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## GT 9.2.2 Social Media Standards

### Introduction

Gwinnett Technical College utilizes social media to engage with diverse audiences, including current and prospective students, alumni, parents, faculty, staff, community members, and beyond. The College maintains an official presence on various social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Threads, X, and YouTube. Gwinnett Tech's audiences expect an engaging social media experience, which means that, regardless of which Gwinnett Tech accounts they choose to follow, we aim 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 may result in disciplinary action or termination of employment.

### 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 primary Gwinnett Tech social media accounts and ensuring all college-related accounts post engaging content that accurately represents Gwinnett Tech as a leader in the higher education sector. ***The use of TikTok, WeChat, Telegram, or any ByteDance-owned app is prohibited on all state-issued electronic devices.***

The Communications team is available to answer any questions or provide guidance for College faculty and staff at [communication@GwinnettTech.edu](mailto:communication@GwinnettTech.edu).

### Active Social Media Accounts

Gwinnett Tech maintains an official presence on:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)

- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Threads](#)
- [X](#) (monitoring, not actively posting)
- [YouTube](#)

Any department or program requesting a social media account is **only** permitted to have a Facebook group and/or an Instagram profile. All departments and programs must obtain approval from the Communications department before proceeding.

## 1. Account Management

- **Existing Accounts** - An authorized full-time employee of the College must manage Gwinnett Tech-affiliated accounts. Each College social media group or profile must have at least **two** full-time employee administrators and **one** moderator (optional) assigned to oversee the platform. Account administrators and contributors must follow all applicable College policies regarding confidential and proprietary information.
- **Creating a New Account** – Want to set up a new social media group or profile for your department or program? Your first step is to contact the [Communications department](#) for guidance and approval. They will help you determine the most effective way to communicate—whether by creating a new group or profile, using an existing one, or exploring other communication options.

## 2. Responsibilities

- **Maintain confidentiality.** Be cautious not to disclose confidential or proprietary information regarding Gwinnett Tech students, employees, or alumni. Follow all relevant College, federal, privacy, and confidentiality policies. All Gwinnett Tech employees are required to comply with FERPA, HIPAA, and other laws that mandate 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 regularly protecting and updating your passwords.
- **Connect thoughtfully.** Engaging with other social media members and accounts helps build credibility and community, but it could also unintentionally suggest that your site endorses a particular cause, group, or individual. Carefully consider whom you “friend,” “follow,” link to, or permit access to your site, as well as the level of comments you allow. Support the Gwinnett Tech community by linking back to the Gwinnett Tech homepage and its social media profiles. Whenever possible, link to a Gwinnett Tech news source rather than an external one.
- **Create social media accounts using your departmental @gwinnettech.edu email address.** If you're setting up a social media group or profile on behalf of your department, include your shared departmental **@gwinnettech.edu** address

as an administrator to ensure a smooth transfer of administrative control when you're no longer responsible for managing the account.

- **Maintain an active presence.** Social media accounts need to post content regularly to maintain their reach and increase awareness among their audience. **Accounts that have no activity or haven't posted for more than 30 days will be removed or deactivated** by the Communications department.
- **Transfer of Social Media Accounts Between Administrators.** Departments or programs with an active social media account must notify the Communications department before departing or transferring to a different role. This will ensure that the new administrators and moderators can access the social media accounts. **Failure to notify the Communications department will result in automatic deactivation or deletion of the department's or program's social media accounts.**
- **Handle Negative Content Appropriately.** Negative comments or direct messages should only be removed if they fall into speech categories not protected by the First Amendment. Users may not be blocked based on their viewpoint in 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 appears on an official social media account.

Any comments, direct messages, or posts considered 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 also reserves the right to block posts from users who 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, mascot, and logo.** The Gwinnett Tech logo or mascot cannot be altered 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 maintain good taste to protect Gwinnett Tech's institutional voice. As a representative of Gwinnett Tech, please refrain from posting content that could be misinterpreted as pranks or

social media posts. If you are unsure, consult your supervisor or the College Communications Department. Respect College time and property—computers and time on the job are for College-related business.

- **Respect others.** Social media platforms are designed for two-way communication, and content posted on a social media account might encourage comments or discussion of opposing views. As an administrator, you should respond when appropriate, but consider how your reply could reflect on you, your department, and the College. If you're unsure about posting something or replying to a comment, ask your supervisor. You can remove libelous or offensive comments, but don't censor posts you personally disagree with. Also, avoid criticizing other people and institutions. Doing so may alienate you from your audience, reflect poorly on Gwinnett Tech, or lead to conflict.
- **Remain transparent.** Be honest about your identity, as no individual departmental social media account represents the entire Gwinnett Tech community. Clearly link pages, account names, images, and content to a specific department or unit within Gwinnett Tech. If you post about Gwinnett Tech in your personal time, please identify yourself as a Gwinnett Tech student, faculty member, or staff member.
- **Stay accurate.** Verify facts before sharing them on social media. Whenever possible, link to the original source. Check your content for grammatical and spelling errors. If you discover an error, fix it promptly 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 build 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 also include discussion forums, blogs, podcasts, and video-sharing platforms.
- **College Social Media Account/Group/Page/Profile** – Any registered account managed 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 name of the unit.
- **Social Media Administrator** - An authorized employee of the College responsible for managing a Gwinnett Tech-affiliated social media account.
- **Social Media Moderator** – An authorized employee or student of the College who assists with content creation and responds to comments and direct messages for a Gwinnett Tech-affiliated social media account.

*Social media technology is constantly evolving, and no policy or procedure can address every specific situation that might arise. Users are encouraged to contact Communications at [Communications@GwinnettTech.edu](mailto:Communications@GwinnettTech.edu) for guidance. This social media policy is subject to regular updates.*