Cal State Fullerton®

Cal State Fullerton Social Media Guidelines

Cal State Fullerton recognizes the importance of social media networks. Social media is a powerful tool to exchange information, raise the visibility of the university and engage with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the surrounding community. While social media is an effective communication tool, it also brings unique challenges. Individuals who contribute to CSUF social media accounts as representatives of CSUF and as a part of their employment must be attentive to these guidelines.

The guidelines below provide best practices for CSUF faculty, staff, and students managing university social media channels. For these guidelines, CSUF channels are associated with a university email account and exist on behalf of and promote the university and university-related activities.

Social media accounts are defined as having an account registered with a social media platform, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, and the like. They include handle names and direct links to each of the accounts. Social media may also include blogs, university websites, and, in some cases, personal social media accounts and websites used partly for university activities (such as research, teaching, residential housing groups, and recognized student organizations).

The purpose of social media is to create conversation and community. CSUF deeply values and supports free speech and freedom of expression, which are fundamental rights and core to our nation's democracy. Our campus is committed to its academic mission and public mandate to serve as a place where individuals from diverse perspectives can freely express and explore ideas, concepts, and opinions.

How to Use These Guidelines

These guidelines are meant to be best practices and a helpful resource to anyone using social media and are intended for all students, faculty, and staff who manage or contribute to official CSUF social media channels. Official CSUF channels are defined as those that speak on behalf of the university and have oversight by university employees. Social media channels include but are not limited to those for divisions, schools, academic departments, offices, or programs. Social media channels include blogs, wikis, and social networks like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Tumblr, and LinkedIn. The guidelines can also be helpful for individuals managing accounts in their official CSUF capacity, including deans, vice presidents, faculty, and staff.

These guidelines can be a valuable guidepost for ensuring social media activity is consistent with university policies and state and federal laws.

Guidelines for Social Media Use on Behalf of CSUF

The following guidelines pertain to individuals who oversee, manage, post to and respond to messages on behalf of CSUF on university social media accounts:

CSUF pages must be approved. All CSUF-affiliated social media channels must be approved by the area's appropriate administrator, whether a dean, department head or vice president. New channels should also be routed to Strategic Communications before being created to ensure proper consultation. Support groups and fan pages on social media sites are easy to create and promote, sometimes making it difficult for users to identify CSUF channels and pages. However, these pages require input and maintenance to be effective. A CSUF social media page is an account managed on behalf of divisions, departments, and programs or university-related business. Again, if you feel there is a need and value in generating an official group or page for CSUF, ask your supervisor and consult with them before allocating time or resources to the endeavor.

Always plan for a staff or faculty member to oversee and monitor the social media account if others, including students, are contributing to the account. The staff or faculty providing oversight must also maintain administrative rights on the social media accounts. University social media channels should have a designated lead responsible for posting; do not leave accounts open for all to post original content or respond to comments. For example, the social media accounts must be connected to the department, oversight staff, or faculty member's email address. Some issues reported via social media may have Title IX or legal implications requiring active monitoring.

Before creating a page, check to see if there is an existing profile to avoid creating duplicate pages. If you discover your department has an inactive social media channel or is falsely presenting as a CSUF page, please contact the Strategic Communications and Branding department for assistance by emailing strategiccommunications@fullerton.edu.

CSUF's social media channels are listed on Cal State Fullerton's social media directory. Campus social media managers are encouraged to review these social media best practices and guidelines and attend social media workshops hosted by Strategic Communications. Contact CSUF Social Media Coordinator, Savannah Terrazas (scterrazas@fullerton.edu) or Associate Director of Digital Media, Jillian Brander (jboyd@fullerton.edu) with questions.

Be respectful and responsible. While managing CSUF social media accounts (division, college, program, or other unit-level accounts), be mindful of what you include and how the information will be received. CSUF is prohibited from posting anything obscene, defamatory, or libelous. The university channels exist to support and encourage community building and connections, promote the work of the CSUF community and share information aligned with the university's mission and principles, including the university's commitment to supporting free speech and freedom of expression. If you have any concerns about whether or not you should post specific information, speak directly with your appropriate administrator. You may also contact Strategic Communications at strategiccomm@fullerton.edu.

Be Selective. Not everything needs a response. CSUF is a large public institution and, as such, is open to criticism about any number of operational or policy actions. When you see criticism online, don't take it personally. And do not feel compelled to respond to every complaint.

Please do not engage in debate or tell someone they are wrong. When responding, be professional and courteous, as you represent the university via university channels. Always view the profile before engaging or responding.

Example: I can't believe CSUF is raising tuition for a pedestrian bridge.
Appropriate Response: We appreciate your voicing your concerns and hope to clarify this misconception. The pedestrian bridge plan does not increase student tuition or fees. The Board of Trustees sets the California State University system-wide student costs.

Please note that the example above aims to clarify a user's question in a kind and professional manner. Provide accurate information to comments when you can do so. If you feel a post or comment is sensitive and needs a response, forward it to your supervisor or CSUF's Social Media Strategist, Savannah Terrazas at scterrazas@fullerton.edu or Jillian Brander at jboyd@fullerton.edu.

Do not delete comments or posts. As a general rule, we do not delete comments or posts, even if they are considered contentious and do not align with institutional values of diversity and inclusion. A California State University (CSU) system-sponsored platform, such as social media channels introduced on behalf of a university department or program, is a government forum. As a governmental entity, the CSU may not restrict the content of most speech, including postings by the public on the CSU's social media accounts but at the discretion of the VP of University Advancement, comments on posts may be removed. The social media platforms themselves (such as Facebook or Twitter) are not governmental entities; they can and do have established community guidelines about appropriate postings to their sites. If you believe that a posting may violate a social media platform's community guidelines, please flag it for StratComm by emailing stratcomm@fullerton.edu. Our team will assess and address if necessary.

Protect confidential and proprietary information. Social computing blurs many of the traditional boundaries between internal and external communications. Be mindful of the difference. Sensitive information should never be shared via social networks, even via "Direct Messages" that might appear private. Do not post confidential or proprietary information about CSUF, or CSUF employees, students, affiliates, or alumni that would violate such person's rights to privacy under applicable federal and state laws and regulations. Be attentive to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA), and university policies. Do not share CWID numbers, social security numbers, banking information, and other personal identifying information in the social media space. Also, respect embargos (the date before which information cannot be shared via a public channel or forum), which may be set by a researcher's funding agency or other organizations.

CSUF's social media pages with contact information should be up-to-date. All social media pages related to CSUF should include accurate contact information, including email addresses and phone numbers. The social media pages should also include the correct link to CSUF's web properties.

Review before posting. Always review all aspects of a social media post before publishing, including the copy, multimedia, link, and call-to-action. All posts should be factually accurate and grammatically correct. If you are unsure about a post, get a second opinion from a colleague or supervisor. Please also refer to the university's [Standards and Branding](#) for direction.

Be careful when using multimedia elements, including photographs, video images, and printed materials. Be aware of the media (photos, videos, GIFs) used in social media posts. All media used should be high-quality and related to your department or organization. Do not use copyrighted photos, videos, or music without permission or license for use. The CSUF [Visual Resources](#) are also available to the campus for university use. Seek consultation with Strategic Communications by emailing stratcomm@fullerton.edu to ensure that you have the correct intellectual property rights to use the image. Similarly, ensure that you have appropriate rights before posting copyrightedwritten materials. Again, Strategic Communications can assist in determining whether such rights have been secured.

When photographing people for print, web, or video projects, please use a [model release form](#) for adults or children under 18 to ensure that subjects know their image's reproduction and usage rights. Keep these records on file; you do not have to share them with Strategic Communications.

Be active and do not allow channels to fall dormant. Remember to update and monitor your social media accounts regularly. Posting relevant and timely content is key to establishing a successful social media presence. Additionally, actively responding to comments and engaging with your audience will keep your followers interested. When interacting with your audience via university channels, do so professionally and respectfully.

Follow Cal State Fullerton brand guidelines. When creating or maintaining a CSUF social media account, follow CSUF Brand guidelines. Doing so will create consistent branding across the university's social media accounts and show your audience that your page is an authentic CSUF page.

Have a plan. Before getting started with social media, it's crucial to have a plan. During the planning stages, assign the designated team members to help maintain and monitor your social media channels. While creating your strategy for social media, identify your goals, target audience, and how you will measure success. It's also essential to determine what content you plan to share on social media and if there are any opportunities to collaborate with other partners on campus.

Make it accessible. Remember the importance of accessibility when creating social media content. This includes using alt-text descriptions on social media platforms that allow you to do so, including captioning on videos, and being aware of color contrast on any social media imagery. For more information about accessibility, visit http://www.fullerton.edu/ATI/

Recommended Best Practices for Employee Personal Social Media Use

As an important note, while these guidelines may be helpful for personal social media use unaffiliated with a CSUF account, they are not designed for employees' personal use of social media.

Some employees maintain several social media channels, some for personal use and others for official CSUF business. Individuals must use care to separate the two uses and may not use university resources to distribute personal communications.

It is recommended that you identify your communications for transparency. Employees who use personal social media channels to talk about work or CSUF-related matters are encouraged to disclose their affiliation with the university or add a disclaimer to their social media accounts stating that their thoughts are their own.

All students, faculty, and staff are responsible for what they post on their own social media channels and sites and the sites of others. Unless your job duties at CSUF involve the use of your personal social media accounts on behalf of the university, and this use is explicitly authorized in writing by a school dean, department head, or vice president, an employee's personal use of social media is not considered to be related to employment responsibilities at CSUF. Consequently, CSUF will not be liable for and will not indemnify an employee for any liability resulting from postings they generate for their own social media activities and accounts.

Nothing in these guidelines should be read to restrict the ability of students, faculty, or staff to engage in protected activity and speech, and the guidelines are not intended to govern or limit communications, free speech, or academic freedom. The above guidelines are created for university accounts only, but you are free to use any and all of the policies as best practices for your personal accounts. In addition, several other sites provide best practices for social media use, and we recommend that you consult them as well, which offer the following reminders:

Be transparent; identify yourself. Your personal social media should not be set up in a way that leads others to believe it is a university-sanctioned or CSUF-managed site. It should be apparent (and clearly stated) that your opinions on your personal sites are yours and do not represent the views and opinions of CSUF or the CSU.

Example: Twitter bio to include "RT ≠ endorsements" or "Views are my own."

Be mindful of confidential and proprietary information. Be aware to avoid sharing confidential and proprietary information regarding the university on social media.

Do not forget your day job. Consistent with the CSU Responsible Use Policy, personal blogging should generally be done on personal computers and on personal time to not interfere with work performance.

By agreeing to these guidelines, I state that I have read and understood the CSUF Social Media Guidelines and Best Practices and that I will abide by the Guidelines for Social Media Use on Behalf of CSUF.