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GT 9.2.2 GT Social Media Standards

Gwinnett Technical College supports the responsible and effective use of social media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc.) by College departments or programs to connect with our broader community. The College understands that social media is an important, yet emerging form of communication. To ensure we all understand the responsibilities related to participating in this evolving media, the following policy applies to all Gwinnett Tech employees, students, and alumni acting on behalf of Gwinnett Technical College in an official capacity.

Because the technology that drives web communication changes rapidly, this policy may be adjusted to reflect issues that can arise in the management and implementation of the page or for any other reason that supports the College's priorities for the social media pages/activities.

Laws, Regulations, and Policies that Govern What You Can Post Online

This section outlines governing regulations that apply to all users of Gwinnett Technical College social media when posting material online. In some cases, violations could lead to disciplinary action or termination.

Protect confidential and proprietary information:

Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Gwinnett Technical College, its students, employees, or alumni. All persons must follow the applicable federal requirements such as Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations, and adhere to all applicable institutional and legal privacy, confidentiality, and property policies and laws.

Sharing information about individuals:

Do not discuss a situation involving named or pictured individuals on a social media site without their permission.

Do no harm:

Ensure that your authorized use of social media does not harm or otherwise injure Gwinnett Technical College, its faculty, students, alumni, or employees.

Respect copyright and fair use:

When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and the College.

Use Gwinnett Technical College intellectual properties only with permission:

No user may establish social media sites that use the Gwinnett Technical College logo or other intellectual properties (e.g., such as photography, video, artwork, and publications copyrighted to the College) without authorization from the College. It is a violation of social networking site policies to represent an institution without authorization. Communications must be contacted at Communications@GwinnettTech.edu if you wish to start a social media profile or use the College's intellectual property.

Disseminating official information:

Communications and other designated offices are responsible for posting and publishing online official information on behalf of the College.

Guidelines for College Use of Social Media

These guidelines apply to institutional social media accounts that are set up, maintained and/or moderated by Communications, as well as department-moderated social media sites.

Institution-moderated social networking sites:

Gwinnett Technical College has institution-moderated social media sites managed by Communications. These sites can be used by the College community to disseminate information to various audiences including prospective students, donors, alumni, and visitors of the College. Those who wish to contribute information or make suggestions for the Gwinnett Technical College pages should email Communications@GwinnettTech.edu.

Individual departments may choose to establish a department-moderated site when these institution-moderated sites are not applicable for their needs. Departments are required to contact Communications at Communications@GwinnettTech.edu to register these sites.

As part of the social media framework, Gwinnett Tech maintains official presence on

- Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/GwinnettTech>),
- Twitter (<https://twitter.com/GwinnettTech>),
- LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/edu/school?id=21298>),
- Instagram (<https://instagram.com/GwinnettTech>),
- Pinterest (<https://www.pinterest.com/GwinnettTech>),
- Snapchat (<https://www.snapchat.com/add/gwinnetttech>),
- Vimeo (<https://vimeo.com/GwinnettTech>), and
- YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/GwinnettTech>)

We anticipate an even wider social presence for content sharing in the near future. The above sites are maintained by Communications with content produced or curated by the College to inform audiences about the mission, programs of study, and opportunities at the College or in the industry. Other

departments and offices may submit content to these official sites through Communications, which will review the request and post content changes as appropriate.

If you operate a department-moderated social networking site:

Before creating a department-moderated social media site, the site administrator must contact Communications to get approval and guidance. Departments should also consider their particular audience, message, and goals and have a strategy for keeping information on their social media site updated.

The intention and purpose of the department-moderated sites should be specific in order to protect the College's institutional voice. Efforts should be made to cross-link to institution-moderated sites managed by Communications and/or to College content on GwinnettTech.edu when relevant. Whenever possible, use of images, pictures, graphics, and posted content must directly relate to the particular department or activity to avoid confusion with institution-moderated sites.

Administrative access to Gwinnett Tech-sponsored social media sites:

Every social media site should have at least two administrators. A member of the Communications team will be included as an additional administrator on any social networking site that is moderated and maintained as an official presence of the College. There are several important reasons for this, which includes ensuring that these networks are managed if staff or faculty members leave.

This practice also allows us to communicate efficiently during an emergency and it allows us to track usage and quickly remove content that violates our social media policy. Site administrators are still responsible for their social media engagement and the Communications administrator typically serves as a monitor.

Instructional use of social media sites:

Faculty may use social media tools to support teaching and learning activities. However, faculty should not use social media to disclose proprietary information such as assessing students' work or communicating grades, but may use it for general information and research purposes.

Official student clubs and organizations:

Student clubs and organizations are encouraged to create a social media presence in consultation with the group's advisor using social media or other web technologies as applicable. When associated with the College, these pages should adhere to College policies. Developing "friendships" with the official College pages and other student group pages is encouraged. Students should consider their particular audience, message, and group goals and have a strategy for keeping updated information on their social media sites.

Use of images, pictures, graphics, and posted content must tie back clearly to the particular group or activity to avoid confusion with institution-moderated sites.

Posting Online and When Using College-Moderated Social Media Sites

This section provides guidelines for all users of Gwinnett Technical College social media when posting material online. When launching a social media initiative, the College or department is responsible for monitoring the page activity on a regular basis – at least daily – to ensure that the user-generated posts and comments are appropriate and do not violate general terms of use within this document. Social media

allows users to share their feelings about a particular product or service, whether positive or negative. See below for additional information on managing comments from users on a social media site.

All Gwinnett Tech-related social media accounts must first be approved by Communications by emailing Communications@GwinnettTech.edu or by completing a Project Request Form located on SharePoint under Communications. You must acknowledge and agree that Gwinnett Tech is the owner of such account and be willing to share access information, including usernames and passwords with Communications. There must be a minimum of two administrators on any social media account, at least one of which is a full-time staff or faculty member. Be sure to adhere to the following guidelines:

Seek approvals:

Any message that might act as the “voice” or position of Gwinnett Tech must be approved by Communications before posting. Contact Communications at Communications@GwinnettTech.edu or by completing a Project Request Form located on SharePoint under Communications.

Know and adhere to your social media platform’s terms of service:

Be sure to understand and follow the terms of service of any social media platform you use. You are personally responsible for compliance.

Be yourself:

Never pretend to be another person on social media. Be honest about your identity when posting as a moderator on any Gwinnett Tech social media site.

Be accurate and transparent:

Have the facts before you post. If you post inaccurate information, be upfront and admit it, then correct it quickly. Use of social media is successful when you use the platforms to offer authentic, direct communications and two-way flow of information. If you are interacting with a student on behalf of Gwinnett Tech on social media, sometimes it might be appropriate to include your name and job title or department as a signature to your post.

Be respectful of Gwinnett Tech and others:

Exercise good “netiquette.” Do not post private information concerning others such as student data or contact information. Be professional and respectful at all times on social media. Social networks are in the public realm and are not appropriate venues for the discussion or dissemination of private matters. It is important to remember that all employees are subject to the same laws, professional expectations, and guidelines when interacting online as we would in-person with students, parents, alumni, donors, and media.

Consider the intended audience when posting:

College-moderated sites are frequented by prospective students, alumni, donors, friends, and other interested parties. The College encourages thoughtful social media interaction and does not seek to censor contributions to these sites. However, profanity, racist, sexist, discriminatory, abusive, harassing or derogatory content that incites hate or encourages unethical or illegal activities, comments on litigation involving the College, spam, and off-topic remarks may be removed and the user could be banned from further participation on the site.

Monitor your social media profiles on a frequent, regular basis:

Social media pages should be monitored on a daily basis at minimum. Any questions or concerns that appear on the page should be promptly addressed. See below for guidance on responding to negative comments.

Maintain the ability to review, respond, approve or remove comments:

When comments violate the sites' terms of use appear on any site you operate, they should be removed promptly. See below for guidance on responding to negative comments.

Individuals' likenesses and information:

Photos or likenesses of a manager, supervisor, co-worker, vendor, student, donor, or any other person should only be used with that individual's advance permission.

Protect your identity:

Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. If you are unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, ask your supervisor for input or contact Communications for guidance.

Do not post misleading or false information:

Refrain from posting false or misleading statements of any kind, including any information associated with Gwinnett Tech's business, student success, or other information subject to regulation in our industry.

Endorsements and third-party interactions:

If you post content that could be reasonably construed as an endorsement of Gwinnett Tech or a Gwinnett Tech related service or product, ensure that the statement is truthful, generalized, and does not contain quantifiable claims.

Branding and GWINNETT TECH marks

If you create a social media site on behalf of Gwinnett Tech, comply with Gwinnett Tech's branding standards and use simple graphics that represent the Gwinnett Tech brand.

Compliance with laws, regulations, and policies:

Comply with relevant laws, regulations and policies, including - but not limited to - laws, regulations, and policies specific to our industry, data privacy and security, and marketing.

Confidentiality:

Always adhere to the Gwinnett Tech Confidentiality Agreement. Comment on or provide information regarding activity at Gwinnett Tech that is within public knowledge.

Link to other College material:

Ideally, posts on College-moderated sites should be brief. Redirect a visitor to content that resides within the Gwinnett Tech College site at GwinnettTech.edu whenever applicable.

Content Development Guidelines

All content must relate directly to College business, programs, and/or services. Content placed by administrators cannot promote individual opinions or causes that are not directly related to College purposes.

Written Content:

Content should be short and written in active voice. Remember to consider the audience. The style and tone of content should be direct and student-oriented.

Photos and Videos:

Uploaded photos and videos must relate directly to the College and/or student life and should not be used as a promotional tool for programs, products, or services outside the College. All photos and videos must adhere to existing College policies.

Updating and Adding Content:

The page should be well-maintained and as current as possible. In general, the more frequently the content is updated, the more users will access the page.

Handling Negative Comments on Social Media:

As noted above, social media allows users to share their feelings about a particular product or service whether positive or negative. It is a venue in which opinions are voiced and sentiment about a particular brand can be developed through the viral aspect of word-of-mouth marketing. While each social media channel allows different methods of addressing negative feedback, there are general guidelines to follow when determining if user-generated content should be removed or addressed.

The first course of action in dealing with negative feedback is to determine what type of feedback it is. These include the following categories:

General Criticism/Complaints:

A user expresses a negative opinion about the College, its programs, location, tuition, etc. The general recommendation is to let opinions remain posted and to allow the social media space to be what it is meant to be – an open forum for user input.

How to handle general criticism or complaints:

When negative opinions are posted, it is typical for brand fans to respond with their positive experiences. The benefit of social media is that it truly is an open forum for our students and others to share their opinions, which includes defending negative posts. While it is important to address specific types of user posts (e.g., direct questions, inaccurate information, etc.), if the posts are simply negative opinions, it is a best practice to let the conversation flow without interjection from the brand, or delete the negative comment if prohibited language is used. If a brand steps in too often, or inappropriately, the community members might see it as a censored forum. This may cause them to become apprehensive about posting in the future if they are looking for a true open environment, and could have a negative impact on their opinion of the brand. Try to avoid the ‘big brother’ approach when determining whether a post/comment requires a response.

Direct Problems

User has had a negative experience with the College and has identified the problem. While this type of feedback portrays the College in a negative manner, it can be useful in exposing real problems that may need to be addressed. Direct problems allow the brand to follow up with the user to find out more information on the situation, and to make it right.

Handling a direct problem:

The best way to deal with a user who has a specific problem is to ask the user to contact the administrator via email and to take the discussion off-line. This can be accomplished by posting a response to the negative comment providing an email address and inviting the user to contact the administrator directly.

See guidelines for direct messaging below.

False Information

Inaccurate information is posted about the College or its educational offerings.

Handling posts containing false information:

Follow up on the comment or post and provide correct information, if possible. Be sure that the information you provide is accurate and that you are responding in a polite, friendly, and professional manner. Keep in mind that some students will publish the response either on another website or on their personal pages for others to read, even if you have sent them a private, direct message.

Direct Messaging

Sometimes it is better to address a user directly via a private message. This may be because of a negative comment posted that requires further follow up, or a specific question that would be best addressed in a private setting.

Follow these guidelines when addressing community users directly:

- Identify yourself as an employee of Gwinnett Tech by providing your title, as well as your role as page administrator.
- Keep conversation formal and factual. Focus on providing information or a means for the user to obtain the information they may be looking for.
- Provide your contact information so the user can follow up with you directly if he/she has any further questions but does not wish to communicate through the social site.
- Respond in a timely manner, preferably within 24 hours of first becoming aware of the post in question.
- If you determine that a social media posting requires a response, you should involve Communications in the decision to help develop a plan of action to ensure the response is appropriate.

Comments and Posts Policy

Negative comments should not be deleted unless it constitutes one of the categories of speech that is not protected by the First Amendment. Users may not be blocked based on the viewpoint of the comments.

The following types of speech are not protected by the First Amendment and can be removed:

- Obscenity
- Pornography
- Threats
- Defamatory Statements

Contact Communications immediately if this type of content is found on an official social media page.

Any comment or post deemed inappropriate by Gwinnett Technical College page administrators due to harassing or threatening language, slander, or profanity will be removed without prior notice. Gwinnett Technical College reserves the right to block posts from those that violate this policy.

Abusive content should be reported according to the social media site's posted policy.

Social media posts are subject to the Gwinnett Tech employee and student conduct codes.

Social media technology is evolving and no policy or procedure can address all of the specific situations and circumstances that may arise. Users are encouraged to contact Communications at Communications@GwinnettTech.edu for guidance.

Personal Use of Social Media Platforms

Understand how your role may impact how others interpret what you say:

Your personal social media is governed by this policy to the extent it has a connection to Gwinnett Technical College. If you choose to list your work affiliation on a social media platform or identify your association with the College, then you should regard all communication on that network as you would on a professional network.

Anything you publish online should never be attributed to the College and should not appear to be endorsed by or originating from the College, unless you are authorized to officially act in this capacity on behalf of the College.

All personal social media sites that identify your association with the College must include the disclaimer, "The views expressed on this platform are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of Gwinnett Technical College."

When using College e-mail to register for a social media site:

You are accountable for all activity conducted with your College email address or when identifying yourself as a member of the College community. The "@GwinnettTech.edu" address attached to your name may indicate to others that you are acting on the College's behalf, so be clear when that is not the case.