UMKC Social Media Policy

Purpose:

The University of Missouri-Kansas City recognizes the need for a strong presence in social media. UMKC encourages colleges, departments, programs, groups and entities to be active in the social space and create social media accounts to build relationships.

UMKC has developed a social media policy and application process to ensure that any and all interactions on behalf of UMKC represent the university's best interests. UMKC is one of four campuses in the [University of Missouri System](#).

This policy and the following requirements apply to any situations where an employee is expressly or impliedly representing the university, as an employee of UMKC 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 her affiliation with UMKC and includes any situation in which a reader might reasonably believe that the employee is acting on behalf of the university.

Application of Policy:

This policy will apply to social media accounts created by university employees for the official business purposes of the university, including UMKC faculty, groups, departments, programs, entities, etc. It will therefore impact students, faculty and staff who use various social media for communication in conjunction with representing UMKC. Some examples of the various communication media included under this policy are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, Snapchat, Vine, Instagram and Pinterest. The Strategic Marketing and Communications Social Media Advisory Group has been established to assist in the campus-wide implementation of this new policy.

All officially-recognized social media accounts will be publicly listed by the university in a directory on the UMKC website.

Student organizations that wish to create social media accounts that will be officially recognized by the university must be registered through UMKC's Office of Student Involvement (OSI).

Policy Statement:

The use of social media websites is increasingly common for university departments, students and employees, and these communications tools have the potential to create a significant impact on organizational and professional reputations. UMKC has developed a policy to properly portray, promote and protect the institution and to assist UMKC entities in creating and managing their social media accounts. This policy requires that:

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1. Academic units and departments should seek guidance from MCOM about the appropriate use of social media for their goals, audiences and resources.
2. Officially recognized UMKC social media accounts, blogs and web pages should be reviewed and approved through an application process.
3. Each social media account will have no fewer than two (2) responsible administrators assigned.
4. Each officially approved account must include a disclaimer statement, in the prescribed form, regarding content and opinions contained on the site.
5. UMKC reserves the right to block individual accounts and/or remove comments, links, photos or other content from the social media sites for any reason, including but not limited to, inappropriate, offensive, injurious and illegal content. These may be removed by UMKC employees identified as account administrators or at the direction of the Social Media Advisory Group.
6. Links posted in UMKC social media should not be construed as endorsements of organizations, entities, views or content contained therein. By sharing content on any of UMKC's social media sites, individuals understand and acknowledge that this information is public and that UMKC may use the information for promotional purposes.

Policy Provisions:

Use of Social Media Sites for General Business, Marketing and Communications.

The Vice Chancellor for Strategic Marketing and Communications will be responsible for administering this policy.

The Social Media Advisory Group, comprised of UMKC Strategic Marketing and Communications staff, has been established to provide input and assist in university outreach and training on this policy and best practices. The Social Media Advisory Group will manage the day-to-day application process and update the social media account directory as needed.

Administrators may contact UMKC's Social Media Advisory Group at any time for consultation.

The following requirements apply to all university social media accounts:

1. All applicants for officially recognized social media accounts are required to submit the profile image/avatar of each account as part of the application process to ensure that UMKC's brand standards are upheld.
2. All social media accounts officially recognized by UMKC must have at least two UMKC employees as administrators and one MCOM employee at all times to ensure adherence to this policy.
3. Should a UMKC employee administrator of an account leave the university for any reason or no longer wishes to be an account administrator, it is the academic unit or administrative department's responsibility to designate another UMKC

employee to be an account administrator and remove the former employee's administrative permissions to the site.

4. If there are not two employees available to serve as account administrators, a member of the UMKC Social Media Advisory Group may serve in that capacity.

5. If there are any problems identifying a new administrator, contact the UMKC Social Media Advisory Group.

6. Departments, programs or units will be required to have a plan for keeping their social media sites updated, 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.

7. Other than "official" social media pages maintained by UMKC Strategic Marketing and Communications, 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.

8. Once a social media account has been approved by the university, it may be reviewed periodically by the Social Media Advisory Group to ensure that it is accurately and acceptably representing UMKC and remains in active use. 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.

9. UMKC employees identified as administrators of accounts are responsible for managing and monitoring content of their social media accounts, including without limitation ensuring that postings are consistent with other UMKC published materials on the same topic. Administrators are responsible to remove content that may violate the University of Missouri System Standard of Conduct.

10. 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 and security 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 UMKC department, 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 and students 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 or students desiring to report such concerns and complaints should instead use the officially designated resources and processes identified in the relevant UMKC policies, procedures, rules and regulations.

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Guidelines for Content:

1. UMKC employees are expected to adhere to the same standards of conduct online as they would in the workplace. Laws and policies respecting workplace conduct, contracting and conflict of interest, as well as applicable policies and guidelines for interacting with students, parents, alumni, donors, media and all other university constituents apply online and in the social media context just as they do in personal interactions. Employees are fully responsible for what they post to social media sites.

2. Use good judgment about content and respect privacy laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). Do not include confidential information about the university, its staff or its students in materials posted on social media sites. Examples include information about a student's grades or performance, admission status, GPA, Social Security number and any/all other information that would be covered by FERPA; personally identifiable health information such as medical conditions or injuries or healthcare sought or received; and other private personal information that the person has not consented to have published. The university will not ask for, nor should an individual send, credit card or payment information, classified information, privileged information, private information, or information subject to non-disclosure agreements via any social network internet communication service.

3. Social media posters must also be aware of NCAA rules governing interactions between the institution and its employees, and prospective student-athletes. All employees should refrain from contacting (tweeting, messaging, friending on Facebook) prospective student-athletes prior to signing a National Letter of Intent. Always check with the Department of Athletics' compliance officials before posting anything that may violate these rules.

4. Post only content that is not threatening, obscene, a violation of copyright or other intellectual property rights or privacy laws, or otherwise injurious or illegal. If you are unsure whether certain content is protected by privacy or intellectual property laws, contact UMKC's General Counsel.

Best Practices to Engage Your Audiences via Social Media:

The university expects that all employees using social media covered by this policy will use 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. We are all brand ambassadors. Remember your social media history never really goes away. Assume everyone you know will see it and it will live on forever.

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 UMKC, 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 the University of Missouri-Kansas City."

3. Link back to the university whenever possible. Ideally, posts should be very brief, redirecting a visitor to content that resides within the UMKC website. When linking to a news article about UMKC, check first to see whether you can link to a release on the UMKC News site instead of to a publication or other media outlet.

4. Protect the institutional voice. Posts on social media sites should protect the university's institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. No individual UMKC unit should construe its social media site as representing the university as a whole. Consider this when naming pages or accounts, selecting a profile picture or icon and selecting content to post – names, profile images and posts should all be clearly linked to the particular department or unit rather than to the institution as a whole.

5. 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. Listen to your audience and followers and talk with them not at them. Be authentic. Social media is also a good customer service tool.

6. 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 students, alumni, prospective students, parents, etc.

7. 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 UMKC published materials on the same topic.

8. 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.

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

10. Solicit help from Strategic Marketing and Communications to respond to someone who questions or impugns the credibility of the university.

11. Be mindful of copyright, especially when posting pictures, video or audio. Just because an image or picture is found on the Internet doesn't mean it's free to use. If you need UMKC-related images, please contact Strategic Marketing and Communications for UMKC approved stock photos where required media release forms have been collected for images. Personal ownership of a photo or

piece of music does not extend to the university and should not be used with UMKC social media content unless it has been approved for use by marketing.

12. It's a good practice to get permission from a speaker or group of people to take and post social media pictures. Taking and posting of pictures of minors require permission from a parent or guardian.

User Agreements for Social Media Accounts

Whenever a social media account is created, the social media outlet requires the account creator to agree to certain terms and conditions for use of the site by clicking "Yes" or "I accept" as part of the account creation process. These are legal contracts, and they often contain terms and conditions that create risks for the account creator and the University (for officially recognized UMKC accounts). In view of this, UMKC has adopted this policy to manage these so-called "clickwrap agreements" and mitigate the risks they create. Account administrators are delegated authority to create official social media accounts through completion of the application process and approval by the Social Media Advisory Group. The Social Media Advisory Group will request legal and/or administrative approvals prior to approving applications when required.

University employees and departments are not authorized to enter into advertising agreements with social media sites without prior authorization and approval obtained by contacting the UMKC Marketing Director. Any UMKC unit wishing to purchase advertising services from social media sites, or from any type of publication, must follow all applicable rules and policies governing both the public relations considerations and the procurement and contracting considerations related to such services.

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