

DePaul University, Division of Student Affairs

Social Media Handbook

University resources and divisional guidelines

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----------|
| I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE | 2 |
| II. UNIVERSITY SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES | 2 |
| III. STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS | 3 |
| IV. USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO RAISE THE VISIBILITY OF DIVISION-WIDE INITIATIVES | 5 |
| V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES | 6 |

Social Media/'sōSHəl 'mē-dē-ə/: forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content (Merriam-Webster, 2013) such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.

Social media is frequently just one part of your department's overall communication strategy, and will reflect the larger goals and objectives that you have for your department's communication, overall.

I. Introduction and Purpose

The Division of Student Affairs strategic plan goal 2 team began to explore student engagement and social media in the middle of the 2012-13 academic year. As the goal 2 team's social media task force did this, it became evident that some guidance from the division regarding departmental use of social media would be helpful.

This document serves to do the following:

1. Point Student Affairs staff to university resources that offer best practices, guidance, strategies and resource requirements to support meaningful social media efforts of departments.
2. Highlight social media strategies that can raise the visibility of divisional and departmental programs and services.
3. Direct Student Affairs staff to social media professional development opportunities.

II. University social media guidelines

A. University social media guidelines

Before embarking on social media for your office you should review the university's social media guidelines: http://brandresources.depaul.edu/vendor_guidelines/g_socialmedia.aspx. Make sure to revisit the guidelines from time to time, or when you have a specific question, too. The guidelines include general recommendations, information on logos and social media icons, tips for handling negative posts, and a post response flowchart, among other topics.

B. University Social Media Program Guide 2013

A new social media document created by Kris Gallagher in University Marketing was distributed in July 2013. The guide provides information on how to build a successful social media program at DePaul, and includes sections on audience, objectives and strategy, tactics, content and measurement.

You can link to the Social Media Program Guide on the EM & M website at http://brandresources.depaul.edu/vendor_guidelines/SMWG_Social_Media_Guide_July_2013.pdf

III. Strategies for Success

There is a lot of information out there about how to do social media ‘best.’ However, there are some universal best practices that you should be aware of, which tend to apply well to our particular work in Student Affairs:

1. **Determine if you actually need your own social media.**

Students are becoming overwhelmed by social media the same way they became overwhelmed by an abundance of emails from the university. Rather than add to the pile of social media that students may or may not ever get to, you could work with another group to get your message out (Ramspott, 2012).

Social media is time consuming, if you do it right. Determine if you have the staff to adequately manage ‘good’ social media for your department. If you don’t, use another department’s established social media to get your message out. This will save you time, and you will be reaching an already-established social media audience.

Rather than establish your own social media, you can join the **university’s social media group**. This group meets monthly and maintains a university social media email list. You can share social media messages with the group that they can push out through their social media channels. Contact [Kris Gallagher](#) in Marketing Communications for more information or to sign up.

2. If you engage in social media, be sure to **define and describe your audience**. Please see the DePaul University Social Media Program Guide ‘Identify Your Target Audience’ for more information.
 - For departments, it’s not just ‘students.’ Try to define and describe sub-groups of students, and begin to tailor different messages to different sub-groups.
3. After you define your audience, **determine the purpose or objectives of your social media**. Please see the DePaul University Social Media Program Guide ‘Determine Objectives and Strategy’ for some broad, common purposes or objectives for social media in a university setting.
4. After you’ve moved through the first 4 steps, you should **decide your media platforms**. Please see the DePaul University Social Media Program Guide, ‘Select Tactics.’
5. Make sure to **make the time to manage your social media**.
 - Understand the time requirements for your particular strategy and objectives and ensure that you have the staff to meet those objectives. If you don’t have the staff, you will need to adjust your goals, objectives and strategy in order to ensure that the appropriate amount of time is spent on social media activities in order to meet your stated objectives.
6. **Develop an execution strategy**

Once you have defined and understand your audience, and determined your objectives and strategy, it is time to actually put content in the appropriate social media channels. You'll need to determine:

1. How often to produce content for each platform that you are using
2. What kind of content is the most appealing to your audience.

See the Social Media Program Guide, 'Identify Your Target Audience,' for starters. However, here are a few, key execution tips:

- Different platforms have different standards: make sure to do some research and find out what you should post, why and how often.
 - Think about how you can get your audience members talking about you (re-tweeting, sharing posts) on their social media: in other words, how do you create 'buzz?'
7. Make sure to **measure your social media success**. See the DePaul Social Media Program Guide, 'Measure Response.'

- There is no perfect way to measure the return on your social media investment, and trying to measure the success of social media efforts can be frustrating. But some measurement is better than none, and you should find the most appropriate measurement for your social media efforts. Keep in mind, determining which measurement tools are right for your department requires a clear definition of your objectives (Burg, N., 2013; Dyer, P., 2013).

Some things to keep in mind when you are measuring your social media success:

- A high number of likes or posts doesn't necessarily equal success: consider measuring the sentiment of posts or shares to determine the nature (positive or negative) of the post or share.
- Interactions, or simple 'likes,' don't carry the weight they used to, but they still have meaning. There is an amount of time associated with someone deciding to like something on your page, and there's a different amount of time associated with casual or accidental visitors, acquaintances and close friends liking something on a Facebook page. By understanding who has liked something and how many of their friends and acquaintances have seen that like, you know something about the reach of your post.
- Your website's analytics can tell you how often people find your page via Facebook or Twitter. These numbers are helpful, but since it's not always easy to tell what actions on these social media sites have driven that traffic, or how much that traffic truly cost, **traffic analysis should be used with other measurements** to give a fuller picture of the value of social media (Burg, 2013).

8. **Copyrights** and social media

- Give credit where credit is due: anything that is posted (picture, text, articles, etc.) that is not your own, original creation should cite the source.
- Not all photos, art, comments, text, etc. that you find online are free to re-use as you see fit, even if you do cite the source. Make sure you know if permission to use is required, and then secure permission to use another person's work, if necessary.

- If you are confused about the copyright policy, read the university's [copyrights policy](#). Make sure to read up on [Fair Use](#), too: some use is allowable for educational or non-profit purposes without securing permission.

IV. Using social media to raise the visibility of Division-Wide Initiatives

The Divisional strategy around social media is intentionally de-centralized and encourages the efforts of individual departments and programs to build and develop their own affinity groups and followers.

In order to maximize our communications or to promote strategic or large-scale events and initiatives sponsored by the Division or by particular departments in the Division, departments are encouraged to:

1. "Friend", "Like", "Follow", etc. from your program or department account the sites, pages, and accounts of other Divisional colleagues wherever possible.
2. Announce your connection to DePaul by using #depaulSA or #DePaulU or #DePaul with your Twitter posts. This helps to promote DePaul and Student Affairs, and can make your post or event easier to find.
3. Link your programmatic efforts and messages to others in the Division during certain key programs and times of year. Work with central the coordinating person / program / department to coordinate as needed.
 - a. **Welcome Week:** Use or add this common hashtag for all Twitter posts related to events during or surrounding welcome week in the fall and in the winter quarters: #DPUwelcomeweek (Coordinating party: NSFE)
 - b. **Involvement Fair / Real Life Recess:** #dpuactivate (Coordinating party: OSI)
 - c. **Finals Week(s):** use or add this common hashtag for all Twitter posts related to events during or surrounding final exams at the end of each academic quarter: #dpufinals (Coordinating party: OSI)
 - d. **New Student Service Day:** #NSSDdepaul (Coordinating party: VCSO)
 - e. **Vincentian Service Day:** encourage students, staff and faculty to participate and learn about Vincentian Service Day through all social media platforms. Use hashtag wherever appropriate: #VSDdepaul (Coordinating party: VCSO)
 - f. **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day:** #dpuMLK (Coordinating party: CIP)
 - g. **Common Experience:** #dpuComEx (Coordinating party: SLI)
 - h. **Blue Demon Week:** #BDW2014 (Coordinating party: OSI)
 - i. **Fest:** #depaulfest (Coordinating party: OSI)
 - j. **Countdown To Graduation:** #countdown2capandgown #CTG2014 (Coordinating Party: OSI)

NOTE: There are likely numerous other department-sponsored programs and initiatives using hashtags to communicate and promote. Not all will necessarily be raised to the level of a

Division-wide effort – but you still are encouraged to invite others to join you in promoting your efforts.

V. Professional Development Opportunities

Various ongoing training opportunities exist for Divisional staff regarding how to effectively manage social media to engage students.

1. Human Resources' Workplace Learning and Performance Social Media Workshop

- The 3 hour workshop offered through HR WLP is "Social Media at DePaul: Best Practices for a Strategic Online Presence" (MD001A)
- Register through HR's WLP portal in Campus Connect or view available workshops:
<https://hr.depaul.edu/Workplace%20Learning/LearningAtDePaul/index.html>

2. Division of Student Affairs Professional Development workshops.

- Keep your eyes open for social media development and training options through the Professional Development Committee.

3. Division of Student Affairs Quarterly Communications Committee meetings

- A quarterly meeting of those responsible for communications efforts, including social media, for a particular department or program within the Division.
- Offers a forum for sharing information, question and answer, sharing effective practices and coordination of joint initiatives.
- Contact the Communications Coordinator in Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

4. DePaul University Social Media Working Group

- Regular, university-wide meeting of those active in social media at DePaul.
- Offers a forum for connecting with others institutionally and remaining informed of institutional efforts and strategies around social media, for requesting advice or assistance from other social media users and leaders in the university, and to benefit from discussion and learning on effective uses of social media in university context.

Conclusion:

Without a good understanding of your audience and purpose, clearly defined goals and objectives, the selection of the right social media platforms to match your strategy and your resources, and a way to measure your social media success, you could be spending a lot of time accomplishing very little in terms of your message and engagement with students. We hope this document sets you on the right path with your social media