3.3.4.Lp Augusta Technical College Procedure: Social Media Policy

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Implemented: 05/01/2018

Social media is a powerful communication tool that has a significant impact on organizational and professional reputations. Because they blur the lines between personal voice and institutional voice, Augusta Technical College has crafted the following procedure to help clarify how best to enhance and protect personal and professional reputations when participating in social media.

Social media are defined as media designed to be circulated through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Examples include but are not limited to LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

Both in professional and institutional roles, employees need to follow the same behavioral standards online as they would in real life. The same laws, professional expectations, and guidelines for interacting with students, parents, alumni, donors, media, other college constituents, and Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) policies apply online as in the real world. Employees are liable for anything they post to social media sites.

Section 1: Policies and Procedures for all Official College Social Media Sites:
If you post on behalf of an official College unit, the following policies must be adhered to in addition to all policies and best practices referenced above:

- **Protect confidential and proprietary information:** Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Augusta Technical College, students, employees, or alumni. Employees must still follow the applicable federal requirements such as FERPA and HIPPA regulations and adhere to all applicable college privacy and confidentiality policies. Employees who share confidential information may be disciplined, up to and potentially including termination.
- **Respect copyright and fair use:** When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the College. For guidance, consult the **Community Engagement and Public Affairs Department.** If using photographs, make sure proper releases are in place.
- **Do not use Augusta Technical College logos for endorsements:** Do not use the Augusta Technical College logo or any other college images or iconography on social media sites other than Augusta Technical College official sites. Do not use Augusta Technical College's name or logo to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate. This includes "liking" or similarly indicating endorsement on social media sites.
- **Terms of service:** Obey the Terms of Service of any social media platform employed.
- **Strive for accuracy:** Get the facts straight before posting them on social media. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors.
- **Notify the College:** Departments should not have a social media page, but should utilize official websites and other social media sites set up by the College. If your department or division would like to start a group on the Augusta Technical College page, you should contact the Community Engagement and Public Affairs department to ensure all institutional social media is coordinated through the Community Engagement and Public Affairs department.
- **Acknowledge who you are:** If you are representing Augusta Technical College when posting on a social media platform, acknowledge this.
- **Link back to the College:** Whenever possible, link back to the Augusta Technical College Website. Ideally, posts should be very brief; redirecting a visitor to content that resides within the Augusta Technical College Website. If you wish to link to a news article about Augusta Technical College, please forward that information to the Community Engagement and Public Affairs department prior to posting.
- **Protect the institutional voice:** Posts on social media sites should protect the college's institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. Consider this when naming pages or accounts, selecting a profile picture or icon, and selecting content to post.

Section 2: Best Practices for all Social Media Use:

- **Think twice before posting:** Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect both on the poster and potentially the college. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created, and comments can be forwarded or copied. If you wouldn't say it at a conference, to a co-worker or to a member of the media, it is likely not a good idea to post it online. If you are unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, you may ask your supervisor for input or contact the **Community Engagement and Public Affairs Department**. Even on personal sites, you may not post anything confidential learned through your employment at the College.
- **Be respectful:** Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they reflect on the poster and/or the College.
- **Remember your audience:** Be aware that a presence in the social media world is or easily can be made available to the public at large. This includes prospective students, current students, current employers and colleagues, and peers. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not alienate, harm, or provoke any of these groups or bring discredit upon the institution.
- **On personal sites:** If you identify yourself as an Augusta Technical College faculty or staff member online, it should be clear that you **are not** acting in an official capacity and the views expressed are your personal opinions, statements and photos. If you would not want what you are writing or posting to be seen by the college, think twice before posting. Being online will not insulate you from discipline for inappropriate behavior.
- **Consider limiting access:** Even on a personal site, be thoughtful about who you "friend" or otherwise give permission to view your personal social media accounts, especially students.
- **Photography:** Photographs posted on social media sites easily can be appropriated by visitors. Consider adding a watermark and/or posting images at 72 dpi and approximately 800x600 resolution to protect your intellectual property. Images at that size are sufficient for viewing on the Web, but not suitable for printing. Be careful posting photographs, even on private pages, that you would not want distributed publicly.

Responsibility

The President of Augusta Technical College and the Director of Community Engagement and Public Affairs have the overall responsibility for ensuring this procedure is implemented.