UNIVERSITY OF THE PEOPLE
Tuition-Free Online University

Social Media Policy

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Owner:	Senior Vice President for Enrollment
Summary:	This policy provides the University's individual, academic and administrative units with rules and guidelines concerning the use of social media platforms.

Policy Statement

University of the People (UoPeople) recognizes the utility of social media accounts and websites to facilitate communication amongst students, faculty, staff, team members, alumni and other parties; it also recognizes how social media has the potential to significantly impact professional and organizational reputations.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the social media accounts created for UoPeople official business, and content and posts in other social media platforms that are made by users associated with UoPeople for UoPeople official purposes, accurately portray, promote and protect the institution. Adherence to this policy is intended to prevent the posting of inappropriate or unauthorized content on a website or account or by a user associated with UoPeople.

This social media policy applies to staff, students, faculty and UoPeople team members who engage in online conversations related to UoPeople. It provides the University's individual, academic and administrative units with rules and guidelines concerning the use of social media platforms. This Policy is not intended to guide any online communications of individuals who are not associated with UoPeople nor personal social media accounts.

Definitions

Online Ambassador – Individual responsible for coordinating and distributing content provided by the Communications Department in new and existing forums, and for creating new content in collaboration with the Communications Department.

Social Media – Broadcasting for social interaction and interactive dialogue by means of web-based and mobile technologies. Social media outlets include but are by no means limited to online social networks, blogs, discussion forums, YouTube video sharing, RSS feeds and online collaborative publishing (i.e., Wikis).

Social Media Account – An online profile established through a blog, blog website, or via a social media platform.

Social Media Best Practices – A set of guidelines that demonstrate the most effective means of carrying out the goals of a social media program at any given time. Note that UoPeople is committed to the continual improvement of its social media outreach programs and therefore its social media best practices may change following the conception and adaptation of new ways to reach a global audience.

Social Media Platform – An online forum or other tool utilized by social media users. There are numerous types of social media platforms, including, but not limited to, social (i.e., Facebook, Google+), photograph sharing (i.e., Flickr, Instagram), video sharing (i.e. YouTube, Vimeo) and micro-blogging (i.e., Twitter, Tumblr).

Terms of Use – Individuals and companies that operate websites and social media platforms set forth rules governing their use. These may be called *Terms of Use* or *Terms and Conditions*. Many specify that by posting on their website, the user grants the operator of the website an irrevocable, perpetual, and non-exclusive license to use and distribute that content for any purpose.

University's Best Interests – Actions and behavior deemed to be most advantageous to the University in both the short and long-term.

Users – Individuals who utilize social media platforms.

Social Media Policy

Individuals who engage in social media to promote UoPeople should know that their online persona is a reflection of the University. This Policy has been developed to assist individuals associated with UoPeople in creating and managing their social media accounts and online persona connected to UoPeople, and to set forth best practices for online behavior.

UoPeople Social Media Accounts

UoPeople has its own Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+ and YouTube accounts, which may be accessed by visiting the UoPeople website at http://uopeople.edu. UoPeople also utilizes an official hashtag, #UoPeople, and other standard metadata tags and beacons.

UoPeople does not endorse and is not responsible for any content posted by third parties on any of its websites or social media accounts, or by anyone using the University's tags and beacons.

University Endorsement of Outside Social Media Platforms

UoPeople currently does not officially endorse any outside social media platforms or groups and has not officially granted the use of its name and/or logo to any individual, group or organization for social media purposes. Content that appears on unofficial sites reflects the opinions or policies of its owners and/or administrators and does not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of University of the People. UoPeople does not endorse, nor does it accept any liability for the content or actions of those sites, nor for any user-generated content, including the content of links to or from the pages on those sites.

Role and Responsibilities of Online Ambassadors

The UoPeople Communications Department oversees the UoPeople presence on various social networking sites and determines where to launch a new presence and what content shall be posted on the various platforms. This is done with the assistance of online ambassadors who are appointed by the UoPeople Communications Department and are charged with coordinating and distributing content provided by the Department in new and existing forums, and for creating new content in collaboration with the Department. Online ambassadors are responsible for assuring that their content:

- Is accurate and up-to-date;
- Does not reveal any confidential information concerning students, faculty, staff or University financial or intellectual property interests;
- Does not publish names, photographs, videos, texts, recordings, slideshow presentations, or other content without the written, express consent of all involved parties;
- Does not imply that they are an official representative of the University; and
- Otherwise adheres to UoPeople policies and social media best practices.

Posting Requirements of Users Affiliated with UoPeople

Users of UoPeople Social Media Accounts and of outside social media platforms, who are associated with UoPeople, are subject to the terms set forth in this policy, and users who are enrolled at UoPeople are also subject to the UoPeople Student Code of Conduct.

Staff, students, faculty and UoPeople team members who engage in online conversations related to and in furtherance of UoPeople official online presence must ensure that any postings and comments directly or indirectly relating to UoPeople:

- Are not disrespectful, offensive, injurious or otherwise inappropriate
- Do not interfere with the educational environment
- Cannot be perceived as harassing or threatening
- Are not libelous or otherwise illegal
- Are not pornographic
- Do not violate the privacy rights of any UoPeople student, faculty member or staff person
- Do not reveal confidential information about a course
- Do not infringe on copyright laws
- Do not use the platform to make a political statement
- Do not use the UoPeople name or logo inappropriately or in a misleading manner
- Are in line with UoPeople's mission and values

Social media may not be used as a substitute for the University's usual Human Resources processes, and job postings may not be made online without the express authorization of the UoPeople Human Resources Department.

Social Media Best Practices

The Communications Department shall make the following best practices available to all online ambassadors, staff, students, faculty and UoPeople team members who engage in online conversations related to UoPeople:

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SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES

1. ***LISTEN & INTERACT***: Add value to the discussion by providing useful and concise information in a friendly manner.
2. ***KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE***: You are connected to your own, unique social network. Understand your audience in this network, what they connect to, and what things they are interested in.
3. ***KEEP IT SHORT AND TO THE POINT***: In the age of social media, where everyone has a voice, those who can keep it short and to the point are often the most respected.
4. ***KEEP THE BRAND***: UoPeople is the world's first, non-profit, tuition-free, accredited, degree-granting online university. Please help us keep this image to ensure that the gates of higher education are open to all, regardless of financial, social or geographic constraints.
5. ***KNOW WHEN TO PASS SOMETHING ON***: You will get talkbacks to your posts. If someone is voicing a concern that you are not certain how to address, contact UoPeople staff immediately.
6. ***WRITE DELIBERATELY AND ACCURATELY***: "Delete" doesn't really exist on the internet, so please think before you post. You may want to include a date in your post for future reference.
7. ***CORRECT MISTAKES***: Acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly.
8. ***DISAGREE WITH OTHERS RESPECTFULLY***: Avoid discussing things where emotions run high, such as politics and religion.
9. ***RESPECT COPYRIGHT LAWS***: Always give credit and link to your sources.
10. ***KEEP US UPDATED*****:** Let us know if there are any concerning or remarkable comments to any of your posts, if you are posting in a social media platform that you haven't posted in before, or if you have posted something new and interesting that you think we should see.

Monitoring Content

The UoPeople Communications Department and its online ambassadors work diligently to correct inaccuracies and monitor content relating to UoPeople and/or posted by users affiliated with UoPeople. The Communications Department staff and online ambassadors respond to such inaccuracies with correct information and/or requests to remove the offending content.

All social media users who are affiliated with UoPeople should keep in mind that all content can be immediately shared and becomes part of their permanent online record. Anyone using social media should be thoughtful as to how they present themselves in online networks.

Students, volunteers, and online ambassadors should never represent themselves as official spokespeople of the University. If a member of the UoPeople faculty or staff identifies himself or herself online as a member of the UoPeople faculty or staff, they shall make it clear that they are not speaking on behalf of UoPeople. All users should provide an open and honest explanation of their role and make it clear that the views expressed are their own, unless they are copying and pasting from a university post or the UoPeople website.

The Communications Department is responsible for regularly monitoring the social media accounts. Reporting any non-compliance with this policy to the Vice President for Enrollment or designee so further action can be taken. Content within groups must remain relevant and in compliance with this policy. Violations of this policy may be subject to removal and disciplinary actions.

Compensation from Third Parties

If a UoPeople faculty member or staff person is offered compensation by a third party to participate in an online forum, advertisement or endorsement, permission must first be granted by the University as this may constitute a conflict of interest.

Appearance in the General Media or Press

If a UoPeople faculty member or staff person is contacted by the press following a post or comment made online that relates in any way to UoPeople, they must consult with the UoPeople Communications Department before responding to ensure consistent messaging.

Contact

For more information on UoPeople's policies concerning social media accounts and/or compliance with this Social Media Policy, contact the UoPeople Communications Department at outreach@uopeople.edu.