Purpose

Social media encompass a wide variety of Internet networking and communication tools, including but not limited to sites such as Facebook and MySpace (social networking), Twitter (live blogging), LinkedIn (professional networking), YouTube (video), Flickr (photo sharing), AOL Instant Messenger, Yahoo Messenger, etc.

Social media, when used wisely, are a very powerful tool, allowing Clarkson and its community members to engage prospective students, current students, parents, employees, alumni and other interested constituencies in the life of the University. Social media aid our personal connections, our professional networking opportunities and our communication objectives when we are charged with representing Clarkson and its departments, programs and/or units.

It is important for our faculty and staff to follow the same standards while using social media as they do in their face-to-face interactions and other forms of communication with our constituencies. Even more so in our online dialogues, we must recognize that even individually driven conversations are potentially public for the world to see how we treat and connect with others. We must obey all laws and we must show respect for others, just as we do in other forms of communication.

This policy and the following requirements apply to any situations where an employee is expressly or impliedly representing the University, as an employee of Clarkson in general and/or on behalf of a department, program, unit or the University in part or whole. This includes any activity in which the University is connected to the identity of the employee beyond simple identification of his or her affiliation with Clarkson, and includes any situation in which a reader might reasonably believe that the employee is acting on behalf of the University.

The following points are intended to make deployment of this policy a positive exchange and to help to ensure that all Clarkson employees and departments, programs and units appropriately represent the University in social media.

Employee Conduct

A. Using Social Media

1. University employees authorized by their supervisor, by department agreement, or faculty conducting academic inquiry may use social networking media to conduct University business consistent with this policy, the Clarkson University Acceptable Use Policy, the University Operations Manual and any other applicable University, department, program or unit policies, procedures, rules and/or regulations.

2. The creation of officially recognized sites that represent the University and/or a department, program or unit of the University, that link from Clarkson.Edu, or that appear in published materials sponsored by the institution, have additional governance requirements associated with them as outlined below.

B. Your personal identity online and contact you provide

1. In forums recognized by Clarkson (see section C) and when using your Clarkson e-mail address, the University's domain, or your Clarkson title or other University resources in any social media covered by this policy, employees will be held responsible for following all applicable University policies, procedures, rules and regulations, including but not limited to the Acceptable Use Policy (http://www.clarkson.edu/studentaffairs/regulations/ix.html#F), copyright policy, procedures for the distribution of official university information and surveys, crisis communications procedures, and EEO/ Affirmative action/ Harassment policies.

2. Employees may not disclose or use confidential or proprietary information of the University or any faculty, staff or student in any form of social networking media. This includes, but is not limited to, information protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Sharing this type of information, even unintentionally, can result in legal action against you and/or the University.

C. Social Media Account Management on behalf of a unit of the University

1. Starting and Maintaining an Officially Recognized Social Media Site:
a. Departments, programs or units of the University that would like to create or maintain a social media account that represents the department, program or unit, that link from Clarkson.edu and/or that appear in the University’s published materials must apply for recognition from the Director of News & Digital Content Services in the Marketing & External Relations office. Together they will discuss the purpose of the account and how they plan to use and maintain it. After receiving approval from the Marketing & External Relations office, the user may create the new account subject to the terms of this policy and any requirements imposed as a condition of approval. The University reserves the right to revoke or limit approval at any time in its sole discretion.

b. Departments, programs or units will be required to have a plan for keeping their social media sites up-to-date, and that considers their message, audience, and goals. It may be in a department, program or unit’s best interest to collaborate with others who are serving similar audiences to maximize reach and maintain fresh content in the social media venue.

c. Other than “official” social media pages maintained by the Marketing & External Relations office, no department, program or unit should consider its social media site as representing, or allow its social media site to be constructed and/or operated in a manner that states or implies that it represents, the University as a whole.

d. A minimum of two (non-student) University employees in good standing must be listed as administrators of the account. (Three are recommended.) If the service does not allow more than one administrator, a copy of the login and password information must be provided to your supervisor and updated if it is changed. If there are not two employees available to serve as account administrators, or if a supervisor requests, a member of the Marketing & External Relations office will serve in that capacity.

e. Should an employee administrator of an account leave the University, be reassigned to a position not having responsibility over the account, have his or her responsibility for the account revoked, or for any reason no longer wish or be authorized to be an account administrator, another employee must be designated as an account administrator, and the password or other access code for the account must be changed immediately.

f. Employees identified as administrators of accounts are responsible for managing and monitoring content, including without limitation ensuring that postings are consistent with other Clarkson published materials on the same topic. They are responsible for removal of any content that violates applicable federal, state or municipal laws, rules or regulations; University policies, procedures, rules or regulations; or the terms of use for the site on which the account is maintained. The University reserves the right to require the alteration or removal of content that it deems to be contrary to (a) any applicable federal, state or municipal law, rule or regulation, (b) any applicable University policy, procedure, rule or regulation, and/or (c) the best interests of the University.

g. The University has adopted a variety of policies, procedures, rules and regulations that specify the manner in which concerns or complaints regarding certain issues are to be reported (e.g., campus safety issues, allegations of discrimination, harassment and/or other human resources concerns, allegations of research improprieties, conflicts of interest, environmental health and safety issues, etc.). A University, departmental, program or unit social media site and/or page approved pursuant to this policy is not responsible for receiving and acting on such concerns and/or complaints, and may not state or imply that it is so authorized, unless expressly designated as having such responsibilities. Employees should understand that the posting of such concerns and/or complaints on approved sites or pages does not ensure that they will be received and acted upon by appropriate University personnel, and the University cannot guarantee that posted concerns and/or complaints will be addressed in a timely manner, if at all. Therefore, employees designing to report such concerns and complaints should instead use the officially designated resources and processes identified in the relevant Clarkson policies, procedures, rules and regulations.

h. Once a department, program or unit social media account has been approved by the University, it will be reviewed periodically by the Marketing & External Relations office to ensure that it is accurately and acceptably representing Clarkson and remains in active usage. Employee administrators of recognized social media sites that are dormant for more than a three-month period will be asked to remove them or the University will require their removal.

i. The words “Clarkson University” and our logos, trademarks and service marks (collectively, the “Clarkson Marks”) are the property of Clarkson University. If you plan to use any Clarkson Marks in a social media account, the logos must first be submitted to the Director of News & Digital Content Services in the Marketing & External Relations office for approval of the proposed use. The Clarkson Marks may only be used on social media officially recognized by Clarkson pursuant to this policy. The Clarkson University "seal" is reserved for special honors and to signify corporate agreements and should not be used online in social media.

2. Working in a social media platform representing a department, program or unit: As a representative of Clarkson who wishes to engage in posting in social media forums to engage individuals with your department, program or unit, you are expected to:

a. Follow the terms and conditions set forth by each social media venue and adhere to our own Clarkson University policies, procedures, rules and regulations.

b. Obey the law. Follow local, state and federal laws, rules and regulations, including without limitation those pertaining to copyright and other intellectual property rights.

c. Respect the rights and privacy of others. Ensure you have permission to name a student, alumnus, fellow employee or other third party in a blog or other posting.

Best Practices to Engage Your Audiences via Social Media

The University expects that all employees utilizing social media covered by this policy will utilize the following best practices:

1. Overall, be selective and thoughtful about where you post and how you reply or choose not to reply. It is perfectly acceptable to invite a phone call to discuss something or refer someone to the appropriate office. When in doubt, don’t say it.

2. A common practice among individuals who write about the industry in which they work is to include a disclaimer on your site, usually on the “About Me” page. If you discuss higher education issues or matters within your field of expertise on your own social media site in a manner that could reasonably lead readers to believe that you are speaking on behalf of Clarkson, you should include a sentence similar to this: “The views expressed on this [blog, website, etc.] are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of Clarkson University.”

3. When posting to a blog, keep the tone of your comments respectful and informative. Avoid personal attacks, online fights, and hostile communications. If a blogger or any other online influencer posts a statement with which you disagree, voice your opinion, but do not escalate the conversation to a heated argument.

4. Write reasonably, factually, and with good humor. Understand and credit the other person’s point of view and avoid any communications that could result in personal, professional, or credibility attacks.

5. When lawful, appropriate and possible, provide a link to your supporting documents or your own profile on campus. This will help raise your online ranking results, too.

6. Solicit help from the Marketing & External Relations office to respond to someone who questions or impugns the credibility of the University.
7. Post frequently. A small amount of action on a social media page is almost as bad as having no page at all. In order to keep the audience engaged, try to comment or provide an update at least once a week. Leave yourself an “appointment to post” on your calendar to remind you to update the social media site.

8. Keep your audience in mind. Remember that many different kinds of people have access to view the social media account when posting. While writing in a style appropriate to the medium, be sure to consider this when displaying information so as to not alienate any of the potential students, alumni, prospective students, parents, etc.

9. Post accurate information. Many people will have access to information posted on social media sites. Ensure that the information is correct before it is posted and consistent with other Clarkson published materials on the same topic.

10. Spelling and grammar check. We’re in the education business and with that comes a set of expectations. Double check all spelling and grammar before posting.

11. Fix errors quickly. When mistakes occur, fix them as soon as possible. Do not wait, or simply leave the error up.

12. Live the Clarkson Values.
   a. Integrity: Honesty and accountability in our actions and words form the foundation of our relationship with others. Be truthful in all matters, including without limitation your credentials (such as degrees earned, titles held, research published) and facts about the institution, department, program or unit itself.
   b. Teamwork: Credit appropriately just as you would in scholarly work or team-based projects: do not violate copyrights or other intellectual property rights and cite/link the materials borrowed from others.

Further questions regarding the Social Media Policy can be directed to the Director of News & Digital Content Services in the Marketing & External Relations office.

History

Approved October 2011