Guidelines for Use of Social Networking Sites and Concordia-Related Web Content

Introduction

These guidelines are set forward in the spirit of a collective commitment to communicating well on the social web and to assist the marketing department in implementing a social media strategy. This strategy has been designed to support our community first, but also to give prospective students, alumni and friends of the university a chance to see the vibrancy of our campus and academic life.

Additionally, this strategy relies on members of our community engaging with prospective students, alumni and friends of the university across the social web. Our goal to grow enrollment and donors is supported when our community has conversations with those outside of our campus grounds.

To that end, it is assumed that our policy has to be flexible enough to allow our faculty and staff to approach relationship building online on their own terms.

Summary of guidelines

The following is a quick summary of the guidelines set out below:

- Make sure to register all pages and profiles you create with your supervisor and the marketing department (see www.cune.edu/socialmediapolicy)
- Competing sites—those that overlap with the aims of the official Concordia website or social media strategy—are not allowed.
- Before you create a page or profile, make sure that you have clearly sorted out your purpose for creating that page or profile.
• Make sure you follow any specific visual or messaging standards highlighted (e.g. for Facebook, Twitter and YouTube).
• Remember that you are representing the university when you converse online.
• When interacting online, authenticity, openness, transparency, and ethics should guide your dealings. Seek dialogue. Don’t treat social network sites as virtual billboards.
• Negative comments on your pages or profiles are okay from time to time, but you should remove any harmful, offensive or illegal posts immediately.
• Make sure to include a disclaimer stating that you are not speaking on behalf of Concordia on all personal sites or profiles you maintain.
• Be sensitive to the terms and conditions of any third-party site you join. Make sure you understand copyright implications.
• Make sure that all profiles you create on behalf of Concordia link back to cune.edu.

Registering your pages and profiles

You are free (and encouraged) to create new sites and pages that help you communicate with prospective students, alumni and friends of the university, but before you do, you should speak with your supervisor (or advisor in the case of student groups) and the new media director.

For a quick form to do this visit www.cune.edu/socialmediapolicy.

This isn’t simply about getting approval—it’s also about making sure the marketing department knows which profiles are active so we can track our engagement across departments. You do not need to register personal accounts with Concordia.

For example, you do not need to let us know about the following:

• A personal Facebook account
• A personal Twitter account
• A personal LinkedIn profile
However, **you must** let us know about the following (including, but not limited to):

- A department Facebook page
- A team Twitter account
- An arts photo album on Flickr
- A student activity tumble log on Tumblr
- A student organization YouTube Channel

Alerting the marketing department will help us avoid duplication of pages and any competing sites issues (see the next section). As soon as possible, the marketing department should be given administrative privileges for any new pages or profiles that represent departments, clubs or teams. Access allows us to respond more quickly in the event of a problem (such as the unavailability or departure of the staff member who has administrative control of the page). Also, if you plan to transfer administrative rights of a registered page you're administering, you should notify your supervisor and the marketing office before you do so.

**Ownership of Concordia-associated social networking sites**

Concordia-associated social networking sites should be created with Concordia's future social networking efforts in mind. For this reason, a Concordia-associated social networking site is considered an asset of the university that may continue regardless of who created it. It is not owned or co-owned by an employee of Concordia, his or her proxy, or another organization.

If a professor leaves the university, for example, Concordia would want to retain his or her Concordia-associated social networking or at least retain that option. The professor may remove his or her own administrative rights, but should make it a simple matter for the university to add a succeeding professor in an administrative role. Typically this will be taken care of by including the new media director as an administrator. It may, however, mean passing along a password and account information for certain types of accounts.
Competing sites

You should contact your supervisor and Concordia's new media director prior to establishing websites or pages that may overlap the goals of official pages within cune.edu.

The aim of the competing pages/sites policy is intended to protect the efficiency, quality and long-term expectations of users.

**Efficiency and quality:** We want to efficiently maintain our institutional site and make sure it gets the attention needed to accomplish goals related to recruitment, reputation (branding) and development efforts.

**Long-term safety:** Pages within cune.edu should and will continue to be maintained regardless of whether specific personnel are employed by the university or available from one day to the next.

Goals, for example, of institutional web pages for academic departments, offices, events, performance groups (programs) at Concordia:

- Provide an institutionally backed web address for the public (i.e. cune.edu/program)
- Market the program to potential recruits, their parents and donors
- Make available news/features about the program

Sites/pages that are clearly okay

A personal blog with comments from a coach, for example, about the season is clearly okay. As long as this type of site is clearly and directly associated with the coach rather than the team in general, there should be no "competing sites" problems.

While there would obviously be some overlap as far as the information shared, the site is not attempting to also replicate the aims of the institutional site. News about the team is shared, for example, in a coach or player comments or with links to cune.edu rather than in a game recap or another type of press release. Contact information about joining the program, etc., refers people to pages within the cune.edu site.
Sites/pages that are clearly out of bounds for employees or proxies:

Site/pages that, because of the domain name chosen, the site's title, or in other information, may create confusion as to whether they are the primary Concordia-backed site for a program are out of bounds.

For example, www.concordiaspeech.org would cause confusion about the official source of news about forensics at Concordia.

**Naming conventions of pages**

Naming standards help to clearly identify pages and profiles owned by Concordia University, Nebraska. They also help users who are searching for our pages find them more easily. For example, there are numerous other “Concordias” for us to distinguish ourselves from, so our social profiles should contain our full name, “Concordia University, Nebraska,” unless other length constraints make that impractical. Currently we allow the use of the abbreviation “CUNE” within Twitter handles.

**Facebook**

[Department, Office, or Program] – Concordia University, Nebraska
Concordia Bulldogs [Team or Sport]

**Twitter**

CUNE_[Team, Department, or Program]

**all others**
Concordia University, Nebraska

**Facebook profiles and images**

**Profile administration**
As a way to ensure transparency, it is helpful that at least one account administrator’s name
be provided in the “About” section in Facebook (facebook.com/[Your-Page]/info – see http://facebook.com/ConcordiaNebraskaAlumni/info for an example).

**Profile images**

Profile images are finalized by the marketing and communication department and will feature one of the following:

1. The Concordia cross, either blue on white or white on blue
2. An image with the Concordia mark overlaid. Regarding image selection or approval, the marketing and communication office will evaluate content, composition, feeling, and appropriateness for the intended audience. To propose an image, contact the marketing and communication office at socialmedia@cune.edu and attach the photo.

*Facebook profile pictures are set to 180 x 180 pixels, but the image is reduced to 50 x 50 pixels in the news feed, and is reduced even smaller in comments.*

**Cover photos**

A Facebook cover photo (the large, horizontal main photo on a page) offers an opportunity to further express a department or team’s identity. It is valuable to occasionally change the page cover photo as a means to express to fans and followers that the page is well maintained. You can rotate the cover photo between images if new photo development is limited. When selecting images for the cover photo, you are usually better off finding a more general image.

You should upload and maintain your own cover photo; however, the marketing and communication office will occasionally review cover photos for content, composition, feeling and appropriateness for the intended audience.

Please contact the marketing and communication office at socialmedia@cune.edu if you’d like help selecting an images.

*The size of the Facebook cover photos is 850x315 pixels.*
Twitter account information and visual standards

Account fields
The primary means for identifying your page on Twitter is the “name” field. You should include the abbreviation “CUNE” in the name field. *The name field is limited to 20 characters.*

Be sure to complete the “bio” field. This field allows 160 characters that further describe the account. It is also sometimes used to include personal “handles” of account administrators. Please mention “@CUNE” in your bio—this will link back to Concordia’s main Twitter page.

The “web” field provides an opportunity to link your profile back to cune.edu or an appropriate sub-page (e.g. [http://cune.edu/music](http://cune.edu/music)).

Background images
How Twitter users see your background depends on the size of their browser window, so while some images may look great on your computer, they may not look good for others. Therefore, images should be carefully selected to account for the loss of a portion of the image. Solid color background images with minor additions can be found at [cune.edu/socialmediapolicy](http://cune.edu/socialmediapolicy) (make sure to set the image to “center” when using one of these images). If no image is used, please use the hex color #102C52 as your background.

Header image
This image appears at the top of your profile. Your name, bio and web fields will be overlaid on top of the image, so make sure to select images with this in mind.

*The size of the header image is 520 x 260 pixels.*

Profile photos
The marketing and communication office will finalize profile photos after reviewing images for content, composition, feeling and appropriateness for the intended audience. Changes to the established image will be considered according to circumstances/opportunities for improvement.
YouTube visual standards

YouTube offers fewer customization options, but here are a few guidelines:

- Please use the hex color #102C52 as the background color.
- Preferred profile pictures include Weller tower or the Concordia logo.
- A unique feature of YouTube is that the settings can be established to allow for space at the top of the profile page for an image. Any photos used should be of a high quality and relevant to the brand.

LinkedIn, Pinterest and Instagram

For these networks, Concordia desires to have a singular presence. You can help support these profiles by doing the following:

**Pinterest**

Please direct traffic to http://pinterest.com/concordiane/. If you have ideas for pins and boards, please direct the idea with a link to socialmedia@cune.edu.

**Instagram**

Any ideas for Instagram photos are greatly appreciated and can be sent to socialmedia@cune.edu. If you use Instagram with a personal account, we encourage you to take photos and use the tag with @ConcordiaNebraska. You can also use hashtags, such as #ConcordiaNebraska or #goCUbulldogs for athletic events.

**LinkedIn**

Direct any possible traffic to Concordia University, Nebraska Alumni & Professional Network. Relevant discussions can be started by group members and any recommendations for groups should be sent to socialmedia@cune.edu.
Stating your purpose

Before you start your page or profile, it's a good idea to think through what you’re committing to and why you’re doing it. If you’d like some help thinking through it, give the marketing department a call. We’re glad to help.

In general though, here are some things to think about:

- What's the goal of the page? How does it fit within your team or department goals?
- Does a similar page already exist? Could you achieve the same using a page that already exists?
- Does the site you’re planning to use reach your audience's demographic?
- How much time are you willing to spend keeping content up-to-date and relevant?
- How long are you planning to maintain the page?
- How do you plan to protect the Concordia brand?
- How will you measure success?

Guidelines for posting on your pages

Everything you post is public

When engaging with users online, use common sense, be authentic and take responsibility for posts. Have fun, but treat each interaction as if it was something that a prospective student, a prospective student’s family, alum or donor (or your supervisor, the president or board of regents) would see. They likely will. Remember that our audience also includes folks who may know nothing at all about Concordia.

Remember that users expect different types of interaction on each network (e.g. what’s appropriate for Facebook might not always work for Twitter, etc.), so be sensitive to their preferences. We want to avoid the sense that we are infiltrating a user’s space in order to broadcast our message.

“Golly dern lucky mother nature”

Obviously you shouldn’t swear or use the Lord's name in vain within our social media outlets, nor should you use substitutes for swearing (“gosh almighty!”). Also, avoid talking
about luck (since it's all in God's hands) and the glories of mother nature (not exactly a Christian doctrine).

**Personal pronouns**

When administrating pages, you are representing both the entity of our specific page(s) and the entire university. Use third person pronouns (we/us) instead of first person (I/me) to offer a collective impression rather than personal. Sometimes the context of a post may benefit from using first person. Then include the name (your name) the pronoun is referring to, for example: “I am very pleased with the results. –Adam.”

**Post tone**

The tone of your writing should strike a good balance between personal and professional. For example, it's perfectly fine to show enthusiasm and excitement in a post, but avoid ending each sentence in an exclamation point or using multiple exclamation points after a sentence.

**Negative, Harmful, Offensive, and Illegal Content**

Should someone post negative content on your page, site, or profile, it may be your first impulse to delete it, but unless the comment is slanderous or offensive, you should allow it to remain, publishing a public response in defense of your position instead.

The goal in these instances is not to start a mud-slinging match, but to show the online community that you are able to handle criticism positively. In many cases, you may be surprised that people who agree with you will come to your aid in supporting your position.

If all negative comments are removed all of the time, the site will lose credibility because it lacks authenticity.

However, should a comment be harmful, offensive, or illegal (including spam), take measures to remove the content immediately. Refer first to the third-party site's method of reporting offensive behavior, then remove the post if you are able.
There may be some instances where networks do not allow you to remove the comments of other users. In these cases, simply follow the procedures outlined by the site for reporting abuse, and follow up until appropriate action has been taken by the site.

**Friends, Fans and Followers**

Depending on the networks you are in, you may have the option to establish friend, fan or follower connections. If the network or profile has an open follower model (e.g. Facebook pages or Twitter—people can follow you, but you are not obligated to follow them back), in general, you should allow everyone to follow you with the exception of obvious spam accounts or accounts that are clearly harmful, offensive or illegal.

When deciding whom to follow or approve as a mutual connection (a Facebook “friend”) make sure to review your potential friend’s profile or page carefully before you do so. If the conduct of any of your “friends” becomes harmful, offensive or illegal, make sure to review your connection with him or her and consider removing the friend connection if necessary.

**Exiting a Profile**

Before you start a new page or profile, you should have a plan in place for how long the association between Concordia University and the page will last. In many cases, the association will be indefinite (as in departmental or team pages), but in other cases it may be only for a season or term.

If you plan to shut the page down or stop engaging with the community after a specific time, please make sure to have an exit strategy in place. Our aim here is to avoid damage to the Concordia University, Nebraska brand due to neglect of a site.

If you are unsure how to plan for an exit, contact the marketing department.
Personal disclaimers

If you maintain any kind of personal site, such as personal blog, micro blogging account (through a service like Twitter, Tumblr, etc), or anything else, please make sure to include a disclaimer stating that all of the content on your site is a matter of your own personal thoughts, opinions or research, and should not be construed as the official position of Concordia University, Nebraska.

For transparency's sake, this disclaimer is designed to help users understand that you are posting of your own volition, protecting you and the university should there be any questions of the source of any content included on your personal site.

On sites that limit your biography to a certain number of characters (such as Twitter), something as simple as “My posts are my own” will suffice.

Blogs and personal sites hosted by Concordia

For guidelines related to Concordia-hosted blogs, please see the Guidelines for use of institutionally-supported web publishing tools at http://cune.edu/webpublishing

Copyright, intellectual property and other legal considerations

Every third party site you join will have its own privacy policy and set of terms of service (TOS). Make sure you review these documents carefully (don’t just click the “I agree box” without reading through them).

This is vitally important not only for your own protection, but also for the protection of your pages. For example, Facebook prevents fan pages from administering contests through the Facebook platform (e.g. “upload a picture of yourself in a Concordia t-shirt and win a prize”) without a special application service. If you are found in violation of this term of service, they can shut your page down indefinitely and without warning.

If you are sharing your intellectual property on any third-party site (i.e. not a site that you host), make sure that you read their terms and conditions carefully to determine who owns
Some sites are clear that users own their own data, while others state that the site may retain the rights to anything posted.

Some sites allow you to copyright your work through Creative Commons. It’s free, easy and open. You can find more about Creative Commons and create your own copyright license at http://creativecommons.org

**Links**

The goal of Concordia’s distributed social media strategy is to engage and join in conversation with prospective students, alumni and friends of the University across the web where they are interacting.

While it’s important to have these conversations in the places where they occur organically, it’s also important to point back to cune.edu where people can attain information about their formal relationship with Concordia—e.g. cune.edu is the place where prospects can get official information about class offerings, financial aid, and apply for admission.

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