



Social Media Policy For Faculty and Staff

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Social media are used by an increasing number of people around the globe, including Young Harris College staff, faculty, current and prospective students, parents and alumni. From blogging and Facebook to Twitter and YouTube, anyone with access to the Web or mobile technologies has the ability to self-publish and transmit content in a variety of formats that include audio, video and written communications.

Social media are having a profound effect on the way YHC recruits new students and communicates with others on and off campus. Social media are a set of communication tools that has a major impact on organizational and professional reputations. Everyone at YHC has the ability to impact the reputation of the College, regardless of whether or not the social media content involved is personal or professional in nature.

The line between personal voice and institutional voice increasingly blurs as information, opinions and content are shared through social media. Employees should follow the same standards online as they would in everyday interactions with students, alumni, donors and other constituents. The successful use of social media is based on the concepts of trust and transparency, and the College trusts all YHC employees to guard its reputation. The same laws, professional expectations and guidelines for interacting with students, parents, alumni, donors, media and other College constituents apply online as in the real world. Employees and student representatives are personally liable for anything they post to social media sites.

Employees are encouraged to voice questions or concerns regarding appropriate and inappropriate uses of social media. Employees should contact Maddy Elledge in the Office of Communications and Marketing at melledge@yhc.edu to ask questions and receive specific guidance.

POLICY SUMMARY

The objective of YHC's social media policy is to encourage employees to take advantage of all of the positive benefits of social media while being aware of potential areas of concern. This document outlines the College's philosophy regarding social media, provides a definition of social media, states required policies, explains disciplinary action and lists best practices.

The Office of Communications and Marketing is responsible for ensuring that the policy is followed by all faculty and staff. The Office of Communications and Marketing will also officially review YHC's social media policy on an annual basis to make necessary updates and adjustments.

SECTION I: PHILOSOPHY

Young Harris College believes that social media and digital technologies are fundamentally changing educational recruitment and retention. Employees are encouraged to learn about and use social media and new technologies. Employees are trusted to use their best judgment when publishing personal or professional content in the digital environment.

SECTION II: DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

YHC defines social media as any digital media technology that allows someone to publish or transmit content of any type in a digital format. Examples include but are not limited to blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Flickr, SnapChat, LinkedIn, Pinterest and other online communities. Employees should assume that any content published or transmitted through digital technologies can be traced back to them. As such, this definition also includes email, instant messaging and mobile phone communications such as text messages. If you share something with just one other person, it could potentially be shared with others.

SECTION III: SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES

YHC requires all employees to review and confirm their understanding of the following policies:

1. College and departmental organizations that already have an identity online or see an opportunity to create a new official YHC identity online, such as a Facebook Page, Instagram account or Twitter account, must contact Maddy Elledge in the Office of Communications and Marketing at melledge@yhc.edu to obtain approval in order to ensure that all YHC social media sites coordinate with other YHC-related sites and content. Any faculty or staff advisor of a student organization that would like to create an identity online must follow the same protocol.
2. Once its social media site is approved as an official YHC-related social media entity, the department or organization must select a representative(s) who is assigned to ensure that all information conveyed through the social media site is accurate and regularly updated.
3. Confidential or other proprietary information about Young Harris College, students, employees or alumni may not be posted on social media sites, except as permitted by law. Employees must comply with state and federal laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), as well as NCAA regulations. Employees' statements and comments may be protected by the concerted activity provisions of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).
4. The YHC logo and other college images must not be used on personal social media sites without permission from the Office of Communications and Marketing.
5. When posting, all employees must be aware of copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the College.

SECTION V: DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The College reserves the right to approve all official YHC accounts prior to their creation on any networks (e.g., Facebook Page). Employees who violate this policy are subject to the requirements of the Young Harris College Employee Handbook, including its Employee Conduct and Work Rules (Section 701) and Progressive Discipline (Section 716) provisions, and are subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.

SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

YHC employees are responsible for the content they publish or transmit through any form of social (or traditional) media. What is published or transmitted in the digital environment could be captured and viewable forever. Search engines can generate posts years after they were created, and comments can always be copied or forwarded. Use common sense.

While there will always be gray areas when it comes to social media, there are general guidelines employees should follow.

1. **Think before you post.** Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect both on the person making the post and the College. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created, and comments can be forwarded or copied. Before publishing or transmitting any content using social media, ask the following question every time: *"Would I say this to someone I met at a conference or to a member of the media?"* If the answer is "no," it probably should not be posted online.
2. **Be accurate.** Review the content being posted for factual and grammatical errors, especially when posting on behalf of a college organization or department.
3. **Remember your audience.** Be aware that a presence in social media is or can easily be made available to the public at large. This includes prospective students, current students, current employers and colleagues, peers and other audiences. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not harm or alienate these audiences.
4. **Take ownership.** Do not publish content anonymously or pseudonymously. Assume any content published or transmitted in the digital environment can be traced back to you. If you identify yourself as a YHC faculty or staff member when blogging or publishing content through any public form of social media, make it clear that the views expressed are your own and do not necessarily represent those of the College. The following disclaimer may be used: *"The content on this site reflects my own opinions and not necessarily those of my employer."*
5. **Be respectful of others.** Social media provides a platform for comments and discussion, and it is important to consider how a response will reflect on the institution. Posts should remain professional in tone and in good taste. Do not engage in personal insults or use obscenities.
6. **Protect your photos.** All photographs posted on social media sites, especially Flickr, can be easily appropriated by others. YHC recommends that photos be posted at 72 dpi and a lower resolution (800x600) that can be easily viewed on the Web but are not suitable for printing.