



College Procedures Manual	
Category	Miscellaneous
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4.4.9 Social Media Policy

1.0 General Statement

College of the Rockies welcomes the responsible use of social media technologies to support engaged learning and to reach out effectively to our broader community. Our rich and diverse use of social media also allows us to share, in a public way, the many qualities and strengths of our institution. We intentionally use social media to advance the institution and build relationships with important constituencies like prospective and current students, parents, alumni, employees, industry, and our communities.

2.0 Purpose

The College recognizes the open nature of social media which is often used for both personal and professional purposes. Social media can also create a sense of role ambiguity. It may not always be clear when one is speaking on behalf of the College, sharing facts, or sharing personal/professional opinions. It is important to remember that we are subject to the same laws, professional expectations, and guidelines when interacting online as we would in-person.

This policy is designed to clarify employee's responsibilities when posting material online.

3.0 Policy Statements

3.1 What you can post online: Legal implications

3.11 Protect confidential and proprietary information

Do not post confidential or proprietary information about College of the Rockies' students, employees, or alumni. All persons must follow the applicable federal and provincial requirements, such as **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)** and **Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)**. Adhere to all applicable institutional and legal privacy, confidentiality and property policies and laws. For guidance on interpreting federal and provincial requirements, please contact COTR's Learning Resource Centre (Library).

Before posting online content please consider this guideline:

"If it's not ok to put on a billboard, it's probably not ok to put online."

3.12 Respect copyright

When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the College. Refer to the College Procedures Manual 3.4.2 on Copyright. For additional guidance on copyright, please contact COTR's Learning Resource Centre (Library).

3.13 Use COTR intellectual properties only with permission

No user may establish social networking sites that use the COTR logo or other intellectual properties such as photography, video, artwork, and publications belonging to the College without authorization from the College. It is a violation of social networking site policies to represent an institution without authorization. For additional guidance, please contact the College's Web Marketing Specialist.

3.14 Be respectful in your conversations

When engaging in conversations in social media, be aware at all times of the tone and content of your discussion. College of the Rockies has a number of policies in place that guide public discourse, and these policies apply to social media conversations. Specifically, please note the following policies:

2.4.5 Student Conduct & Responsibilities

2.4.9 Student Concerns Regarding Faculty

4.8.6 Discrimination / Harassment

3.15 Disseminating official information

Marketing and other designated departments are responsible for posting and publishing online official information on behalf of the College.

3.2 College, Campus, Classroom and Department Social Media Sites

3.21 College social networking sites

College of the Rockies has institution-moderated social network sites managed by marketing staff. These sites can be used by the College community to disseminate information to various audiences including prospective students, donors, alumni, and visitors of the College. Individual departments may choose to establish a department-moderated site when these institution-moderated sites are not applicable for their needs. Refer to *Appendix A: Procedures to Create an Official Social Media Presence*

3.22 Campus/Department social networking sites

Departments must consider their particular audience, message and goals and have a strategy for keeping information on their social media site up-to-date. The intention and purpose of the department-moderated sites should be specific in order to protect the College's institutional voice. Efforts will be made to cross link to institution-moderated sites managed by Marketing and/or to College content on www.cotr.bc.ca when relevant. Use of images, naming conventions,

pictures/graphics and posted content must directly relate to the particular department or activity to avoid confusion with institution-moderated sites.

3.23 Administrative access to COTR-sponsored social media sites

All social media accounts officially recognized by COTR must have a COTR employee (staff, faculty, admin) as an administrator at all times.

Should a COTR employee administrator of an account leave the College or no longer wishes to be an account administrator, it is that individual manager's responsibility to designate another COTR employee to be account administrator.

A member of the Marketing department (typically the Web Marketing Specialist) will be included as an administrator on any publically accessible¹ social networking site that is moderated and maintained as an official presence of the College.

3.2.4 Social media use in the classroom

Faculty are encouraged to incorporate social media to enhance the learning experience in both face-to-face and online classrooms. However, the nature of social media sites necessitates special precautions when using it in teaching and learning activities.

Faculty using social media in the classroom must ensure that students who choose to participate in social media assignments and activities are familiar with the risks involved in posting work to a third party website (which may retain ownership of the student's work) or a website which stores all account information on U.S. servers (subject to scrutiny according to the Patriot Act). Faculty must also ensure that activities and assignments incorporating social media remain *optional* for students, or that other assignment options are available to students who are uncomfortable with the use of the social media application.

Refer to Appendix C: Social Media: Guidelines for Responsible Use in the Classroom for more information.

3.3 Posting online and posting to College-moderated sites

3.31 Understand how your role may impact how others interpret what you say

If you choose to list your work affiliation on a social network or identify your association with the College then you should regard all communication on that network as you would in a professional network. What you publish online should never be attributed to the College and must not appear to be endorsed by or originating from the College, unless you are authorized to officially act in this capacity on behalf of the College.

3.32 When using College email

You are accountable for all activity conducted with your College email address or when identifying yourself as a member of the College community. The "@cotr.bc.ca" address attached to your name

¹ This does not include private student or staff groups that require approval of members to belong. However, in these cases, the requirement that a COTR employee be an account administrator still stands.

may indicate to others that you are acting on the College's behalf so be clear when that is not the case.

3.33 Be accurate and transparent

Have the facts before you post. If you post inaccurate information then correct it quickly. Social networks are successful when they offer authentic and direct communications via user-generated content. Social networks are interactive with a two-way flow of information. If you are representing College of the Rockies when posting, acknowledge this by including your name and job title or department as a signature to your post.

3.34 Respect others' privacy

Take care not to post private information concerning others such as an email from a colleague or contact information. Please exercise good "netiquette". Social networks are in the public realm and are not appropriate venues for the discussion or dissemination of private matters.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Procedures to Create an Official Social Media Presence

1. A plan must be created by the initiating program, department, group or individual desiring an official social media site, and must be signed off by the Manager/Department Head. The plan should identify:

- the department/group/individual requesting the presence,
- the specific type of media,
- objectives to be achieved and the targeted audience,
- person(s) responsible for maintaining the site,
- all individuals that will be authorized for providing content, and
- any other relevant information.

The plan signed by the Manager/Department Head must be submitted to the Marketing Office. To ensure brand management and consistency with other media, the Marketing Office will be responsible to approve and create social media accounts and to maintain administrative rights of the official presence. Where appropriate, official social media sites will include a link to the Posting and Commenting Guidelines.

2. Employees responsible for the maintenance and updates of the account must participate in a training session through the Marketing Office. They must also sign off indicating that they have read, understand and will adhere to the Social Media policy and all corresponding policy supports, including the Use of Social Media Code of Conduct.

3. It will be the responsibility of the initiating department/group/individual to be the primary administrator of the site. This includes monitoring and maintaining the site and ensuring that the objectives of the site and this policy are achieved.

4. Violations or suspected violations of the policy must be reported to the site's primary administrator **and** webmarketing@cotr.bc.ca . If the College encounters content that violates the policy, the offending item will be removed immediately by the site administrator.

Appendix B: Use of Social Media Code of Conduct

The following document is posted by the College to guide employees, students, or alumni who participate in social media channels online in the name of the College. It may also aid those who have personal social media channels. The guidelines, a compilation of “best practices” from respected online university, agency and industry sources will help you use these forums effectively, protect your personal and professional reputation, and help you to follow College policies and branding standards.

Getting Started

- Determine who will be empowered to respond directly to users and when a supervisor’s approval may be needed.
- Set up e-mail notifications so you know when someone posts to your area. (YouTube and Flickr, for example, offer this when someone posts a comment.)
- Keep comments as open as possible—do not automatically or arbitrarily censor a negative post. (Although posts that are obviously spam or offensive can be removed.)
- Have and display comments guidelines.
- Know who your audience is.
- Think about how you are going to measure success: Clicks on a blog, unique page views, number of comments, tools such as HootSuite & Tweetdeck, counts of followers and fans.

Be transparent. Be honest about your identity. If you are authorized to represent the College in social media, say so.

Student blogs which are endorsed by the program but not directly monitored/censored for content should include the following disclaimer:

“This student blog presents an unfiltered and authentic depiction of student life in the (program name) program at College of the Rockies. College of the Rockies does not censor or exercise editorial control over communications of its bloggers. As such, the statements or communications of the bloggers on the (program name) blog site do not represent a statement of the College’s or program’s official position or policy.”

Be accurate. Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It’s better to verify information first than to have to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources or to relevant COTR web pages whenever possible. If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly. This will earn you respect in the online community.

Be respectful. You are more likely to achieve your goals if you are constructive and respectful. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it is wise to delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed. Your reputation, and the College’s, is best served when you remain above the fray.

Be a valued member. Social media is not advertising. If you join a social network such as a Facebook group or comment on someone’s blog, make sure you are contributing valuable insights. Don’t post information about topics unless you are sure it will be of interest to readers. Self-promoting behaviour is usually viewed negatively and can lead to you being banned from websites or groups.

Think before you post. There is no such thing as a “private” social media site. Search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival

systems save information even if you delete a post. You may view your posted material as your intellectual property; but the fine-print rules of the social media channel you are using may establish otherwise.

Maintain confidentiality. Do not post confidential or proprietary information about College of the Rockies, its students, its employees or alumni. Use good ethical judgment and follow College policies. If you discuss a situation involving individuals on a social-media site, be sure that they cannot be identified. As a guideline, don't post anything that you would not present at a conference.

Check often. Visit your social media channel at least once or twice a day, and preferably have the application open all day. (e.g., Twitter, Facebook.)

Update Often. You will get out of the social networks what you put into them. On Facebook consider updating your page no more than 1-2 times a day and spread the posts throughout the day. On Twitter you can get away with updating more frequently (5-10 times a day).

Respond to questions quickly. For questions directed to your channel, respond as quickly as possible—within the hour, if possible; at least within the day, even if it is only to say, "I don't know, but I'll find out and get back to you".

Give feedback on removed posts. If you remove content because it violates commenting guidelines, be professional and contact the commenter and explain politely why it has been removed.

Be aware of liability. You *can* be held legally liable for what you post on your site and on the sites of others. Individual bloggers have been held liable for commentary deemed to be under copyright, defamatory, libellous or obscene (as defined by the courts). Employers are increasingly conducting web searches on job candidates before extending offers. Be sure that what you post today will not come back to haunt you.

Personal site guidelines

Disclaimer. A common practice among individuals who write about the field in which they work is to include a disclaimer on their site, usually on their "About Me" page or in the footer. If you discuss higher education on your own social media site, we suggest you include a sentence similar to this: "*The views expressed on this [blog, website, forum] are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of College of the Rockies.*" This is particularly important if you are a department head or administrator. Be aware that if you identify your affiliation with the College of the Rockies, readers will associate you with the College, even with a disclaimer that your views are your own.

Don't be a mole. Never pretend to be someone else and post about the College. Tracking tools enable supposedly anonymous posts to be traced back to their authors.

Don't use the College logo or make endorsements. Do not use the College logo, College crest, athletic logo or any other official College marks or images on your *personal online sites*. Do not use College of the Rockies' name to promote or endorse any product, cause, political party or candidate.

Protect your identity. While you want to be honest about yourself, don't provide personal information that scam artists or identity thieves could use against you. Think twice before listing your home address or telephone number or your work telephone or e-mail address. It is a good idea to create a separate, non-COTR e-mail address that is used only with your social media site.

Communicating with students. Instead of “friending” students on social networks, consider creating a group or page for your program (see *Procedures to Create an Official Media Presence*). This will allow you to communicate with students on a platform they are comfortable with, while retaining privacy and boundaries.

Adopt and follow a code of ethics. There are numerous existing codes of ethics for bloggers and other active participants in social media, all of which will help you participate responsibly in online communities. If you have your own social media site, you may wish to post your own code of ethics.

Appendix C: Social Media: Guidelines for Responsible Use in the Classroom

College of the Rockies supports the use of social networking/media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) applications as a way to connect with others, share educational resources, create and curate educational content, and enhance the learning experience. Social networking can add educational value to the classroom; however, faculty should keep in mind that some precautions are necessary when using these tools. In the social media world, the lines are blurred between what is public or private, personal or professional.

Faculty should practice and promote the following guidelines for all students who willingly choose the option to participate in social media activities:

Use good judgment

- All posts to a social media site for classroom work must adhere to COTR policy relating to good conduct, privacy, harassment, etc.
- Regardless of account privacy settings, you should assume that all information shared on social networks is public information.

Be respectful

- Ensure that your social media participation for classroom work is respectful, responsible, and considerate of others.
- Even though you may be participating in classroom-related work, unless you are specifically authorized to speak on behalf of the College as a spokesperson, you should ensure that the views expressed in your postings, etc. are identified as your own.

Be a good listener

- Keep in mind that one of the biggest benefits of social media is that it gives others another way to talk to you, ask questions directly and to share feedback.
- Be responsive to others when conversing online. Provide answers, thank people for their comments, and ask for further feedback, etc.
- Always be doing at least as much listening and responding as you do “talking.”

Don't share the following:

1. Confidential information: Do not publish, post or release information that is considered confidential or not public. If it seems confidential, it probably is. Online “conversations” are never private. Do not use your birth date, address, or cell phone number on any public website.
2. Private and personal information: To ensure your safety, be careful about the type and amount of personal information you provide. Avoid talking about personal schedules or situations. NEVER give out or transmit personal information about fellow students, instructors, or other College staff.

Please be cautious with respect to:

1. Images: Respect brand, trademark, copyright information and/or images of the College. You may link to photos and video (products, etc.) that are available on the College's website. Do not post pictures of students, faculty, or other College staff without their expressed consent.
2. Other sites: A significant part of the interaction on blogs, Twitter, Facebook and other social networks involves passing on interesting content or linking to helpful resources. However, don't blindly repost a link without looking at the content first. Pay attention to the security warnings that pop up on your computer before clicking on unfamiliar links.
3. When using Twitter, Facebook and other tools, be sure to follow their printed terms and conditions.

And if you don't get it right...

- Be sure to correct any mistake you make immediately, contact the affected individuals, and make it clear what you've done to remedy the situation.
- Apologize for the mistake if the situation warrants it.

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