UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM
ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM

SECTION: General Administration
NUMBER: 01.H.01

AREA: University Marketing, Communications and Media Relations

SUBJECT: Social Media Policy

1. PURPOSE

The University of Houston System and its component institutions (“University”) encourages the use of social media to connect with others, including students, employees, alumni, and fans of and the University. Social media sites are excellent venues to communicate and encourage engaging discussions about University current events, issues, accolades, organizations and people. This policy defines the rules and procedures for the use of Official University Social Media Site Official University Social Media Profiles (as defined in Section 3.3) to ensure that University-sponsored social media profiles are both legal and in compliance with University policies.

2. POLICY

2.1. All Official University Social Media Site Official University Social Media Profiles must adhere to state and federal laws and regulations, and University policies. Only public information may be posted on by Official University Social Media Site Official University Social Media Profiles. Official University Social Media Site Official University Social Media Profiles must not contain sensitive personal information as defined in Texas Business and Commerce Code, Chapter 521, or other confidential information as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Regulations, as applicable. Any sensitive personal information or other confidential information posted on by an Official University Social Media Site Official University Social Media Profile must be removed by the site profile administrator as soon as practically possible upon discovery. Ensure that confidential information policies referenced in SAM 01.D.06 are followed.

2.2. The University is committed to fostering an educational environment that allows for freedoms of speech and expression in accordance with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Posts, comments, and messages left by other users that are protected by the First Amendment may not be deleted, and user accounts cannot be blocked. Additionally, comment filtering must be disabled or set to the lowest possible setting. However, the University will not tolerate any activity or posting...
on an Official University Social Media Site. Official University Social Media Profile loses First Amendment protection such as any unlawful, defamatory, or obscene (as defined by Texas and federal law) activity or posting. The University reserves the right to remove any such posting without notice. Moderation of content on Official University Social Media Profiles shall comply with guidelines posted on the University’s Social Media Guidelines website.

2.2.1. Profile administrators must consult with the Office of General Counsel before taking any action against content on Official University Social Media Profiles, including content that the First Amendment or this policy may not protect. The University also reserves the right to refer Social Media activity to the applicable Social Media platform and/or appropriate authorities for appropriate action. The University also reserves the right to refer social media activity that may go against the platform’s terms of use to the applicable social media platform and/or appropriate authorities for appropriate action.

2.3. All Official University Social Media Sites must respect intellectual property rights, federal Copyright law and University policies.

2.4. Employee Use – When using Social Media as a part of their official duties, and/or when presenting oneself in Social Media settings as a University representative, employees must comply with applicable University policies governing employee behavior and acceptable use of electronic and information resources.

2.5. Primary administrative rights for Official University Social Media Sites will be assigned only to University employees. Official University Social Media Sites will have a minimum of two administrators that have access to the profile’s credentials to ensure that the site is consistently managed. Should one administrator be unavailable, the second assigned administrator will manage the site. At least one of the two administrators should be a permanent University employee. The email address on file with these accounts must be a shared department email address. For more information on complying with these guidelines, please visit the University’s Social Media Guidelines website. Passwords for Official University Social Media Profiles should be changed at least once a year, as well as any time a profile administrator leaves their position at the University. If the departure of a profile administrator leaves only one permanent University employee with profile access, an additional permanent University employee must be provided access. For Social Media platforms that do not have passwords for each profile, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, the list of administrators with access should be reviewed at least once a year.
2.6. All content on the [Official University Social Media Site](#) must comply with [1 TAC 206](#) and [1 TAC 213](#) to ensure that the information is accessible and usable by people with the widest range of capabilities possible. Accessibility requirements apply to the content on the social media tool, not the features of the tool. Therefore, if the Official University Social Media Site does not use an inaccessible feature, it is not in violation of accessibility requirements. It is the responsibility of the [Official University Social Media Site](#) administrator to ensure social media content is fully accessible. Accessibility guidelines/practices should comply with the guidelines posted to the Social Media Guidelines website. **BEST PRACTICES**

2.7. Records Retention – Content posted by the University or the public on an [Official University Social Media Site](#) is a state record and is subject to the State of Texas Records Retention requirements unless it is content duplicated from another source or transitory information of temporary usefulness. University site profile administrators are responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable record retention requirements for content posted on their site profiles.

2.7.2.8 Do not make any statements via Social Media on behalf of the University. Official University Social Media Profiles should comply with new regulations. Additional information can be found on the Social Media Guidelines website. Only link to or share official University statements.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1. **Social Media:** Forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as photos or videos). Examples include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and other similar platforms or applications.

3.2. **Copyright:** A form of intellectual property law protecting original works of authorship including literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works. A copyright does not protect facts, ideas, systems or methods of operation—only the way these objects may be expressed.

3.3. **Official University Social Media Site:** A Social Media site profile, page, account or community which represents a University college, department, or official program. Any other [Social Media](#) site profile, such as a student organization site profile, a student’s personal Social Media profile or an employee’s personal Social Media profile, is NOT subject to this policy.

When possible, two-factor authentication should also be enabled for enhanced account security. **MOVE TO BEST PRACTICES**
All University Social media sites profiles must comply with any approved applicable University branding standards. Profile pictures using Master Brand logos are reserved for the University’s flagship social media accounts. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the Division of University Marketing and Communications. MOVE TO BEST In moments of crisis or emergency, only share posts coming from the flagship University of Houston social media accounts, UH ALERT, the University of Houston Police Department, the University of Houston Office of Environmental Health and Life Safety and the University of Houston Office of Emergency Management. Only create new posts when authorized by University officials. MOVE TO BEST PRACTICES

4. PROCEDURES

4.1. Branding for University Social Media

The branding, visual identity and configuration of all Official University Social Media Profiles should comply with the guidelines posted to the Social Media Guidelines website. For any Official University Social Media Site, Official University Social Media Profile, the social media icon and/or profile image picture and cover photo must comply with any applicable University branding standards. The social media icon and/or profile image picture should be the Interlocking UH logo accompanied by a short line of text beneath it to identify your profile. The vertical version of the profile’s brand extension logo is also permitted for use as a profile picture. Other symbols or marks that have been in long-term use with a well-established identity within your college, program, department or business unit may also be used as a profile picture. REFER TO BEST PRACTICES can be a photograph related to the administrator’s entity, an approved logo for that entity, or another appropriately branded image. All images should be 72 dpi resolution for web.

4.2. Content for University Social Media (does not include photo policies)

4.2.1. Administrators of the site profile, when in need to request authorization to hide or delete any material in violation of this policy, or to block a user from a site profile, should contact the University’s Social Media manager or webmaster, who will consult with the Office of the General Counsel.

4.2.2. Administrators should only use Official University Social Media Site, Official University Social Media Profiles for University purposes and should not engage in personal or private activity under the guise of any Official University Social Media Site, Official University Social Media Profile.

4.2.3. Only public information may be posted on Official University Social Media Site, Official University Social Media Profiles. Official University Social Media Site, Official University Social Media Profiles should not be used for the communication of business transactions, including credit card or
payment information, educational records protected by FERPA, medical records protected by HIPAA, or any other confidential information.

4.2.4. Social media content on an Official University Social Media Site may sometimes include photographs, audio or video. Site administrators are responsible for ensuring that social media content posted on the site is not infringing on the intellectual property and privacy rights of others. Intellectual property rights of content shared by the public will be governed by federal copyright law, the terms of service of the social media provider, and/or University policies.

4.2.5. Administrators are encouraged to link to source material whenever possible. This activity will reduce the spread of misinformation and drive traffic.

4.2.6. Administrators of University Social Media Sites should adhere to the policies for the social media platforms in which they are participating. These policies are constantly changing, and it is the administrator’s duty to stay up to date.

4.2.7. All graphics, images and videos posted by Official University Social Media Profiles must comply with any approved applicable University branding standards.

4.3. Photos for University Social Media

4.3.1. If the administrator intends to publish a student photo on the an Official University Social Media Profile, in which the subject can be recognized, they must comply with the University’s Photo Release Guidelines. Then a signed photo release form from the individual is needed. This form may be found on the University’s legal affairs website. Additionally, a FERPA Authorization Form is required.

4.3.2. When posting non-student photos, it is recommended that the administrator obtain written permission. This written permission can be accomplished in an e-mail or with the photo release form referenced in the University’s Photo Release Guidelines.

4.3.3. Administrators will not share any restricted-use photos.
5. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Party: Vice Chancellor for University Marketing and Communications

Review: Every five years on or before September 1

6. APPROVAL

Approved:

Vice Chancellor for University Marketing and Communications

Senior Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

Chancellor

Date: