Appendix H: Social Media Policy

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

Gadsden State Community College supports the need for a strong presence in the social media realm. The College encourages departments, programs, groups and entities to be active in the social space and create social media accounts to build enriching relationships and campus awareness.

Gadsden State has developed a social media policy and application process to ensure that any and all interactions on behalf of GSCC represent the College's best interests.

All social media accounts recognized by Gadsden State will be listed on the Gadsden State website under the Social Media Directory:https://www.gadsdenstate.edu/student-life/social-media.cms. Check back often to see who is on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Flickr, YouTube and more.

APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This policy will apply to social media accounts created by College employees for the official business purposes of the College, including Gadsden State Community College faculty, campuses, groups, departments, programs, entities, etc. It will therefore impact students, faculty, and staff who utilize various social media for communication in conjunction with representing Gadsden State. Some examples of the various communication media included under this policy are Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Flickr and YouTube. The Public Relations and Marketing Department has established a Social Media Policy Committee to assist in the campus-wide implementation of this policy.

All officially-recognized social media accounts will be publicly listed by the College in a social media directory on the Gadsden State website.

Student organizations that wish to create social media accounts that will be officially recognized by the College must be registered through Gadsden State's Public Relations and Marketing Department.

EXEMPTIONS FROM THIS POLICY

This policy will apply only to social media accounts created for the express purpose of officially representing Gadsden State groups, departments, programs, entities, etc. and will not apply to private social media accounts. College employees acting in an individual capacity should exercise caution to communicate clearly that they are not acting in a representative capacity, or expressing the views of the College.

DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS POLICY

Poster or User: A person submitting content to any social media site that is officially recognized by Gadsden State.

Social Media: Social media is media designed to be disseminated through social interaction using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media uses the Internet and web-based technologies to transform how people communicate with one another and receive news, information and entertainment. Social media has transformed people from content consumers to content producers. Types of social media include networks like Facebook and YouTube but also include blogs and podcasts.

Social Media Accounts: These are accounts or profiles created in social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr and LinkedIn.

Social Media Best Practices: These consist of widely recognized guidelines, ethical considerations and conventions for creating successful social media campaigns and accounts.

Social Media Policy Committee: Members of the policy committee are from various departments of Gadsden State and coordinated by the Public Relations Department. The purpose of the policy committee is to help Gadsden State departments create, manage and succeed in using social media outlets to further their academic mission. The Social Media Policy Committee identifies individuals and groups that currently manage social media accounts for Gadsden State entities, advise them on the policy and encourage those who have not done so to apply for official recognition status. The policy committee provides occasional training sessions regarding social media use and its role at Gadsden State.

Social Media Terms and Conditions: The terms and conditions imposed by the social media website in which the User is participating.

College's best interest: To represent the College in a fair, accurate and legal manner while protecting the brand and reputation of the institution.

POLICY STATEMENT

The use of social media websites is increasingly common for Gadsden State's departments, students and employees and these communications tools have the potential to create a significant impact on organizational and professional reputations. Gadsden State has developed a policy to portray, promote and protect the institution properly and to assist GSCC entities in creating and managing their social media accounts. The following policy also provides suggestions on how to protect personal and professional reputations while using social media. This policy requires that:

1. Officially-recognized Gadsden State social media accounts and web pages are reviewed and approved through an application process.
2. Each social media account will have responsible administrators assigned.
3. Each officially-approved account must include a disclaimer statement, in the prescribed form, regarding content and opinions contained on the site.
4. Inappropriate, offensive, injurious and illegal content may be removed by employees identified as account administrators or at the direction of the Social Media Policy Committee.
5. Best practices for social media accounts should be considered.

POLICY PROVISIONS

Use of Social Media Sites for General Business, Marketing and Communications

The Director of Public Relations will be responsible for administering this policy.

The Social Media Policy Committee has been established to provide input and assist in Gadsden State's outreach and training on this policy and best practices. The Web Design/Social Media Specialist will manage the day-to-day application process and update the Social Media directory as needed.

Administrators may contact Gadsden State's Web Design/Social Media Specialist at any time for consultation.

The following requirements apply to all Gadsden State Social Media accounts:

1. All applicants for officially-recognized social media accounts are required to submit the profile image/avatar of each account as part of the application process to ensure that Gadsden State's branding standards set forth by the College are upheld.
2. All social media accounts officially recognized by GSCC must have at least two GSCC employees as administrators at all times to ensure adherence to this policy.
3. Should a GSCC employee administrator of an account leave the College for any reason or no longer wishes to be an account administrator, it is the academic or administrative department's responsibility to designate another GSCC employee to be an account administrator and remove the former employee's administrative permissions to the site. Whenever possible, a department should appoint two individuals to act concurrently as account administrators for a social media site representing GSCC.

4. If there are not two employees available to serve as account administrators, the Web Design/Social Media Specialist may serve in that capacity.
5. If there are any problems identifying a new administrator, contact the Web Design/Social Media Specialist.
6. GSCC employees identified as administrators of accounts are responsible for managing and monitoring content of their social media accounts. Administrators are responsible to remove content that may violate the College's Conduct Policies or the Social Media Terms and Conditions.

Guidelines for Content:

a.) GSCC employees are expected to adhere to same standards of conduct online as they would in the workplace. Laws and policies respecting workplace conduct, contracting and conflict of interest as well as applicable policies and guidelines for interacting with students, parents, alumni, donors, media and all other College constituents apply online and in the social media context just as they do in personal interactions. Employees are fully responsible for what they post to social media sites. Adhere to Gadsden State Community College compliance requirements, policies and guidelines. For employees, this includes but is not limited to acceptable behaviors outlined in the Policies and Procedures Manual, Professional Code of Conduct or Employee Handbook.

b.) Use good judgment about content and respect privacy laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Do not include confidential information about the College, its staff or its students in materials posted on social media sites. Examples include information about a student's grades or performance, admission status, GPA, Social Security number and any/all other information that would be covered by FERPA; personally identifiable health information such as medical conditions or injuries or healthcare sought or received; and other private personal information that the person has not consented to have published. The College will not ask for, nor should an individual send, credit card or payment information, classified information, privileged information, private information or information subject to non-disclosure agreements via any social network internet communication service. Don't violate the law. Refrain from using information and conducting activities that may violate local, state or federal laws and regulations.

c.) Social media posters must also be aware of NCAA rules governing interactions between the institution and its employees, and prospective student-athletes. All employees should refrain from contacting (Tweeting, messaging, friending on Facebook) prospective student-athletes prior to signing a National Letter of Intent. Always check with the Department of Athletics' compliance officials before posting anything that may violate these rules.

d.) Post only content that is not threatening, obscene, a violation of copyright or other intellectual property rights or privacy laws, or otherwise injurious or illegal. If you are unsure whether certain content is protected by privacy or intellectual property laws, contact the Web Design/Social Media Specialist.

e.) Representation of your personal opinions as being endorsed by the College or any of its organizations is strictly prohibited. Gadsden State's name or marks may not be used to endorse any opinion, product, private business, cause or political candidate.

f.) By posting content to any social media site, the poster represents that the poster owns or otherwise has all of the rights necessary to lawfully use that content or that the use of the content is permitted by fair use. Posters also agree that they will not knowingly provide misleading or false information, and that they will indemnify and hold the College harmless for any claims resulting from the content.

g.) While GSCC is committed to the protection of academic freedom, and it does not regularly review content posted to social media sites, it shall have the right to do so, and, with respect to any site maintained in the name of the College, may remove or cause the removal of any content for any lawful reason, including but not limited to, content that it deems threatening, obscene, a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws or otherwise injurious or illegal. Administrators are responsible for monitoring postings and comments to social media sites and for deleting postings that do not adhere to our policies. Acceptable content may be positive in context to the conversation. Comments that are obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, infringing of intellectual property rights, invasive of privacy, hateful or embarrassing to another person or any other person or entity are not allowed and should be removed. Administrators agree to take all reasonably possible steps to prevent and eliminate inappropriate comments and understand that it may be necessary to discontinue the use of the social media if such comments cannot be eliminated or prevented.

h.) When using or posting online material that includes direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos or videos, always include citations. Provide a link to the original material if applicable.

i.) If you also maintain your own personal social media accounts, you should avoid creating confusion over whether or not the account is associated with GSCC. If you identify yourself as a Gadsden State Community College faculty or staff member online, it should be clear that the views expressed on your site are not those of the College and you are not acting in your capacity as a GSCC employee. While not a requirement, GSCC employees may consider adding the following disclaimer to personal social media accounts: "While I am an employee at Gadsden State, comments made on this account are my own and not that of the College."

User Agreements for Social Media Accounts

Whenever a social media account is created, the social media outlet requires the account creator to agree to certain terms and conditions for use of the site by clicking "Yes" or "I accept" as part of the account creation process. These are legal contracts, and they often contain terms and conditions that create risks for the account creator and the College (for officially-recognized GSCC accounts). In view of this, Gadsden State has adopted this policy to manage these so-called "clickwrap agreements" and mitigate the risks they create. Account administrators are delegated authority to create official social media accounts through completion of the application process and approval by Social Media Policy Committee members. The Social Media Policy Committee will request legal and/or administrative approvals prior to approving applications when required.

College employees and departments are not authorized to enter into advertising agreements with social media sites without prior authorization and approval obtained by contacting the Public Relations and Marketing Department. Any GSCC department or program wishing to purchase advertising services from social media sites, or from any type of publication, must follow all applicable rules and policies governing both the public relations considerations and the procurement and contracting considerations related to such services.

Disclaimers

All officially recognized social media accounts must include the following disclaimers.

Disclaimers Related to Specific Types of Accounts:

1. *Group, Division, or Program Accounts: "The comments and postings on this site are those of the site administrator(s) and do not necessarily reflect GSCC opinions, strategies, or policies."*
2. *Individual Professional Accounts: The disclaimer is as follows: "The views and opinions expressed here are those of _____ and not those of GSCC. The intended use is not for advertising or endorsement of personal opinions, products, causes, or political candidates or ideas."*

Other Disclaimers that Must Be Displayed On Officially Recognized Pages:

User-generated Content and Disclaimer

- *GSCC accepts no responsibility or liability for any data, text, software, music, sound, photographs, images, video, messages or any other materials or content generated by users and publicly posted on this page.*

Inappropriate Content

- *Anyone who believes this page includes inappropriate content should report it to the site manager first, then to the Public Relations and Marketing Department.*

Disclaimer for content on linked sites

- *GSCC accepts no liability or responsibility whatsoever for the contents of any target site linked from this page.*

Terms of Use

- *By posting content on this page, you represent, warrant and agree that no content submitted, posted, transmitted, or shared by you will infringe upon the rights of any third party, including but not limited to copyright, trademark, privacy; or contain defamatory or discriminatory or otherwise unlawful material. GSCC reserves the right to alter, delete or remove (without notice) the content at its absolute discretion for any reason whatsoever.*

Copyright

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