

Official Social Media Policy

Purpose

Spelman College recognizes that social media sites, like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr are necessary tools of communication. In an effort to assist in the development of digital content, the Office of Communications has developed guidelines and policies for social media usage. These guidelines and policies apply to the social media pages managed by departments, organizations, faculty, staff, administrators and student leaders.

Definitions

- **Department Pages**—Social media accounts maintained by official College entities (e.g. Office of Admission, English Department)
- **Organization Pages**—Social media accounts maintained by student organizations (e.g. Spelman Student Government Association, Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance)
- **Public Affairs Pages**—Social media accounts maintained by faculty, staff, administrators and student leaders.

Social Media Usage

Social media is an instrument for interactive communication that allows users to both send and receive information. Social media outlets include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Flickr. The purpose of participating on social media sites is to share what is happening on campus with the general public and to hear directly and immediately from students, faculty, staff, parents, alumnae, media, and friends of the College.

Note: social media is a supplementary form of communication. All official College communication will be conveyed via the Spelman College email system (see Spelman College Email Usage Policy).

Creating an Account

1. **Account Creation:** Prior to launching a social media presence, please contact the Office of Communications with the following information:

- Name of the unit making the request
- Social media platform(s) interested in using (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.)
- Purpose of the account
- Name and contact information of the account administrator. This is the individual responsible for the account. The account administrator must be a faculty or staff member. Ideally, this should be the head of the department.

This information will be used to ensure duplicate accounts are not created and to ensure that all pages associated with the College are similarly branded and consistently maintained. Once the account has been approved, the account administrator will receive a welcome packet with tips and best practices.

2. **Naming Guidelines:** Account names are very important. When naming accounts held by the College, the College's name should be listed before the department or program name when possible. Examples include "Spelman College Museum of Fine Arts" or "@SpelmanAdmiss."

3. **Use of the Spelman College Logo and Institutional Graphics:** As the nation's leading liberal arts College for Black women, it is important that our visual image reflects our trademarks in a distinctive and consistent manner. Be sure that your use of the College logo, nameplate and other identifying elements are in line with the College's [Visual Identity Guidelines](#). If you have questions regarding the use of institutional images or graphics, please contact the Office of Communications.

Account Voice

1. **Protect Spelman's Voice:** Posts on social media sites should be professional in tone and in good taste. No individual Spelman unit should construe its social media site as representing the College as a whole.
2. **Public Persona vs. Personal Persona:** When posting on College accounts, account administrators should post only in the name of that unit. For example, administrators to the Spelman College Facebook page should not appear as a commenter on the page. This preserves the consistency of the unit's voice and maintains the privacy of the account administrator. Exceptions to the rule include professors and administrators who create Public Figure accounts. Public Figure accounts should only discuss fields of study and areas of expertise.

Content Development

1. **Content Guidelines:** Only content that furthers the College's mission should be posted. When posting content, understand that it can be viewed by the general public and may be virally distributed. Make sure all information posted is appropriate for public distribution and suitable for all ages. Information that will show the College or an account holder in a negative manner should not be posted.

In addition, avoid posting detailed policy or procedural information like admission guidelines or program requirements. Instead post links to the information on the College's official website. This decreases discrepancies in the information being distributed and minimizes the need to update changes on multiple platforms.

If posting information regarding a controversial research study, be sure to include disclaimers/context and package the information so the post cannot be shared without the disclaimers. However, if in doubt, please contact the Office of Communications for feedback.

2. **Protect Confidential and Proprietary Information:** Do not post confidential, legal, or proprietary information about Spelman College, students, employees or alumnae. Employees must still follow the applicable federal requirements such as FERPA, HIPPA and NCAA regulations, as well as applicable Spelman College privacy and confidentiality policies. Employees who share confidential or proprietary information do so at the risk of disciplinary action or termination.

Social media should not be used as a method of collecting personal information from users. This may be a violation of the sites' terms and conditions and/or state or federal laws.

3. **Respect Copyright and Fair Use:** Do not use intellectual materials or content produced and legally owned by others without expressed written consent to do so. Any photos, graphics and written content produced and owned by others must be credited appropriately.

4. **Accuracy:** Information posted on social media sites must be honest and verifiable. If you make a mistake, admit it. Correct mistakes quickly. If you modify a post, make it clear that the information has been updated.
5. **Endorsements and Political Campaigning:** Do not use department, organization or public affairs accounts to endorse products, services or individuals. Additionally, College resources cannot be used to support individual candidates or political parties due to its position as a nonprofit organization.
6. **Link back to www.spelman.edu:** When possible, link back to www.spelman.edu.
7. **Emergencies:** In the event of a crisis or emergency, all social media exchanges should cease until account administrators have been otherwise informed. During this time, the executive director and the director of interactive communications will identify the message and distribution strategy for Spelman's social media sites. All posts will be approved by the executive director and/or the director of interactive communications.

Community Management

1. **Site Maintenance:** Frequent updates are necessary in order to maintain and grow the College's online community. Sites must be updated and monitored regularly by the departments/organizations that create them. To ensure an informative and engaging environment, be sure to post relevant information and reply to community questions and concerns in a timely manner. If you are unable to post regularly, please reconsider starting a social media page.
2. **Moderating Comments:** Comments on social media platforms should be encouraged, as they help increase your reach and engagement. However, to ensure your community is welcoming to all members, please abide by the following guidelines:
 - Comments should be relevant to the post
 - All comments should be constructive and should not include vulgar or obscene language
 - Hyperlinks, spam, sales and advertising comments are not allowed
 - Comments that violate these guidelines should be deleted immediately by the account administrators
 - Account administrators reserve the right to review and remove comments and other posted materials.
 - Repeat violators will be banned at the account administrator's discretion