Social Media Guidelines and Best Practices

I. Purpose and Scope

Social media offers the opportunity to initiate new conversations, engage our audience, respond to feedback, and maintain an active dialogue with friends, fans, and others who care about Miami Dade College (MDC). It also serves as an effective tool for sharing news, information, and successes that will communicate the value, benefits, and history of MDC.

Involvement by and collaboration across various College offices in social media will help grow our brand, strengthen our audiences’ connection to MDC, and promote the positive accomplishments of students and faculty. In order to best represent MDC, social media accounts need to comply with uniform policies and present one clear message. This includes a consistency in tone, attitude, actions, and purpose when communicating on social media. Further, this requires consistent branding across the main MDC social channels in name, look, and feel.

These guidelines and best practices will help maintain an organized and strategic effort to engage the various MDC audiences and to better manage the College’s various social identities.

II. Social Media Accounts

Social media presences should be limited to one account per platform per area (e.g. a unit should not have two Facebook pages). The College and each campus will maintain an active Facebook page where content from academic departments, student life, and special services can be shared.

A non-campus level unit can create a unique account only through request and approval of the Office of College Communications and its campus President/Vice Provost. Requests for new accounts should be submitted to the Director of Social Media at SocialMedia@mdc.edu (see Account Registration section).

Non-campus and non-college-wide entities should consolidate to a central presence where possible and appropriate. For example, if there is a need to establish a Learning Resources Facebook page, it should be established as one page co-managed by representatives from various campuses rather than multiple separate pages managed independently at each campus.

III. Account Registration

Per MDC Procedure 1701, existing social media accounts must be registered with the College using the online form located at http://www.mdc.edu/socialmedia/register.aspx. New social media accounts must be approved by both the requesting office’s Campus President/Vice Provost or his/her designee and the Director of Social Media before they are created and registered.
The Director of Social Media will keep a complete listing of recognized accounts and account managers, which can be viewed at http://www.mdc.edu/socialmedia/accounts.aspx. Registering accounts will ensure that necessary communications such as emergency alerts and changes to social media procedures can be communicated to account managers.

IV. Student and Alumni Groups

Student and alumni groups with social media accounts will not be listed as officially recognized channels unless they formally represent the College and adhere to these guidelines. However, they should still adhere to these standards, including the appropriate use of the College name and logos.

Regarding Facebook, unless there is a particular reason for an organization to have a public facing Page, they are encouraged to create a group. Pages represent brands and companies, profiles represent individual people, and groups are best for internal communications and organizing activities for small groups.

V. Education and Training

The Director of Social Media will hold initial meetings with account managers to establish the account, develop content strategies, and generate a communications plan. After these initial meetings, relevant updates and best practices will be shared through email.

Introductory and more advanced trainings through College Training & Development will be held throughout the year. In person meetings will be held as needed.

VI. Marketing and Promotion

College-wide promotion of social media accounts (e.g., Facebook ads, emails) must be coordinated through the Office of Communications and the Director of Social Media. For non-College wide marketing (e.g. poster displays), account managers are responsible for coordinating their materials through the College’s Marketing Office.

VII. Content

Content for social media accounts should focus primarily on displaying the achievements of students and faculty, highlighting news and recognition, and sharing the unique experience and offerings of that unit. Content should be positive and informational, focusing on the key benefits of MDC:

- High quality education
- Affordability
- Accessibility
- Diversity of courses and degrees offered
- Campus life and special events
- Flexibility of which campus to attend
Types of content to post include:

- Photos
- Videos
- Fun facts, statistics, and history
- Links to news releases
- Event details and recaps
- Questions and polls
- Stories/Quotes about the campus experience from students, alumni, faculty, staff and donors

Account managers will be asked to contribute content to the College-wide social channels. Collaboration and cooperation will ensure that the diverse offerings of MDC are well represented and content remains unique. Content, event notices, and story ideas can be sent to SocialMedia@MDC.edu.

Not all content is appropriate for social media or individual accounts. Every effort will be made to ensure that all newsworthy information is shared on MDC’s social channels, but there may be times when posting certain content is not possible or appropriate. Campus page managers will have discretion to determine what content is appropriate for their campus Facebook page. The Director of Social Media will have discretion to determine what content is appropriate for the College-wide social accounts.

VIII. Appearance and Management

To clearly display each account’s affiliation with MDC, each account must meet minimum standards—where possible and appropriate—including but not limited to the following:

- **Account name.** Accounts must include “Miami Dade College” or “MDC” in their name.
- **URL.** Facebook pages should create a shortened URL through Facebook in the format of “www.Facebook.com/MDC______” (i.e. www.Facebook.com/MDCHomestead).
- **Profile photos.** Accounts should use their College, campus, or department logo as the profile photo. If the unit does not have a unique logo, a unit-branded icon will be provided by the Director of Social Media.
- **Complete account profile.** All basic information including website, contact information, “About” section, and other profile information should be completed. This includes appropriate artwork such as Facebook cover photos and Twitter header photos.
- **Regular and appropriate content posts.** Accounts should remain active and engaging throughout the year, maintaining effective content management. Content should appropriately represent MDC values and be related to the page’s purpose.
- **Staff as administrators.** Administrators for the account must be MDC faculty or staff. Each account should identify at least one back up manager to serve in the primary manager’s absence or departure.

IX. Guiding Principles
• **Be unique and relevant.** Share unique, self-generated content that matters to your audience and that reflects what your account is about. While it’s okay to share College-wide news on a departmental account, content should primarily be unique and related to the account’s purpose.

• **Listen and be responsive.** Listening to your audience and following their lead will identify what they care about. Providing prompt and complete responses to questions and comments will ensure that our constituents feel valued. It will also help build community and credibility.

• **Be social.** Social media isn’t a webpage or soapbox for shouting out news and events. Your presence should be conversational, engaging, and promote two way communication.

• **Add value.** Ensure that content is valuable and meaningful to your audience. Provide context and descriptions to links, photos, and other content. Move from broadcasting to engaging.

• **Show, don’t tell.** When possible, use photos, video, and graphics to make stories more compelling and provide more depth.

• **Quality over quantity.** Focus attention on engaging material. Posting too frequently or posting irrelevant content will make it likely that they will ignore you in the future.

• **Be authentic and human.** Being personable as moderators will enhance your community’s experience. Find a voice and tone that matches the story’s context.

X. **Emergency Communications**

In the event of an emergency, threat to individual safety, or other situation, content will be coordinated between the Director of Emergency Preparedness and the Director of Social Media. Information about communicating emergency information on social media will then be emailed to account managers. This will ensure clear and consistent messaging to all fans regardless of the account they are viewing. Situations will be evaluated on an individual basis to determine what level of communication is necessary and to what extent future content posts should be delayed.

XI. **Community Posting Policy**

Maintaining productive, relevant, and safe communities online is of the utmost importance. Account managers should be moderating conversations in their community, responding to questions and comments, and removing inappropriate content. MDC’s policy on social media content, including which content will be removed, can be found at [http://www.mdc.edu/socialmedia/policy.aspx](http://www.mdc.edu/socialmedia/policy.aspx).

It is the responsibility of the account manager to delete content from their page that violates this policy in a timely fashion. Account managers should use discretion when responding to or removing content. Content that is critical of the College should be responded to—if a response is appropriate—rather than deleted, unless it is a violation of this policy.

XII. **Understanding Metrics**

Account managers are encouraged to regularly review analytics for their account. Doing so will help to identify content that resonates with our audiences and will be crucial to determining the strength and value of our social media efforts to the College. The Director of Social Media may request metrics from the account for annual reports.