SOCIAL MEDIA AT REGIS COLLEGE

Many Regis College departments and offices use social media to help spread the word about our learning community. The list on the Social Media @ Regis College web page has the most up-to-date list of official Regis College channels. If you are planning to open a new social media page or account, please be sure to consult with your supervisor and/or Administrative Council member.

Regis’ public image is extremely important to the growth and well-being of the College. Regis social media channel users are expected to use good judgment and convey a professional image. Also, remember that Regis College “brand” standards apply to social media.

Please remember that existing College policies pertaining to conduct and use of electronic media – as stated in the Regis College Conduct, Ethics, Conflict of Interest, Technology Use and Confidentiality Policies for Faculty, Staff and Administration and Regis College Student Handbook – also apply to social media.

The collection below of tips, suggestions and things to consider should prove helpful in using Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Instagram, Flickr and other such media to communicate with internal and external audiences.

GUIDELINES AND TIPS

Much like the world of social media itself, social media guidelines and best practices are evolving, so please check back often for changes and updates.

- Think twice, publish once. Once you post something on social media, it gains a life of its own – often in perpetuity. It can be re-tweeted or “liked” across multiple “friends” and has the potential to be viewed by millions of people across the world. Nothing online is “private” – search engines can find things years after they were posted.

- Copyright and plagiarism laws apply, so be sure what you post is yours or properly cited.

- If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly to maintain your credibility. Be human and admit that you need to make a correction and point people to the correction. Especially on Twitter when items can be retweeted, contact the people who have retweeted the mistake and inform them of the correction.

- If users post criticisms of your interest or organization, don’t delete or suppress such postings if they raise valid points. Let the comments stand. Correct misinformation, but don’t engage in heated arguments. Often, the community will correct itself and step in to correct inaccuracies or defend the institution. If this happens and is sufficient to resolve the issue, there may be no need for an additional official response. If the conversation continues, try to take it offline by emailing the person directly rather than having it keep going for everyone to see.

- If you feel a post – expressed via text, video, photo, audio, or graphic – is threatening, obscene, or in any other way inappropriate, contact your direct supervisor or AC member for guidance.

- When posting photos or videos, be sure you have written permission from the subject(s). Students should have a release form on file with the Academic Affairs Office.

- Remove photos and/or videos of people who are not considered in good standing with the College, even if the photo/video was taken long ago. If you are unsure, check with your supervisor and/or AC member.
• When creating your channel, note in the description that it is listed as the official presence of your department.

• Create an account in the name of a recognized Regis entity only if you are authorized to represent that entity. Discuss with your supervisor when you are empowered to respond directly to users and when you may need approval, or if you have questions about the appropriateness of certain content for posting. **In all public relations matters or items directly affecting the reputation of the College, please consult with the President’s Office. Don’t post anything that may be considered the official position of the College without checking first.**

• If you identify yourself as a member of the Regis community through your personal social media presence(s), please clarify that you are sharing your views as an individual, not as an official representative of Regis. In addition, never conceal your identity for the purpose of promoting Regis through social media.

• Stay within your area of expertise. If someone asks a question outside of your expertise, try to redirect the person to the proper resource.

• Postings by the community on college-run social media accounts (e.g. Facebook wall postings, YouTube video comments) do not imply endorsement of that content by Regis. Don’t use the Regis name to promote or endorse any product, cause, or political party or candidate. Avoid conflicts of interest and maintain a distinction between your personal identity and the identity you represent on behalf of the college.

**Posting and monitoring content**

• Be present and responsive, and you will gain credibility and value. If you have a social media outpost and someone finds you, he/she may engage with you and expect a response. It could be a prospective student or a parent seeking information. Establishing and then deserting a social media outpost could reflect poorly on the college. Be sure to monitor replies and comments. Check at least once a day and respond in a timely manner.

• When it comes to frequency of updates, it depends on the channel and how much content you have. Don’t amass content and post it all at once. However, here are some general guidelines:
  
  o Generally speaking, on Twitter, users are used to frequent updates. That said, if you only find reason to tweet once a day, that’s fine, too.

  o For a Facebook fan page, an average of once a day is reasonable.

  o For a video or photo service like Flickr or YouTube, where content is less likely to be fed en masse into a user’s stream, update according to how much content you have available. If you have a video a day or a video a month, either is fine. If you have no photos for three weeks before receiving 50 from a recent event, feel free to add them all at once.

• You may consider giving multiple people in your department access to post if you feel that will help the page remain more up-to-date.
  
  o Tip: Facebook allows for multiple administrators on a page. Each administrator, however, must have a personal Facebook account.
• Measurement and analytics are key to assessing your success in social media.
  
  o When sharing links via social media, use a service such as bit.ly to create shortened, trackable URLs.
  
  o Study the data provided by the respective analytics functions in Facebook (Insights), YouTube (Insights), Flickr (Stats) and Google (Analytics).

  • Determine relevant statistics and track them over time.
  
  • Match analytics information against content and engagement to determine what caused certain results.
  
  • Use this information to better understand your audience and to inform content decisions.

1. Be personable and accessible, while keeping in mind all of the guidelines offered here. Having a personality and a voice will help you build your audience.

2. Once you have established your social media presence, cross-promote in your various channels, both online and offline. If you have a brochure or a website, drive people to your social media channels, and vice versa. Just because people are very active with your Twitter account doesn’t mean they don’t need a pamphlet or an updated website.

3. Connect with other social media managers and users at Regis. Visit our Social Media landing page to see who else is out there and build relationships with groups that align with your audience or interests. Share content and links to each other’s channels.

4. Don’t judge your success solely on numbers. While it is tempting to use views, fans or followers as a metric by which to assess your engagement in social media, it is not the ideal measurement. In social media, quality trumps quantity. Every community is different. You may have just 33 followers on Twitter, but if you are cultivating a highly engaged community, the number means little.

5. Success with building community via social media is not an end result; it is a process. Be present and engaged consistently over time, and measure the effectiveness of that engagement over time.

**What content should not be posted?**

• Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Regis, its students, alumni or employees. Use ethical judgment and follow college policies and federal requirements, such as FERPA.

• Do not collect or send sensitive information — such as phone numbers, student ID numbers, Social Security numbers, and payment information — via social media, as these are not secure channels.

• **As a general guideline, don’t post anything that you would not present at a conference.**

_Last updated: April 2013_

_(adapted in part from DePaul University and Tufts University)_