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 both Enrollment & Marketing Services and the Division of External Affairs. External Affairs also manages the official YouTube channel, which showcases videos about the people and programs of USFSP, and a Twitter account that is used to tweet events added to the USFSP public events calendar.

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 determine if it follows these guidelines and should be added.

Official Use of Social Media by University Units

Only university employees who are authorized by their department heads may use social networking to conduct university business. If you have or wish to create a social media presence or post on behalf of a university unit (college, department or division, etc.), follow these steps:

1. **Identify a project manager**: All social media sites must have designated project manager (staff person) who will be ultimately responsible for content on the site.

2. **Create a plan**: The project manager should develop a written strategy for using social media prior to creating the site. The department head should then approve this strategy.

   To assist in this process, complete the social media strategy worksheet provided on the USF Brand Site. The project manager should identify, among other things, the goals of the site, how content will be created and posted, how questions and comments will be addressed by visitors to the site, metrics to measure success, and resources to be deployed to make it successful.

   External Affairs can assist and advise you with your social media planning. Pages that are not being used should be deactivated or removed.

3. **Notify External Affairs**: Call Tom Scherberger, Communications Director, at 727 873-4456 or e-mail tscherberger@usfsp.edu to explain what type of site you are creating and who the project manager will be. If the site is successful, External Affairs may add it to the USFSP social media inventory.
Please adhere to the following guidelines, in addition to the best practices for individual use by employees listed further below:

- **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 USFSP 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 Logo](image)

  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.

### Best Practices for Individual Use by Employees

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

- If you encounter a student who may be troubled or whose behavior is of concern to others, such as bullying or harassment, please get in touch with [USFSP Students of Concern Assistance Team](#) immediately.

- 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.

**Faculty Use**

Please see the USF System “Faculty Use of Social Media” guidelines.

**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 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.

Revised 8/9/2012