

Twitter: www.twitter.com/UWPlatteville

YouTube: www.youtube.com/UWPlatteville

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/43417

Foursquare: www.foursquare.com/uwplatteville

Google Plus: www.plus.google.com/109673547936705055887/posts?hl=en

Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/uwplatteville/

UW-Platteville social media listserv

The UW-Platteville Social Media list is an open electronic mailing list for anyone involved or interested in institutional/higher education social media, new media, mobile, web and technology to exchange information, ask questions, create discussion, present issues and debates, encourage collaboration of resources and ask for community support.

Subscribe here: www.http://lists.uwplatt.edu/mailman/listinfo/social-media-l

To learn more, contact Sarah P. Miller at (608) 342-1217 or millersara@uwplatt.edu.

Need Help?

Assistance in setting up university-related social media accounts or support in training, execution and maintenance of accounts can be obtained from the UW-Platteville director of social community:

Sarah P. Miller

1508 Ullsvik Hall

(608) 342-1217

millersara@uwplatt.edu

Assistance with content management in any capacity outside of social media can be obtained from the UW-Platteville content manager:

06 Brigham Hall

(608) 342-1194

University of Wisconsin-Platteville Social Media Planning Guide

Use these questions to help you consider whether or not to pursue a social media account and communications strategy:

Purpose

Why are you participating in social media? How will this benefit the university?

Objectives/Goals

What do you plan to achieve with this social medium? Do you want to inform your audience, encourage conversation and/or share information? How will this differ from your primary communication tools?

Define your goals. How will you know when you've been successful? Which platform(s) do you intend to use? Could you achieve your goals by working through the university's official accounts?

Target audience

Who will be reading and commenting on your social media? Who are you trying to engage?

Execution and maintenance

- Who will establish your account?
- Who will be the administrator? Do they have the skills and time?
- Who will maintain and monitor your account?
- How often will it be updated? What content will you share?
- How will you promote your account?

University of Wisconsin-Platteville Social Media Strategy Guide

School/office/department/program: _____

Social media project lead(s): _____

Date compiled: ____ / ____ / ____

Date approved: ____ / ____ / ____

Please note that University Information and Communications does not vet or approve individual social media strategies. Please refer to the established project approval process in your school, office, department or program.

Is there a central web presence? Y N

Is there a tag/#hashtag for this initiative? Y N

Goals:

(e.g. build buzz/awareness, promote program/event, create a community for a specific audience)

Metrics for success:

(e.g. buzz/conversation, traffic to webpage, subscribers/followers/fans, audience insights)

Content types:

(e.g. event updates, news items, interviews, press releases, photos, trivia, questions)

Cross-promotion strategy:

(i.e. social media tie-ins to companion social channels, e-mail marketing, print materials, website, etc.)

Tracking tools:

(e.g. bit.ly links, Google Analytics, Facebook Insights, YouTube Insights, social dashboard reports)

Posting guidelines

Please review the **Social Media Best Practices and Guidelines** for information on responsibility; respect and civility; transparency, representation and endorsements; presence and maintenance; community building; confidentiality and security; and longevity and long-term success.