

USF St. Petersburg Social Media Guidelines

USFSP Social Media Sites

University of South St. Petersburg has an official university presence on three top social media sites: Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

The [official Facebook page](#) is managed by Enrollment & Marketing Services and the Division of External Affairs. Both groups post content, including videos, photo albums, events, links to news stories and more, and respond to comments and questions from the page's fans.

External Affairs will also promote an official [YouTube channel](#) when the new university Web site is launched in 2012. The channel will showcase videos about the people, places and programs of USFSP.

Events added to the public events calendar are automatically tweeted via USFSP's [Twitter account](#).

Many other units also have their own presence as well. External Affairs maintains [an inventory of USFSP social media sites](#). If you are aware of a social media site that is not listed here, please let External Affairs know so it can be added.

Best Practices for Individual Use by Employees

If you choose to use social media sites on a personal and individual basis, you may find the following guidelines helpful. If you choose to post, tweet or comment as an official, employee or expert of the USFSP community, then please observe the following guidelines.

- Assume that everything you post—including comments, links, photos, videos, etc.—is public and can be viewed by anyone at any time, even if you believe you have set your privacy settings at the highest level.
- Remember that you are personally responsible for all content you post online, whether in a blog, on a social networking site like Facebook, or in the comments section of an online news story.
- Be aware of your association with the university at all times. Be aware of university policies regarding discrimination, harassment, privacy. As an employee, you will be expected to adhere to all applicable laws, USF System policies and regulations.
- If you post comments about the university, make sure you indicate that your comments are your own and do not necessarily represent the university's position. Present yourself as an individual. Include your name and title, if applicable, but make it clear that you are speaking for yourself, not the university.
- Observe fair use, copyright and disclosure laws. That means you should always give people credit for their work, and make sure you have the right to use content before you post it.
- Observe confidentiality laws at all times. Never post information about students, colleagues, patients, donors, vendors, etc.
- Respect your audience. Keep your tone friendly and conversational. Aim to be helpful and informative.
- Be aware of the University's [Acceptable Use Policy](#) addressing personal use of IT resources.

Official use of Social Media by the University

Only university employees who are authorized by their departments may use social networking to conduct university business. If you have or wish to create a social media presence or post on behalf of an official university unit (college, department or division, etc.), then the following policies must be adhered to in addition to the best practices listed above:

- **Notify External Affairs:** Call Michel Fougeres, Strategic Web Developer and Project Lead, at 727 873-4040 or e-mail www@usfsp.edu so your social media site is added to the USFSP social media inventory. This will ensure you don't duplicate work that's already been done and also permits External Affairs to discuss content and graphical standards with you.
- **Have a plan:** Units should consider their messages, audiences, and goals, as well as a strategy for keeping information on social media sites updated. Pages that are not being used should be deactivated or removed. External Affairs can assist and advise you with your social media planning.
- **Identify content managers:** All social media sites must have designated primary and backup persons who are responsible for content.
- **Respond promptly:** Successful social media sites require a commitment to engage fans and followers. Most importantly, you have an obligation to respond promptly to comments or questions posted by your fans and followers. This is especially true if incorrect information was posted by a fan or follower and needs follow-up. If you do not, it reflects poorly on your unit and the university.
- **Link back to the university:** Whenever possible, posts should be brief and redirect visitors to details that reside on your USFSP Web site. When linking to a news article about USFSP, check first to see whether you can link to a release on the [USESP News page](#) instead of an external publication or other media outlet.
- **Logo usage:** You may use an art element for your "profile" icon rather than the [official USFSP logo](#). However, you must also describe your relationship to USFSP in your publicly-visible description with the name "USF St. Petersburg" spelled out. For example, the USFSP Twitter account illustrates proper use of an art element and the university name:



USF St Petersburg

@USFSPevents St. Petersburg, Florida

A premier graduate urban institution and a member of the University of South Florida System.

<http://www.usfsp.edu/events>

See the *USFSP Logo Usage* guidelines for more details on logos and art elements.

- **Protect the institutional voice:** Posts on social media sites should protect the university's institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. No individual USFSP unit should construe its social media site as representing the university as a whole. Consider this when naming pages or accounts, selecting a profile picture or icon, and selecting content to post—names, profile images, and posts should all be clearly linked to the particular department or unit rather than to the institution as a whole.

Faculty Class & Learning Use

Faculty members are permitted to use social media with their students for their classes. However, because of unique issues and concerns, consult with your department head beforehand, and if necessary the Office of the General Counsel for advice.

- **Protect confidential and student information:** Respect student privacy and FERPA (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), which protects students' identifiable information and educational records. This includes personal information, grade information and in some cases the identity of your students. Appropriate privacy controls within the social media platform should be utilized. *If your "social media classroom" cannot be sealed off from the public, then participation should be voluntary.* Employees who share confidential student information do so at the risk of disciplinary action or termination.
- **Respect copyright and fair use:** When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the university.

Public records & meetings

As a public entity of the State of Florida, special concerns arise from USFSP employee use of social media to comment on or make statements about USFSP affairs in their official capacity. The following guidelines should be considered:

- **Use Caution:** Social media should not be individually used as mechanisms to conduct official USFSP business, discussing policy decisions or discussing items of legal or fiscal significance. It should be used for no more than to informally communicate with the public.
- **Public Record:** To the extent that you are making a tweet or post in your official capacity or commenting on USFSP business, your tweets and posts will be considered public records and must be produced upon request.
- **Sunshine Meeting Concerns:** The Sunshine Meeting laws prohibit two or more members of the same board, commission or committee from communicating with each other about business which is before the board or that may reasonably come before the board. Members of such boards should not discuss USFSP business on their social media platforms. However, if members use social media for public purposes, then they should not "friend" or have as "followers" any other members of the board on which they sit.