

9.01.04.00 Social Media



Policy/Guideline Area

Marketing, Communications, and Public Relations

Applicable Division

TCATs, Community Colleges, System Office

Purpose

This policy exists to safeguard, elevate, and protect the reputation of the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) and its member colleges. The policy aims to create an environment to foster a consistent and unified digital presence across all TBR colleges and the System Office, ensuring online interactions reflect institutional values and maintain the high standard of communication stakeholders expect. Additionally, this policy serves as a roadmap to navigate the dynamic digital landscape, helping mitigate potential risks while maximizing the benefits of social media engagement. This policy defines the rules and procedures for the use of Official Social Media Accounts to ensure that college-sponsored social media accounts are both legal and in compliance with TBR policies.

Definitions

Social media – A digital technology that allows users to interact and network to facilitate the creation, sharing, and exchanging of information, ideas, and multimedia content through virtual communities and networks.

Official Social Media Account - Any social media account representing a College. Any other social media accounts, including student organization accounts or an employee's personal social media site, are subject only to Section IV of this policy.

Account managers – Any employee given expressed written permission to create content on behalf of the College on an Official Social Media Account.

Definitions included in the overarching Marketing and Communications Policy (9.01.00.00) apply.

Policy/Guideline

I. Official Social Media Account Creation

- A. Social media posts, including text, images, video, and other content, must follow local, state, and federal laws and other applicable marketing, communication, and branding policies and procedures.
- B. All official social media accounts representing the College must be approved, authorized, established, and maintained by the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) or designee(s). Social media accounts should serve a clear purpose for the College's mission and goals.
 - 1. Colleges should document appropriate procedures for units, programs, and initiatives in local policy or guidelines to request Official Social Media Account creation, including requesting account managers.
- C. Access to and/or passwords for official social media accounts are limited to designated communications/marketing staff members and others only as authorized by the CMO.
 - 1. As a contingency measure, a minimum of three people, including the college Spokesperson, should always have access to all social media accounts.
- D. Official social media accounts are the property of the College; thus, account managers must relinquish all rights and access to the accounts upon employment separation for any reason.

II. Official Social Media Account Maintenance

- A. Content created for and distributed through official social media accounts is the sole property of the College and not the employee managing the account. All audience lists and associated information with the account belong to the College.
- B. Account managers are responsible for ensuring that social media content does not infringe on the intellectual property rights of others as governed by federal and state copyright law, the terms of service of the social media provider, and/or TBR policy.
- C. Account managers should adhere to the policies of the social media platforms in which they participate. It is the duty of the account manager to understand social media policies, including this policy, and stay updated with any policy changes.
- D. Account managers must be full-time employees of the College or vendors with fully executed contracts with the College as approved by purchasing and the CMO.
- E. Account managers should monitor official social accounts for comments if they are permitted. Requests for authorization to hide or delete any material posted to an official social media account in violation of local, state, or federal law or this policy, or to block a user from a site, including comments that expose the private data of others, contain commercial solicitations, are factually erroneous/libelous, are off- topic, are threatening or abusive, or are obscene, should be made through the CMO or their designee, who shall obtain advice from the TBR Office of the General Counsel prior to removal of such material. See Exhibit 1, Content Moderation.

- F. Account managers shall not engage in personal activity under the guise of any Official Social Media Account, including expressing political opinions or engaging in political activities, private commercial transactions, or private business activities.
- G. Official Social Media Accounts shall not be used to communicate business transactions, including payment information, educational records protected by FERPA, medical records protected by HIPAA, or any other confidential information.

III. Branding

- A. Official social media accounts must comply with any applicable College branding policies and standards as defined in TBR Policy 9.01.01.00, Branding and Trademarks.

IV. Personal Social Media Accounts

- A. Do not imply representation of the College in any unauthorized way when conducting personal activities.
- B. Employees' social media accounts may be monitored without notice or consent per TBR Policy 1.08.05.00, IT Acceptable Uses, if these sites are accessed using College property or resources.

V. Exemptions and Exceptions

- A. It is understood some College's may have cross-functional duties between marketing and communications and that social media might fall under either in the organizational chart. Thus, Colleges are expected to comply with the intent outlined in this policy regardless of organizational design or title.

- B. Account managers may designate contributors to Official Social Media Accounts on a limited-time basis, such as social media takeovers by students, faculty, or other staff, and interns and student workers.
- C. Exemptions and exceptions outlined in the overarching Marketing and Communications Policy (9.01.00.00) apply.

Sources

Authority

T.C.A. § 49-8-203

History

New policy approved September 12, 2023, Board Meeting; Ministerial revision October 29, 2025.