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Division: Communications		Reviewed: 2/2023, 3/2024

GT 9.2.2 Social Media Standards

Introduction

Gwinnett Technical College uses social media to interact with various audiences, including current and prospective students, alumni, parents, faculty, staff, community members, and beyond. The College has an official presence on various social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X, and YouTube. Gwinnett Tech's audiences expect an engaging social media experience, which means that no matter which Gwinnett Tech accounts they choose to follow, we want to provide them with unique, creative, informative, engaging, and consistent content.

The following policy applies to all Gwinnett Tech employees, students, and alumni acting on behalf of Gwinnett Technical College in an official capacity. Violations of this policy could lead to disciplinary action or termination.

College Communications Department

The Communications Department manages the primary Gwinnett Tech social media accounts and leads the College community in strategic social media efforts.

The Communications Department is responsible for managing the main Gwinnett Tech social media accounts and ensuring that all college-affiliated accounts provide engaging content that represents Gwinnett Tech as a leader in the higher education space. ***Effective December 2022, the use of TikTok, WeChat, and Telegram is prohibited on any state-issued electronic device.***

The Communications team is available to answer any questions or provide guidance for College faculty and staff at communication@GwinnettTech.edu.

Active Accounts

Gwinnett Tech maintains an official presence on:
- Facebook
- X (monitoring, not actively posting)

- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [YouTube](#)

Any Department requesting a social media account is permitted to have a Facebook group and/or Instagram profile.

1. **Account Management**
   - **Existing Accounts** - An authorized employee of the College must maintain Gwinnett Tech-affiliated accounts. Each College social media group/profile must have at least **two** account administrators and **one** moderator (optional) assigned to monitor the platform. Account administrators and contributors must adhere to all applicable College confidential and proprietary information policies.
   - **Creating A New Account** – Thinking about creating a new social media group/profile for a department or program you represent? Your first step should be to contact the [Communications department](#) for guidance. The team will help you determine the most effective way to get your message across - whether it is by creating a new group or profile, utilizing an existing one, or looking to other forms of communication.

2. **Responsibilities**
   - **Be confidential.** Be careful not to reveal confidential or proprietary information about Gwinnett Tech students, employees, or alumni. Adhere to all applicable College, federal, privacy, and confidentiality policies. All employees of Gwinnett Tech are subject to FERPA, HIPAA, and other laws mandating the nondisclosure of personal information.
   - **Be safe.** Be cautious of "phishers." Phishing attempts to control a personal or institutional social media site by deceiving a user into revealing the account's username and password. Monitor your social media accounts carefully to ensure you notice quickly if an unauthorized person gains access—the larger your audience, the more tempting your site becomes as a target. Help keep your social media accounts safe by protecting and updating your passwords regularly.
   - **Connect thoughtfully.** Connecting to other social media members and accounts builds credibility and community but could also give the unintended impression that your site endorses a certain cause, group, or person. Consider carefully whom you "friend," "follow," link to, or allow into your site and to what extent you will allow comments. Help the Gwinnett Tech community stay connected by linking back to the Gwinnett Tech homepage and other Gwinnett Tech social media accounts. When possible, link to a Gwinnett Tech news source instead of an outside source.
   - **Create groups/profiles using your departmental @gwinnetttech.edu email address.** If you are setting up a social media group or profile on behalf of your department, add your shared departmental **@gwinnetttech.edu** address as an

administrator, ensuring a successful transfer of administrative power when you are no longer responsible for updating the account.

- **Keep an active presence.** Social media accounts must post content regularly to maintain reach and raise awareness among your audience. <u>Accounts without activity or content posted for more than 30 days are subject to having their accounts removed or deactivated</u> by the Communications department.
- **Handle Negative Content Appropriately.** Negative comments should not be deleted unless it constitutes one of the categories of speech that the First Amendment does not protect. Users may not be blocked based on the viewpoint of the comments.
  The First Amendment does not protect the following types of speech and can be removed:

  - Obscenity
  - Pornography
  - Threats
  - Defamatory Statements

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

  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.

- **Protect property**. Follow copyright, fair use, and intellectual property rights. In some cases, content posted to a social media platform becomes the property of the account administrator.
- **Protect Gwinnett Tech's name and logo.** The Gwinnett Tech logo cannot be modified or used for personal endorsements, and the Gwinnett Tech name cannot be used to promote a product, business, cause, political party, or candidate.
- **Respect Gwinnett Tech.** Remain professional and in good taste and protect Gwinnett Tech's institutional voice. As a representative of Gwinnett Tech, avoid pranks and postings that could be misinterpreted. Ask your supervisor or the College Communications Department if you are unsure. Respect College time and property—computers and time on the job are reserved for College-related business.
- **Respect others.** Social media platforms are designed for two-way communication, and content contributed to a social media account may encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. As an administrator, you can and should respond when relevant, but consider how your response may reflect on you, your department, and the College. Ask your supervisor if you are

unsure about posting something or responding to a comment. You may remove libelous or offensive comments, but do not censor posts with which you personally disagree. Also, avoid criticizing other people and institutions. Doing so may alienate you from your audience, reflect poorly on Gwinnett Tech, or escalate into a conflict.

- **Remain transparent.** Be honest about your identity because no individual departmental social media site represents all of Gwinnett Tech; clearly link pages, account names, images, and content to a particular department or unit within Gwinnett Tech. If you choose to post about Gwinnett Tech in your personal time, please identify yourself as a Gwinnett Tech student, faculty member, or staff member.
- **Stay accurate.** Get the facts straight before posting them on social media sites. When possible, link back to the original source. Review content for grammatical and spelling mistakes. If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly; this will earn you respect in the online community.

Glossary

- **Social media are** forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging). Users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos). Examples include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X, and YouTube. Social media may include discussion forums, blogs, podcasts, and video-sharing.
- **College Social Media Account/Page/Profile** – Any registered account administered by a College department on any social network that supports that unit's business function or needs. These accounts must include the name of Gwinnett Tech and the unit's name.
- **Social Media Administrator** - An authorized employee of the College who maintains a Gwinnett Tech-affiliated social media account.
- **Social Media Moderator** – An authorized employee or student of the College who helps with content creation and responds to comments and direct messages for a Gwinnett Tech-affiliated social media account.

Social media technology is evolving, and no policy or procedure can address all the specific situations and circumstances that may arise. Users are encouraged to contact Communications at Communications@GwinnettTech.edu for guidance. This social media policy is subject to being updated on a regular basis.