

Social Media Guidelines and Best Practices

INTRODUCTION

McPherson College (MC) acknowledges that responsible use of social media may be used to further the College's mission. MC embraces social media as a means of communicating, interacting, and building relationships with prospective and current students, employees, alumni, friends, supporters, surrounding community members, etc.

This document was developed to provide guidance and support for institutional users wanting to participate on social media on behalf of MC and to help ensure those interactions via social media adequately and accurately represent McPherson College.

While this policy primarily focuses on social media entities that are MC-owned and MC-controlled, it also provides general guidelines regarding personal use.

General note: Social media refers to all existing and future social media entities including but not limited to platforms, accounts, profiles, groups, etc. on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Youtube, WhatsApp, Tumblr, Pinterest, Google+, etc.

BEST PRACTICES FOR MANAGING A MCPHERSON COLLEGE ACCOUNT

The goals of all McPherson College social media should include building relationships, starting conversations, and engaging our audiences in a positive way as we share stories and information about MC. This being said, not all interactions from our audiences will necessarily be positive, and that is ok. Our job is to provide authentic, transparent, honest responses and content. Handling negative interactions and commentary can be found below in the Timely, Diligent, Active section.

As a reminder, the Marketing and Communication Department in coordination with Athletics should be part of the development process for new and existing MC social media accounts. If you have questions, would like to start a new account, or would like to schedule a consultation, email marketing@mcpherson.edu

Be Accurate

Check and verify sources; be factual. If you find you've made an error, post a correction or retraction quickly. Use proper spelling and grammar; double check before posting.

Be Timely, Diligent, and Active

Timeliness is a cornerstone of social media. If you choose to manage an MC account, be prepared to respond quickly to new developments and interactions, both positive and negative. Being responsive builds credibility.

To develop strong social media presences it requires dedicated time for planning, managing, and creating content. Developing fresh content consistently (weekly and often times more frequently depending on platform) all year is necessary. Accounts with infrequent, inconsistent, or low quality content are a detriment to general McPherson College in addition to your department or area. If you already have an account that is not meeting the needs of your audience or of the greater MC, please contact the Marketing and Communication Department for next steps. A new plan can be developed to revitalize it; however, disabling, unpublishing, deleting, or reorganizing it under a different umbrella may be the best option rather than letting it remain inactive or unproductive.

Social media is an outlet for dialogue, not monologue, and some interactions may be negative or critical. Regular monitoring of each social media outlet is necessary. Not all commentary warrants a response; use your best judgment on whether someone is just blowing off steam or if the issue is legitimate. Sometimes critical or negative interactions offer an opportunity to provide more information, to clarify, or to start a healthy conversation in response. If the commenter is agreeable, after responding to the initial comment, taking the conversation offline via providing a fitting email or phone number is appropriate. Always remain professional in responses.

Removing, hiding, or deleting interactions should only be necessary if the content is inappropriate or includes advertising for products and services not associated with McPherson College.

Timing is key to reaching your audience. Spreading content throughout the week, rather than in one mass upload, is recommended. Analytics are available to help determine when audiences are most active and engaged; the Marketing and Communication Department can help guide you through them. (i.e. Facebook user primetime is Wednesday and Thursday between 1 and 4 p.m.)

If you don't think you have the time or resources to manage a robust McPherson College social media account, no problem. Sharing content with the Marketing and Communication Department to disseminate it through other already established MC channels is welcomed and encouraged. The Department encourages ALL areas to share their content with it whether they are social media users or not. Please contact marketing@mcpherson.edu.

Sharing Content

If applicable and when possible, please share/retweet content *from the general MC page/profile* rather than creating a new unique posting. You can include or add your own text, but sharing MC's content will increase the overall reach. The general MC profiles have large audiences, and by sharing content from them, it increases the chance that it will show up not only in your page/profile audience's feed, but also general MC's. This is applicable to your personal page as well.

Visual Content

Incorporation of interesting, high quality imagery as often as possible is recommended. The Marketing and Communication Department can help provide appropriate visuals in some instances. Photos smaller than 116x116, poorly lit, blurry, or pixelated images are not recommended. Take care in not displaying other institutional competitors' logos or names in photos and imagery. If you are asked to remove imagery, please do so promptly.

Contact the Marketing and Communication Department with questions you maybe have about existing or new McPherson College social media. marketing@mcpherson.edu

STRUCTURE

The Marketing and Communication Department (including the director of marketing, promotions and new media manager, and director of public relations) acts as administrator for all MC social media. The Athletic Department designee, in coordination with the Marketing and Communication Department, additionally acts as administrator for all MC athletic social media.

Administrative duties include the following:

- 1.) Development of all social media including appropriate account designation, naming conventions, imagery, passwords, voice, etc.
 - a. Maintaining accurate listing of account login info
 - b. Connecting and removing contributors to/from existing accounts
- 2.) Designation of managing contributors
- 3.) Routine audit of existing accounts and platforms checking for effectiveness, appropriateness, and use.
 - a. Enacting appropriate measures in response to findings
- 4.) Demonstration of proper usage and recommendations for effectiveness

The Marketing and Communication Department in coordination with the Athletic Department designee will help determine which social media is most appropriate according to the goals of the willing social media contributor. *All new and existing contributors should consult with the Marketing and Communication Department prior to participation.*

McPherson College Internal Social Media Workflow and Strategy – Addendum 1

Please review as it pertains to each employee and department.

GENERAL GUIDELINES WHEN OFFICIALLY POSTING ON BEHALF OF MCPHERSON COLLEGE

Use of the McPherson College Name and Logo

Proper and consistent usage of McPherson College logos is critical to reinforcing a clear and compelling visual brand. Do not use the McPherson College name, logo or any other College images or iconography on personal, organizational, or departmental sites in a way that promotes a product, cause, or political party or candidate. Do not edit or modify logos. Follow brand guidelines for the logos at all times. More information is available online: wwwi.mcpherson.edu/marketing-communications/. Any questions related to usage should be directed to the Office of Marketing and Communication, marketing@mcpherson.edu.

Media Inquiries

All contact with the media should be coordinated through the Director of Public Relations in the Marketing and Communication Department. In the occurrence of reporters or media representatives reaching out to personal or MC social media pertaining to MC-related inquiries, please contact the Director of Public Relations prior to responding.

Emergency Communication (A clear protocol for emergency situation communication has not been made available to us at this time. This section reflects what is currently proposed during this type of situation. Additionally, this communication is not a function of the Marketing and Communication Department, but the Department does have a role in disseminating the information.)

From the McPherson College student handbook: McPherson College uses a warning system called the “Rave System.” In the event of an emergency that threatens the campus community, students and campus employees can be warned via text message and/or email. Students are encouraged to enroll in this free program during their enrollment. Faculty and staff can enroll for the program online.

From the 2017 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report: The Vice President for Student Life will direct the issuance of emergency notifications, which will be accomplished using one or more of the following means, depending on the nature of the threat and the segment of the campus community being threatened:

- RAVE Alert System
- Email
- Social Media
- Face to Face
- Text Messaging

In the event information needs to be shared with the larger community, notifications to specified stakeholders can be shared via RAVE alert, email, social media, or press release.

Confidentiality, Copyright and Fair Use, Liability, Transparency

Do not post sensitive or proprietary information about McPherson College or personal, medical, or financial information about students, alumni, or employees. Use ethical judgment and follow MC policies and federal requirements, such as FERPA, HIPAA, NCAA, and Title IX.

When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of MC. When using the thoughts, ideas, quotes, pictures, videos, etc. of other parties, give them credit for their work, and provide a link back to original posting when possible.

You are responsible for what you post. Social media users have been held liable for commentary deemed to be copyright infringement, defamatory, threatening, proprietary, libelous, or obscene (as defined by the courts). Be sure that what you post will not expose McPherson College or you to legal liability. Anything that

would be deemed a violation of policies in a face-to-face or telephone communication would likely be considered a violation of those same policies if it took place within the social media environment.

In personal posts, a disclaimer may be warranted in clarifying the statements are personal and do not necessarily reflect the views of MC. i.e. "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of McPherson College."

Protect the institutional voice. Social media posts on behalf of McPherson College should be professional, grammatically correct, and in good taste. MC will not tolerate content that is threatening, defamatory, illegal, obscene, excessively violent, infringing of intellectual property rights, invasive of privacy, profane, libelous, discriminatory, harassing, bullying, abusive, hateful, or embarrassing to any person or entity, in violation of College policy, or otherwise injurious or objectionable. MC reserves the right to remove any content that falls into these categories.