Social Media Guidelines

Thousands of current and future students, faculty, staff, alumni, and donors are using communication channelssuch as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, and many others to stay connected. CSU and OVPR Communications believe that having a presence in these areas will allow us to broadcast information and interact with a broader audience in an enriching way. In order to operate within these mediums effectively, Colorado State has developed a social media policy to ensure that any and all interactions on behalf of CSU represent the University’s best interests.

The Office of the Vice President for Research has adopted CSU’s policies and developed Office-specific guidance to ensure a positive, professional experience for the public when they interact with our Office. CSU encourages the University community to be actively involved with social media. These guidelines are broad in nature to accommodate any differences in online venues while maintaining a universal code of conduct.

University Officially Recognized Social Media Accounts

The University has established an application process for groups to be recognized by the University as official social media accounts.

All officially recognized social media accounts will be publicly listed by the University at http://socialmedia.colostate.edu/social-media-directory/. This listing most likely increases SEO visibility of your social media account.

CSU’s Social Media Leadership Team is housed in the University’s Division of Public Affairs and reviews and approves all social media applications. The CSU Social Media Online Application can be found at http://socialmedia.colostate.edu/application/. Your OVPR Communications team can offer input for your successful application. Contact VPR.Office@mail.colostate.edu for any questions or concerns.

All officially recognized social media accounts will be given a disclaimer to post to the account declaring it as an official Colorado State University social media account and includes a link to CSU’s social media policy:

Disclaimer Statement: While we are affiliated with Colorado State University, comments made on this account are our own and not that of the University. If you would like to review our social media policy please visit this webpage. http://www.socialmedia.colostate.edu/page/Social-Media-Policy.aspx
Profile Image/Avatar

All applicants of officially recognized social media accounts are required to submit the profile image/avatar of each account to both creative services and OVPROffice@mail.colostate.edu as part of the application process to ensure that CSU’s branding standards set forth in the Communicator’s Toolbox are upheld.

Department Social Media Sites

The OVPR Communications Team are creating and maintaining several core sites to serve as a foundation for social media communications and connections with University constituents. These are:

1. Vice President for Research at Colorado State University Facebook
   a) https://www.facebook.com/CSUVicePresidentForResearch
   b) Serves as University-wide community for past, current or potential future students, alumni, faculty, employees, researchers, donors and as support for the news media.

2. Vice President for Research (Dr. Alan Rudolph) Twitter
   a) https://twitter.com/CSUAlanRudolph
   b) Serve as quick daily feed of interesting news, publications, awards, whereabouts, speaking engagements, interesting discoveries from every avenue of the Office’s activities.

3. Vice President for Research LinkedIn
   a) Serves as primary alumni and/or donor connection especially with respect to employment networking.

Content Policies

1. All materials (such as MP3 recordings, class notes/handouts, videos, slide presentations, etc.) posted on Canvas or the OVPR website and other educational resources are solely for the use of our students for educational purposes. They should not be copied or distributed to anyone outside of the Colorado State University Office of the Vice President for Research prior written approval of the author/instructor.

2. Numerous social networking sites are used by students. As professional students, you are encouraged to *think before you post* to these sites. These sites are available to the public and posting inappropriate personal material may not serve your professional goals, your career, or the reputation of the Office and Colorado State University. Ensure that your social media activity does not interfere with your work commitments. Faculty and staff are not encouraged to use scheduled work time for personal social media use.

3. Use good judgment about content and respect privacy laws. Do not include confidential information about the Office, the University, its staff, or its students.

4. Representation of your personal opinions as being endorsed by the Office, the University, or any of its organizations is strictly prohibited. You may not use the Office name or the CSU name to promote any opinion, product, cause, or political candidate. Be sure to include the statement, “This is my personal opinion and not necessarily that of the University” when necessary.

5. By posting content to any social media site, you agree that you own or otherwise control all of the rights to that content, that your use of the content is protected fair use, that you will not knowingly provide misleading or false information, and that you indemnify and
hold the Office and the University harmless for any claims resulting from the content.

6. While CSU and the Office do not regularly review content posted to all social media sites, it shall have the right to remove any content for any reason posted to approved CSU social media sites, including but not limited to, content that it deems threatening, obscene, a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, or otherwise injurious or illegal.

7. When using or posting online material that includes direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos, or videos, always include citations. Provide a link to the original material if applicable.

8. Refrain from using information and conducting activities that may violate local, state, or federal laws and regulations.

9. Unless approved by the OVPR communications team, your personal social media name, handle, and URL should not include the Colorado State University or OVPR’s name or logo.

10. Ask the OVPR Communications team (VPR_Office@mail.colostate.edu) if you have any questions about what is appropriate to include in your social media profile(s).

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**Content Guidance**

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**Be Authentic**

Be authentic when you write, tweet, or communicate in any way using social media. Let your audience know your role within the Office (student, staff, faculty, etc.) on your personal social media pages to make your intentions transparent to friends/followers of your social media pages. Use the disclaimer, “While I am an employee at Colorado State University, comments made on this account are my own and not that of the University.”

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**Consider Your Audience**

Remember that readers include current and future students, staff, faculty, research colleagues, and current/past and future employees. Consider that before you publish and make sure you are not alienating any of these groups.

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**Understand the Concept of Community**

CSU’s Community exists so you can support others and they can support you. It is not just a place for advertising or self-promotion. Offer praise to others and share others’ information. Offer good ideas that you hear. Pay attention to what your community finds interesting and contribute in that way.

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**Bring Value**

In a good community, people help each other grow and learn. So add value. Help someone who is having a problem (with our organization or another). Ask good questions and let people share their ideas. Offer science-based information whenever possible to help the discussion.
but don’t argue.

**Pay Attention**

Pay attention to what others in your field are doing and saying and what they are interested in. Keep an eye on what people are saying about CSU, the Office, your department, your field, or your competition. There is quite a bit to learn.

**Be Transparent**

CSU OVPR does not endorse people, products, services, and organizations. On social media websites such as LinkedIn, where your affiliation to CSU OVPR is known, personal recommendations or endorsements should not be given or requested when acting as or representing OVPR.

**Account Administrators**

All OVPR social media accounts should have at least two OVPR employees/administrators at all times to ensure an adequate level of engagement and the protection of these guidelines. Should one of the OVPR employee administrators of an account leave the Office for any reason or no longer continue to be an account administrator, it is the individual’s supervisor’s responsibility to designate another media administrative role.

If there are not two OVPR employees available to serve as account administrators when a social media account is being considered, then the account should not be implemented under any circumstances.

OVPR does approve the implementation of social media account utilizing CSU PR as the secondary administrative support. If there are problems identifying a new administrator for a long-standing OVPR social media account, contact the OVPR Communications Team at [VPR_Office@mail.colostate.edu](mailto:VPR_Office@mail.colostate.edu).

CSU employees identified as administrators of accounts are held responsible for managing and monitoring content of their officially recognized accounts. Administrators are responsible to remove content that may violate the University or OVPR Conduct Policies. Administrators at any time can contact OVPR Communications for consultation or CSU’s Social Media Leadership Team if OVPR Communications is not available.

OVPR student organizations that wish to create social media accounts should contact the OVPR Communications Team at [VPR_Office@mail.colostate.edu](mailto:VPR_Office@mail.colostate.edu) for assistance.

Administrators should always receive written consent from their supervisors before posting content to the OVPR social media pages. Administrators of OVPR should retweet other Twitter Account’ tweets at their best discretion. The information that the OVPR Twitter accounts’ retweet should reflect the OVPR and CSU’s mission and brand. Social media administrators do not need permission to tweet/retweet once written permission to tweet freely is given to the administrator from their supervisor/s. Written permission will be given only after the supervisor
deems that the administrator has had adequate experience representing the CSU OVPR mission and voice. Administrators do not necessarily need permission from their supervisors when responding to comments/tweets from the audience. However, administrators should always use their best judgment when responding to comments/tweets, and should ask for assistance from their supervisor when they are unsure of an appropriate response. All responses should reflect the mission and voice of CSU OVPR.

Every CSU-affiliated social media account should include the following disclaimer statement:

Disclaimer Statement: While we are affiliated with Colorado State University, comments made on this account are our own and not that of the University. If you would like to review our social media policy please visit this webpage.

http://www.socialmedia.colostate.edu/page/Social-Media-Policy.aspx

It is important for administrators to use their best judgment when posting about specific personnel fundraising (faculty, staff, family, etc.) or tragedies that are connected to the OVPR. Administrators should receive written consent from the executive director’s office to promote the fundraisers via social media. Administrators should keep in mind that any response made to readers/viewers in private could go public. This includes emails, Facebook messages, Twitter direct messages, etc. Any answer given to a reader/viewer in private should be written as though it is a public message.

Administrators should not delete, disable, or hide posted and shared content on social media accounts. If the content posted by an administrator is incorrect, it is important to address the mistake, admit to the mistake, correct the mistake, and move on. If there is negative feedback posted on or directed at the OVPR social media pages, the content should never be removed from the page by an administrator. The response OVPR gives to the negative comment is the most important factor. Viewers/readers following the conversation will most likely concentrate on how OVPR is handling the negative comment rather than the negative comment itself.

How to respond to negative feedback on social media pages:

- Respond as quickly as possible
- Be thankful, polite, and respectful of your customers, even if you think they are incorrect
- Be honest and transparent
- If your clients/audiences have inaccurate information, correct them
- Tell clients/audiences how you are going to address their complaints, and what the next steps are
- Give clients/audiences a way to stay in touch with you, and invite further feedback (ex: separate email)
- Do not give a similar generic response to each negative comment; be human, different, and sincere
- It is important to respond to negative comments, but use your best discretion about when engaging in the conflict is appropriate
- Never delete content/comments, unless they contain: racism, sexism, verbal
Existing Colorado State University Conduct Policies

- Acceptable use
- Copyright information
- IT security policy
- Personal records privacy and security policy
- Privacy statement
- Website requirements and guidelines
- FERPA/Privacy policies
- Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual
- Student Code of Conduct
- Social Media Policy
- Application
- Best Practices in Social Media
- Facebook Best Practices
- Twitter Best Practices
- Flickr Best Practices
- LinkedIn Best Practices
- YouTube Best Practices
- Tips for Creating Profile Images