Social Media Guide

The University of Wisconsin Colleges and its 14 campuses maintain official social media accounts across multiple channels. Our presence on social media not only allows us to share messages, campus updates and news with the public, it presents an important opportunity us to engage directly and instantaneously with our students, staff, faculty and communities.

The following document is intended to provide guidance to UW Colleges staff and faculty members who maintain social media channels as representatives of our institution. Faculty and staff who manage these channels are responsible for presenting UW Colleges and our campuses in a manner consistent with our mission, values and brand identity.

If you have questions or suggestions about these guidelines, starting or managing social media, please contact marketing@uwc.edu.

Social Media at UW Colleges

Social is an important communications tool for UW Colleges in a landscape increasingly dominated by digital interaction. While the channel nuances may vary, our goals on social are largely the same: to share messages and content true to our mission, values and brand identity, have meaningful conversations with audiences, and build stronger relationships with our communities.

Our Channels

Official social media accounts exist for each of the campuses and UW Colleges. The actual channels vary from location to location, but may include: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest and Flickr.

All official campus pages (i.e. not departmental or program accounts) are managed and maintained by a Regional Director of Communications (RDCs), the UW Colleges Marketing and Enrollment Office and campus personnel.

Posting to Official UW Colleges Social Channels

Please contact your campus social media administrator, the Regional Director of Communications or the marketing office to inquire about promoting an event or contributing other content.
Starting a Social Media Channel

Note: Only the Marketing and Enrollment office and RDCs can establish new main campus or institutional social account. The following section addresses establishing new program or departmental channels (e.g. UW-Waukesha theatre Instagram or a UW-Barron Continuing Education Facebook).

Given the highly cluttered landscape in social media, the organic (unpaid) reach of social media is often quite small. When considering developing a new social media channel, contact the marketing team to discuss if an existing channel might be appropriate for your message as to not dilute our messages in a crowded field of communications. Competition for followers is high and having multiple channels means that we’re competing against ourselves for followers and our messages may get lost.

Time Commitment

It’s important to recognize that social media takes planning and a significant amount of time to do well. Don’t create a social media channel just to have one. It’s essential to have a plan.

Pages vs. Groups

One way to reach a specific audience such as the next incoming class would be to develop a Facebook or LinkedIn group. This may be especially helpful for groups such as student organizations, international students, honors societies, athletics groups, new student groups, alumni and more. A group still requires daily monitoring and frequent posting.

The Right Channel for Your Message

Before starting a social media channel, consider whether you have the resources to maintain that channel and if it will help you accomplish your goals.

Here are some questions to consider:

- Are there other University social media channels for this purpose? This will help avoid duplication of effort and ensure consistent messages to our audience.
- What are your goals? What are you trying to accomplish?
- Who is your audience?
- How successful are similar groups/departments at using social media? Are they achieving the goals they set out to accomplish?
- How will you interact with other university social media channels?
- Will you have enough content to update and monitor the channel on a daily basis?
- What platform is appropriate for my message and will it reach my target audience?
Best Practices

Content Plan

Developing a content plan will ensure that your social media channel stays relevant. A content plan will include your intended audience, your goals, performance indicators to monitor, frequency of posts, what content will be posted, who is responsible for posting and when and how you will measure success.

Monitoring and Removing Posts

Social media should be monitored daily to ensure we’re answering any questions, engaging with our audience, and removing negative comments. Comments that are self-promotional, offensive, explicit, irrelevant or spam should be removed.

Posting Policy

Social is an important engagement tool for UW Colleges. When using social media channels to communicate our message, be sure to be respectful, add value, share accurate information, stay current and respond in a timely fashion. The goal is to build a relationship with your audience and communicate.

Voice

When we develop social media communications, we use language influenced by our environment, our students and our mission. Our brand voice embodies the promise of our campuses and institution with the aim of being supportive, engaging, friendly, knowledgeable and authentic.

Posting Frequency

The appropriate frequency of posting varies depending on the social media channel.
- For channels such as Facebook and LinkedIn, aim for at least once per day.
- For more interactive channels such as Twitter, aim to post 2-4 times per.
- Avoid leaving social media channels without posting for more than a 1-2 days.
• Spread content out throughout the day. Don’t posts multiple items at once (with 15 minutes or an hour) and leave the channel without content for the rest of the day.

Content Guidelines

Be concise, don’t post a paragraph. Use a photo to help tell your story when appropriate. Do not use all caps as this is the equivalent of yelling at your audience.

Channel Access

Multiple university representatives should have access to social media accounts and be aware of social media plans. This will help ensure coverage during vacations as well as help to ensure that channels are not lost due to staff turnover. It’s a best practice to remove access for staff who are no longer employed by the university or to change passwords periodically. It’s also recommended that members of the marketing and enrollment team have access to the accounts to ensure cross-training and access.

Appropriate Use

• Do not spam followers or send unnecessarily repetitive messages.
• Do not distribute materials that would violate copyright laws.
• Do not use social media to threaten or harass followers and do not promote hatred or discrimination.
• Do not use social media for political purposes, fundraising activities that are not endorsed by the University or commercial use.
• Do not use university social media channels to express your personal opinions.

Privacy Policy & Photo Releases

Be sure to respect people’s privacy. UW Colleges campuses are public spaces and therefore releases are not strictly required. It is a best practice to ask permission before taking someone’s photo whenever possible and to get a signed released. If the individual is over the age of 18, it is not strictly necessary but students may also choose to opt-out of photos by using the Opt-Out Form. Use more caution with minor children and have parents sign a release. Campuses with youth programming, continuing education and athletic camps should pay special attention to this policy. Employees must follow the applicable federal requirements such as FERPA, HIPAA and NCAA regulations.