

## **OPR003. Social Networking Procedure**

**Procedure Category:** Operational

**Subject:** Use of Social Networking by the marketing department, faculty and staff, and the public

**Procedure Owner:** Director for Marketing

**Related Procedures:** All

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### **I. Scope**

This procedure will address the use of social media for marketing, employee and public use.

Cowley College recognizes that social networking has three primary functions: to inform, to share and to entertain. The college also recognizes that social media including postings on public forums, blogs, wikis, video or picture sharing sites, and other interactive sites can be leveraged to build relationships with our constituents, further develop the college's brand, inform the public about educational opportunities and promote the college's community involvement. The practice of social media marketing (SMM) is encouraged and supported. Cowley College also recognizes that proprietary and confidential information about the college, its employees and students must remain protected.

This Social Networking Procedure is not to be construed as any attempt to restrict any employees' legal rights to discuss wages, terms of employment or conditions of work, during non-working hours and in non-working areas. This procedure does not provide guidelines for an employee's personal social networking presence if there is no implied or stated reference to Cowley College; however, the college encourages employees to use good judgment and exercise personal responsibility when personally engaging in social networking.

Guidelines for the use of personal social networking sites or communications by students are outside the scope of this procedure.

The college recognizes the need to manage user-generated content hosted on approved Cowley College social media. See Appendix I: Social Networking Policy for Public Use.

### **II. Procedure Purpose**

The Internet and the use of social networking have presented challenges and opportunities to Cowley College. While conducting marketing efforts and communications with the public, it is necessary to control the college's branding on various social media as information pertains to the college and its constituents. The college recognizes the benefits of social networking platforms and other internet communications as valuable, supplemental forms of communications for the purposes of recruiting students, enriching academic programs, recruiting athletes, promoting student activities, distributing information about the college's programs and services and networking alumni.

For the purposes of this procedure, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wiki's, and social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube). This procedure is in addition to and complements any existing or future procedures regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the Internet. These controls apply to employees who post and contribute to these sites for both professional and personal use.

Since user-generated internet communications such as blogging, social web-applications and social media platforms may be created and published by faculty and staff of Cowley College that are not the designated publishers of internet communications for the college, all employees of Cowley College should understand and follow all guidelines that follow.

To assist employees in understanding the provisions of this procedure and making decisions about engaging in social networking, a Social Networking FAQ matrix has been created. See Appendix II.

### **III. Definitions:**

The following are key definitions:

*App:* Short for application, an app is a free or paid software download that links users to a wide range of goods and services, media and text content, social media platforms, search engines, and the like.

*Avatar:* A computer user's graphic representation of him/herself. These need not be actual images of a person.

*Blog:* Short for Web log, a website where a blog author can post information on a specific topic targeted to a specific audience. A blog, if commenting is enabled, allows members of the public to post comments about posts by the blog author.

*Pseudonym:* A fictitious name or social media profile. The purpose of using pseudonyms to establish social media profiles is to prevent the critical connection of a user's personal profile to company credentials. This is not to be confused with "catfishing" or the attempt to deceive others through social networking using false identities.

*Social Media:* Social media refers to the mediums used as a collective to facilitate social networking. Social media websites and other technologies such as mobile applications are designed to create and contribute to online social networks. "Social media" and "social networking" are often used interchangeably.

*Social Media Platform:* Type of software or technology that allows users to build, integrate, or facilitate a community, interaction among users, and user-generated content. Social media tools employed by these platforms to enable users to share information could include video, audio, images, website links, mobile applications, etc.

*Social Networking:* Social networking refers to the act of connecting people who share common interests or backgrounds through the use of web-based services. The result is the

formation of online social communities. These communities have a specific purpose and connect users from different locations and interest areas. Multiple methods are used to connect to users such as status updates, micro-blogging such as Twitter, instant messaging, blogs, polls, photo sharing, video sharing, etc.

*Wiki:* A wiki is a web-based tool that allows for collaborative development of documents, such as procedure or presentations by allowing visitors to add, remove, edit and change content, with or without the need for registration depending on the settings. A wiki also allows for posting links to other Web pages in order to connect the information.

#### **IV. Procedure**

##### **A. Appointed Users & Approved Sites**

The Administrative Council designates the responsibilities of managing the college's social media presence to the Director for Marketing. The Director for Marketing should be trained to address the risks associated with social media and able to identify and report on issues surrounding the college's social networking involvement.

In addition, a Social Media Action Team has been formed to provide consultation and assistance to the Director for Marketing in planning, execution and oversight of Cowley College's social media presence.

To execute institutional SMM activities, the Director for Marketing may grant authority to selected college employees or students. These appointed users will be granted access to social media platforms, and will be selected based on their knowledge of the college's programs and activities as well as their knowledge of proper use of the social media platforms.

Written requests from faculty or staff for permission to create, publish and maintain a social media site that represents the college's organizations, athletic programs, clubs, workgroups and academic departments should be submitted to the Director for Marketing. See Appendix III: Application for Approved Social Media.

If the purpose of a social media site is to provide instructional materials, the approval of the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs is also required.

The Director for Marketing and the Associate of Vice President of Academic Affairs have the authority to approve or deny the request on a case-by-case basis. If the request is denied, all references to Cowley College must be deleted from all content and publications associated with the social networking site that was denied.

Once approved, the employee (hereto after referred to as owner) submitting the request will assume responsibility and liability of the site. If a student is a contributing editor, the responsibility and liability of the site remains with the owner.

The Director for Marketing will provide creative direction towards development of approved social media sites and ongoing content to ensure the Cowley College brand is represented.

Owners may use a pseudonym on social networking sites to protect their real identity. These should be tasteful and used consistently.

Owners of approved social media should provide log in credentials to the Director for Marketing. An exemption is granted to college media outlets.

Owners should demonstrate knowledge and expertise in social media management. The Director for Marketing will provide guidance, resources, and training to site owners. Owners are responsible for training student users. See Appendix IV: Best Practices for Social Media Management.

If the owner of an approved social media site decides to abandon a site for any reason, the Director for Marketing must be informed.

To monitor effectiveness, engagement and compliance, the Director for Marketing will periodically review approved social media sites. An annual review will be conducted by the Social Media Action Team.

On an ongoing basis, if published content on approved social media sites is found to (1) be inconsistent with the Cowley College brand or (2) violate the terms of this procedure, the Director for Marketing will consult with appropriate Administrative Council members to determine a course of action.

#### B. Employee Code of Conduct

When engaging in social networking, employees should consider the appropriateness of posts in context with other Cowley College procedures.

The Director for Marketing will identify authorized representatives who may post and comment on behalf of Cowley College. Employees who are not specifically authorized are not allowed to post in any way that suggests they are doing so on behalf the college.

Employees must protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the college and our faculty, staff, students, vendors and constituents.

Employees must maintain respect and professionalism with regards to our competitors.

Employees are an extension of the Cowley College brand and are encouraged to use good judgment and exercise personal responsibility when engaging in social networking through personal accounts.

Prior to posting on Cowley College approved sites, employees should consider the appropriateness of posts, comments, pictures, or any other communications and how the communications may affect the employee's, or consequently the college's, reputation.

Employees may not share information that is confidential or proprietary about the college including without limitation information about audits, upcoming programs or services, financial

condition (other than what is available to the public), the college's strategic plan, or any other information that has not been publicly released by the college.

If the employee has any question about whether information has been released publicly they should consult the Director for Public Relations and Institutional Communications before releasing information that could potentially harm the college, our current and potential products and services, employees, vendors, or students.

Employees can be disciplined by the college for commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment. Harassment, discrimination, bullying and retaliation activities that are prohibited in the workplace are also not permitted between co-workers when conducted online, even after business hours, at home, or on home computers. Employees are legally liable for anything they personally publish or present online.

Employees are encouraged to "like" or "follow" Cowley College social media pages and "share" or "retweet" content posted by Cowley College's appointed users in accordance with the guidelines outlined in this procedure and provided the content is not edited in any way.

Engaging in social networking sites should not interfere with an employee's primary job duties.

### C. Confidentiality

Cowley College respects the privacy of its students and strictly follows the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines.

No personally identifiable or confidential information will be posted without prior approval of the individual to whom that information applies. A person's date of birth, address and Social Security number, and similar data should never be posted. If the user is able to post and provides this type of information, it should be removed.

An acceptable example of this includes a photograph of a student with an executed media release after being recognized at a college or community function. An unacceptable example would be responding to a student's inquiry for their account balance with that balance.

### D. Brand Identities

An approved social networking publication should adhere to branding standards that ensure a consistent and professional publication of information and images.

The college logo and trademarks may not be used or altered without the express permission of the Director for Marketing. This is to avoid pretense that the employee is an authorized representative of Cowley College. This also serves to protect the Cowley College brand. An authorized representative may use the college logo to include as an avatar.

Cowley College encourages the use of the college's logos and branding elements; therefore, the Director for Marketing will facilitate the creation of logo images, banners, and icons for use on

social networking sites. Requests for use of the Cowley College logos/trademarks and the creation of banners and icons should be submitted to the Director for Marketing.

As a provider for higher education, Cowley College expects all users of its institutional and approved social media sites to use proper grammar and spelling to reflect positively on the college's brand and reputation.

#### E. Copyrights and Intellectual Property

Copyrights and intellectual property laws will be respected by the college and its representatives. The Director for Marketing reserves the right to determine if the use of copyright material is acceptable according to the copyright laws published by the U.S. Copyright Office and the college's Music Performance Agreements.

The use of copyright material, including but not limited to photographs, video, sound tracks, and any material created by another person, is not allowed on any blogging, social web-applications and social networking platform associated with Cowley College unless the material has been purchased for reprint or permissions to reprint have been given by the copyright owner, or the reprint of such material falls under the fair use laws. The standard for fair use is no more than 10 percent of the copyrighted material.

When quoting content from outside the college, users should never quote more than short excerpts of another's work, and always attribute such work to the original author/source. When appropriate, a link to the referenced content is recommended.

Content such as blogs, graphics, concepts, posts and articles created by employees or third parties for use on Cowley College social media sites will remain the intellectual property of the college, even if the content was never published.

Unless otherwise notified by the Director of Web Services, approved social media sites can copy and use photographs, videos, and information published on the official websites of Cowley College without asking or receiving permission.

The marketing department has a collection of royalty-free music that can be used as sound tracks for employee-generated presentations and videos. Requests for use of these music files to use exclusively on college-related presentations and videos should be submitted to the Director for Marketing.

#### F. Diversity, Discrimination

Readers of the college's social media posts, employees, and students represent a diverse community and include many different customs, values and interests. All posts should be respectful and in no way indicate any discriminatory practice toward anyone on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, income from public assistance, handicap or familial status.

## G. Disclaimers

If a reasonable reader could confuse a personal post with an official statement from Cowley College, a disclaimer should be included. Examples could include posts on a personal or public site concerning matters of public opinion or posts that could be interpreted as professional advice. Any implicit or explicit references to the college should include a statement by the employee identifying themselves as a Cowley College employee and a disclaimer.

Disclaimers to be used in appropriate context:

- A. The opinions expressed are my own and are not necessarily those of Cowley College.
- B. Cowley College and I are not providing opinions of law, and these comments should not be construed as legal advice. The opinions expressed are my own.
- C. The opinions expressed are my own and are not necessarily those of Cowley College. These comments should not be construed as medical advice.
- D. The opinions expressed are my own and are not necessarily those of Cowley College. These comments should not be construed as financial advice.
- E. This page is not sponsored by Cowley College. Cowley College does not take responsibility for the contents of this page or any material accessible from this page.

## H. Administrative Enforcement

If necessary, the college may remove content from Cowley College sponsored social media that does not comply. In addition, the college may request removal of content from personal social media that does not comply.

Procedure violations will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination for cause. The Administrative Council is the final authority on these matters.

## I. Reporting

The Director for Marketing will submit a report on at least an annual basis to the Administrative Council regarding the:

- A. The effectiveness of marketing through social media
- B. Risks (including reputation) that emerge through postings
- C. Direct follow-up (if any) to specific postings
- D. References to complaints and inquiries that are received

## J. Frequency of Review and Update

This procedure will be reviewed on an annual basis. Updates will be presented to the College Coordinating Council for adoption.

**V. Effective Dates:**

This procedure first became effective 8-11-14. This procedure was reviewed 8-13-14

**VI. Signature, Title and Date of Approval:**

This procedure is implemented by: Ben Scheers

Title: VP for Institutional Advancement

Date: 8-13-14



## **APPENDIX I – Social Networking Policy for Public Use**

***The procedure below is for the college's website and is for the college's disclosure to the public. Whenever practical, this will also be posted on social media sites.***

### **Cowley College's Social Networking Policy for Public Use**

Access to the college's social networking pages may be terminated if a user uploads or otherwise makes directly accessible content which infringes on any other party's copyrights or intellectual property, is considered offensive, off topic, spam, a personal attack, threatening, derogatory, non-constructive, political or religious in nature. This includes text, links, photos and images. The content will be removed upon discovery and users will be warned. Cowley College may remove repeat offenders' access to the Cowley College's social networking sites.

No confidential or personal information should be shared on social networking sites and will be removed upon discovery by the Cowley College. Examples of personal private information are date of birth, address and Social Security number.

Cowley College does not endorse any comments made by its faculty or staff, unless they are an authorized representative of the college. All statements and viewpoints expressed in the comments are strictly those of the commenter alone, and do not constitute an official position of Cowley College unless they are posted by an authorized representative of the college acting in their official capacity. Employees of the college must identify themselves in all posts. This fact may be material to other readers.

Appendix II - Social Networking FAQs

| Frequently Asked Questions  | Cowley College Social Media Marketing  | Cowley College Sponsored Social Networking  | Personal Social Networking   |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Who is responsible for managing?<br/>Who needs to approve my social networking efforts?</p>                | <p>Director for Marketing<br/>Administrative Council</p>                                 | <p>Owner<br/>Director for Marketing<br/>Associate Vice President of Instruction (if the purpose is for instruction)</p> | <p>Employee<br/>No one</p>   |
| <p>Can I use Cowley College brand identities? (i.e. Legal/trade name of the college, logo and trademarks)</p> | <p>Yes</p>   | <p>Yes</p>  | <p>No</p>  |
| <p>Who manages the branding?<br/>Who owns the credentials? (i.e. accounts, URLs, usernames, passwords)</p>    | <p>Director for Marketing<br/>Cowley College</p>   | <p>Director for Marketing<br/>Cowley College</p>  | <p>Employee<br/>Employee</p>   |
| <p>Who owns the content?<br/>Who can publish content?</p>   | <p>Cowley College<br/>Director for Marketing<br/>Authorized Users<br/>Cowley College</p> | <p>Cowley College<br/>Owner<br/>Authorized Users<br/>Cowley College</p>   | <p>Employee<br/>Employee<br/>Employee</p>  |
| <p>Who is liable for content?</p>   | <p>Director for Marketing<br/>Authorized Users (Exception for student contributors)</p>  | <p>Owner<br/>Authorized Users (Exception for student contributors)</p>  | <p>Employee</p>  |
| <p>Can Cowley College control what I post?</p>  | <p>Yes</p>   | <p>Yes</p>  | <p>No; however, Cowley College encourages you to use good judgment and exercise personal responsibility.</p>   |
| <p>Who can enforce removal of content that does not comply?</p>   | <p>Administrative Council</p>  | <p>Administrative Council</p>   | <p>No one. However, the Administrative Council may request removal of content that is a clear violation of Cowley College's Social Networking Procedures</p> |
| <p>Can I post on behalf of Cowley College?</p>  | <p>Yes, but exercise good judgment and utilize peer review when practical.</p>           | <p>Yes, but exercise good judgment and utilize peer review when practical.</p>  | <p>No</p>  |
| <p>Do I need a disclaimer?</p>  | <p>No</p>  | <p>No</p>   | <p>Yes, if a reasonable reader could confuse your post with an official statement from Cowley College.</p>   |
| <p>When can I engage in social networking?</p>  | <p>Exempt employees - any time<br/>Non-exempt employees - during work hours</p>          | <p>Exempt employees - any time<br/>Non-exempt employees - during work hours</p>   | <p>Any time as long as it doesn't interfere with your primary job duties</p>   |
| <p>Am I subject to disciplinary action?</p>   | <p>Yes, by not complying with the Social Networking Procedures.</p>                      | <p>Yes, by not complying with the Social Networking Procedures.</p>   | <p>Yes, by not complying with the Social Networking Procedures.</p>  |

### APPENDIX III – Application for Approved Social Media

The purpose of this application is to identify objectives and establish a plan for a Cowley College approved social media site. This should be completed by the owner of the proposed site (must be a Cowley College faculty or staff member).

I. **Goals:** What are your goals in establishing this site?

II. **Purpose:** Please describe the function of your desired site. Are you representing a particular group/club/organization, etc.?

III. **Platform:** What social media platform have you chosen and why?

IV. **Profile:** What have you selected for the title and URL for your site?

V. **Administration:** Other than yourself, will you have any other users (please identify them by name)? How will your administrative rights and responsibilities be assigned?

VI. **Management:** How are you planning on maintaining your site on an ongoing basis? Will you be maintaining the site year round?

VII. **Budget/Software/Hardware:** Is your site free, or is there a cost to subscribe/participate? What software or hardware is required to maintain the site?

VIII. **Control:** How do you plan to monitor the effectiveness of your site?

IX. **Signature and Date:**

Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

X. **Approval:**

Director for Marketing: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Associate VP of Instruction: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(if necessary)

## **APPENDIX IV – Best Practices for Social Media Management**

These guidelines will help authorized users of social media that represent Cowley College make appropriate decisions. Postings may include public forums, blogs, wikis, video or picture sharing sites, and other interactive sites, or in responding to comments from posters either publicly or via email.

### **I. Establishing a Social Media Account**

Whenever possible, accounts established for the purpose of developing Cowley College sponsored social media should be separate from personal social media accounts. These accounts, including user name and password will remain the property of Cowley College and will be managed by the Director for Marketing.

Social media identities, login ID's and user names may not use Cowley College's name without prior approval from the Director for Marketing. Passwords used for any social media account should not be the same password as used to login to college systems.

Owners may choose to use a pseudonym on social networking sites to protect their real identity. These must be tasteful and used consistently. Owners may also choose to use their real name and photograph.

Owners should work with the Director of Marketing in the development of the site and associated profiles to optimize branding.

### **II. Posting Guidance**

Posts should be reviewed prior to sending the content to the social media site. Depending on the content, the post should be reviewed for:

- A. Spelling
- B. Grammar
- C. Content accuracy
- D. Photo releases
- E. Compliance with applicable laws and regulations including those pertaining to human resources and the college's procedure
- F. Social media optimization

If an error is made in a post, correct it as quickly as possible. If a post is modified, make it clear that this was done. If a claim is made that a post was improper (such as the post is that persons copyrighted material or is defamatory comment), address these concerns quickly. It is better to remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action.

Responses to inquiries or posts should be handled in a timely manner. To facilitate a prompt response, exempt employees are allowed to post after business hours and outside of the work place. Non-exempt employees should only post during normal work hours and using Cowley College computer systems. Owners should use discretion to respond publicly or privately, considering the guidelines of this procedure.

Any photos that could potentially identify the subject should not be published without an executed media release. Public events in which participants are depicted in the background or in a crowd of people are allowed. To best meet the guidelines established in the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), pictures of minors appearing to be under the age of 13 should not be published in any circumstance without the signed consent of a parent or guardian.

If a student is responsible for generating or posting content to a Cowley College sponsored site, the owner of the site assumes liability for that content. Owners should provide mentorship and training on an ongoing basis to student representatives. It is recommended that content be reviewed by a site owner prior to being posted by a student. Owners assume the risk if a review is not conducted, and should review postings to their site on a routine basis.

### **III. Disclaimers**

When applicable, utilize the disclaimers listed in the Social Networking Procedures.

If a post requires a disclaimer because of the subject matter, but there is insufficient space for the disclaimer, the post should not be made. In its place the post may offer contact information so that a more detailed response may be offered via the telephone, secured email, postal mail, etc.

### **IV. Review**

To monitor effectiveness, engagement and compliance, the Director for Marketing will periodically review approved social media sites. Testing of the college's social media efforts will be conducted on at least an annual basis by the Social Media Action Team. This review will be to ensure compliance with procedures and to ensure that necessary follow-up activities are conducted in a timely manner.

If a site is found to be inactive or ineffective upon review, the Director for Marketing will meet with the owner to develop an agreed upon strategy. If the owner of an approved social media site decides to abandon a site for any reason, the Director for Marketing must be informed in writing.

### **IV. Do's and Don'ts**

DO post frequently. Best practices for effective social media marketing is to post three to five times daily. If your page is not updated on at least a weekly basis, you will not engage your followers. If your page goes dormant during certain seasons, notify your followers.

DO use external content. Share news articles relevant to your page, quotes, and retweet or share posts from cohorts. DON'T claim the content as your own, and DON'T repost without verifying the information is from a reputable source.

DO use pictures. Posts with graphics are proven to have higher engagement and reach. However, a variety of content should be used on sites that support multi-media.

DO support institutional marketing efforts. Direct traffic back to [www.cowley.edu](http://www.cowley.edu) or [www.cowleytigers.com](http://www.cowleytigers.com) whenever possible and share the content generated through institutional social media sites.

DO follow brand identity standards. The brand identity standards are located at <http://www.cowley.edu/cowleyintranet/intranet/marketing/guide.html>. Official Cowley College logos are located at <http://www.cowley.edu/cowleyintranet/intranet/marketing/logos.html>. Cowley uses certain PMS (Pantone Matching System) colors. The official PMS colors for Cowley are Black and PMS 021 Orange. Accent colors used are white and PMS 419 Grey. The sole use of these PMS colors is not required. If using these colors, please match the PMS.

DO use proper spelling and grammar. You represent higher education. Enough said.

DO update your profile. Keep it fresh! Update photos and profile information regularly.

DO validate friend/follower requests. DON'T accept just anyone. This is how phishing or catfishing scams start.

DO include the Public Use Policy (Appendix 1) on your page or provide a link to its location on [www.cowley.edu](http://www.cowley.edu).

DO respect copyrights and intellectual property. Consider fair use laws before posting photos, music, videos, graphics, written works and the like.

DON'T make it all about you. Make it about them. Engage your friends/followers by highlighting content about them!

DON'T delete negative posts, UNLESS they violate our Public Use Policy. Address the issue or resolve the problem effectively instead.

NEVER post personal private information, about a friend/follower that has not already been made public.

DON'T upload anything you wouldn't want EVERYONE to see. Don't fool yourself into thinking that only your group or followers have access.

**XII. Signature and Date:**

I have read these guidelines and agree to comply as a condition of my ownership of a Cowley College sponsored social media site.

Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_