



**Benedictine College**  
**Social Media Policy**

## **1. Policy Statement**

Social media are tools that have a significant ability to positively impact Benedictine College's reputation as an institution committed to community, faith, and scholarship. However, there are some inherent challenges. The use of platforms like Facebook and Twitter often blur the lines between the voice of the person and the voice of the institution. For this reason, Benedictine College has crafted the following policy to help ensure that both personal and professional reputations are enhanced and protected when participating in social media. This policy states that:

- Officially-recognized Benedictine College social media accounts and web pages be reviewed and approved through an application process.
- All social media accounts will have responsible administrators assigned.
- Each officially-approved account must include a disclaimer statement, in the prescribed form, regarding content and opinions contained on the site.
- Inappropriate, offensive, injurious and illegal content may be removed by Benedictine College employees identified as account administrators or at the direction of the Office of Marketing and Communications.
- Best practices for social media accounts should be considered.

## **2. Application of Policy**

This policy will apply to social media accounts created by Benedictine College employees for the official business purposes of the College, including Benedictine College faculty, groups, departments, programs, entities, etc. It will therefore impact students, faculty, and staff who utilize various social media for communication in conjunction with representing Benedictine College. Some examples of various communication media included under this policy are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube. Marketing and Communications Social Media Specialist position has been established to assist in the campus-wide implementation and maintenance of this policy.

All officially-recognized social media accounts will be publicly listed by the College in a directory on the Benedictine College Social Media section of the Benedictine.edu website.

Student organizations that wish to create social media accounts that will be officially recognized by Benedictine College must be registered through the Office of Marketing and Communications.

## **3. Exemptions**

This policy will apply only to social media accounts created for the express purpose of officially representing Benedictine College groups, departments, programs, entities, etc. and will not apply to

private social media accounts. College employees acting in an individual capacity should exercise caution to communicate clearly that they are not acting in a representative capacity, or expressing the views of Benedictine College.

#### **4. Definitions**

**User:** A person submitting content to any social media site that is officially recognized by Benedictine College.

**Social Media:** Media designed to be disseminated through social interaction using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media uses Internet and web-based technologies to transform how people communicate with one another and receive news, information, and entertainment. Social media has transformed people from content consumers to content producers. Types of social media include networks like Facebook and YouTube but also blogs and podcasts.

**Social Media Accounts:** These are accounts or profiles created in social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, Snapchat, and LinkedIn.

**Social Media Best Practices:** These consist of widely recognized guidelines, ethical considerations, and conventions for creating successful social media campaigns and accounts.

**Social Media Policy Committee:** Members of the policy committee are from the Office of Marketing and Communications and other departments or groups. The purpose of the policy committee is to help Benedictine College departments create, manage, and succeed in using social media outlets to further their academic mission. The Social Media Policy committee will identify individuals and groups that currently manage social media accounts for Benedictine College entities, advise them on the policy, and encourage those who have not done so to apply for official recognition status. The committee will provide occasional training sessions regarding social media use and its role at Benedictine College.

**Social Media Terms and Conditions:** The terms and conditions imposed by the social media website in which the User is participating.

**College's best interest:** To represent the College in a fair, accurate, and legal manner while protecting the brand and reputation of the institution.

#### **5. Procedures and Responsibilities**

##### **A. Use of Social Media Sites for General Business, Marketing and Communications**

- 1) The Social Media Specialist will be responsible for administering this policy.
- 2) The Social Media Specialist will manage the day-to-day application process and update the social media page on the Benedictine.edu website and account directory as needed.

3) All applicants for officially-recognized social media accounts are required to submit ideas for profile picture/avatar for each account as part of the application process to ensure that Benedictine College's branding standards are upheld.

4) All social media accounts officially recognized by Benedictine College must be accessible by the Online Communications Specialist as an administrator at all times to ensure adherence to this policy.

5) Should a Benedictine administrator of an account leave the College for any reason, it is the academic or administrative department's responsibility to designate another Benedictine College employee to be an account administrator and remove the former employee's administrative permissions to the site. Whenever possible, a department should appoint an individual to act concurrently as account administrators for a social media site representing Benedictine College.

(a) If there is not an employee available to serve as account administrator, a member of the Benedictine College Social Media Committee may serve in that capacity.

(b) If there are any problems identifying a new administrator, contact the Benedictine College Social Media Specialist.

6) Benedictine College employees identified as administrators are responsible for managing and monitoring content of their social media accounts. Administrators are responsible to remove content that may violate the College Conduct Policies or the Social Media Terms and Conditions.

7) Guidelines for Content:

a) Benedictine College employees are expected to adhere to the same standards of conduct online as they would in the workplace. Laws and policies respecting contracting and conflict of interest, as well as applicable policies and guidelines for interacting with students, parents, alumni, donors, media and all other College constituents apply online and in the social media context just as they do in personal interactions. Employees are fully responsible for what they post to social media sites.

b) Use good judgment about content and respect privacy laws. Do not include confidential information about the College, its staff, or its students.

c) Post only content that is not threatening, obscene, a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, or otherwise injurious or illegal.

d) Representation of your personal opinions as being endorsed by the College or any of its organizations is strictly prohibited. Benedictine College's name or marks may not be used to endorse any opinion, product, private business, cause, or political candidate.

e) By posting content to any social media site, the poster represents that the poster owns or otherwise has all of the rights necessary to lawfully use that content or that the use of the content is permitted by fair use. Posters also agree that they will not knowingly provide misleading or false information, and that they will indemnify and hold the College harmless for any claims resulting from the content.

f) While Benedictine College is committed to the protection of academic freedom, and it does not regularly review content posted on social media sites, it shall have the right to do so, and, with respect to any site maintained in the name of the College, may remove or cause the removal of any content for any lawful reason, including but not limited to, content that is deemed threatening, obscene, a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, or otherwise injurious or illegal.

g) When using or posting online material that include direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos or videos, always include **citations**. Provide a link to the original material if applicable.

h) Refrain from using information and conducting activities that may violate local, state, or federal laws and regulations. If you are unsure whether certain content is protected by privacy or intellectual property laws, contact the appropriate authorities.

i) If you also maintain your own personal social media accounts, you should avoid creating confusion over whether the account is associated with Benedictine College. If you identify yourself as a Benedictine College faculty or staff member online, it should be clear that the views expressed on your site are not those of the College and you are not acting in your capacity as a Benedictine College employee. While not a requirement, Benedictine College employees may consider adding the following disclaimer to personal social media accounts: “While I am an employee at Benedictine College, comments made on this account are my own and not that of the College.”

j) Faculty are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the proposed guidelines suggested by the group “Faculty Ethics on Facebook” (<http://thesabloggers.org/2008/01/faculty-ethics-on-facebook-the-collaborative-project/>), and to engage in discussions concerning the ethical use of social media sites in an academic setting.

Administrators may contact Benedictine College’s Social Media Specialist at any time for consultation.

**B. Clickwrap User Agreements for New Accounts.** Whenever a social media account is created, the social media outlet requires the account creator to agree to certain terms and conditions for use of the site by clicking “Yes” or “I accept” as part of the account creation process. These are legal contracts, and they often contain terms and conditions that create risks for the account creator and the College (for

officially-recognized Benedictine College accounts). In view of this, Benedictine College has adopted this policy to manage these “clickwrap agreements” and mitigate the risks they create. Account administrators are delegated authority to create official social media accounts through completion of the application process and approval by the Social Media Policy committee. The Social Media Policy committee will request legal and/or administrative approvals prior to approving applications when required.

**C. Use of Social Media Sites for the Placement of Advertising.** This Policy does not authorize College departments to enter into advertising agreements with social media sites. Any Benedictine College unit wishing to purchase advertising services from social media sites, or from any type of publication, must follow all applicable rules and policies governing both the public relations considerations and the procurement and contracting considerations related to such services.

1) Because most, if not all, social media sites will require a “clickwrap” agreement (online contract that can be accepted by clicking “Yes” or “I accept”), College employees generally do not have the authority to place advertising without administrative approvals. Requests for approval should be directed to the Director of Marketing and Communications. Agreements may also require legal review and approval.

2) Departments that require frequent or recurring use of online advertising services should work with the Director of Marketing and Communications to arrange for the efficient use of time and resources so that multiple “clickwrap” agreements can be quickly approved.

3) Remember that the ease of clicking “I accept” does not mean that the license agreement is without risk to the College. If you are in doubt about your authority to accept an online agreement on behalf of Benedictine College, or the content of an agreement that is within your authority, contact the Social Media Specialist for guidance.

## **6. Existing Benedictine College Conduct Policies**

Social media users acting on behalf of the College must adhere to all Benedictine College policies and procedures, including:

- Acceptable Use Policy.
- Copyright information.
- IT security policy.
- Personal records privacy and security policy.
- Privacy statement.
- Web site requirements and guidelines.
- FERPA/Privacy policies.
- Student Conduct Code.

- Benedictine Procurement Rules.
- And all other policies as defined in the College Catalog and Employee Handbook.

Each officially-recognized social media account will be required to include a disclaimer declaring it an official Benedictine College social media account.

## **7. Forms and Tools**

A. Visual Brand Standards Guide. The Brand Guide provides a set of standards to be used by College communicators to build a consistent, clear, and positive image of the College in the minds of constituents. It includes detailed information on the band, use of the logo, colors, and typography.

B. Graphic Standards.

C. Technology-related Standards, Guidelines, and Policies.

D. Social Media Application.

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