Bucknell University Social Media Guidelines
Updated April 2011

I. Introduction

These guidelines are intended to help Bucknell University faculty and staff who create and manage social media presences as University representatives, either as individual professionals or on behalf of their academic or administrative departments.

Social media include a variety of online tools and services that allow users to publish content and interact with their audiences. Currently, the most common social networks or websites within this rapidly changing media space include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, MySpace, Flickr and blogs.

Through its institutional social media presence, the University communicates directly with and receives instant feedback from online communities that include students, faculty, staff, alumni, prospective students, families, fans and others. The addendum at the end of this document contains a listing of Bucknell social media sites managed by institutional offices.

Faculty or staff members who manage social media as representatives of Bucknell are responsible for following all normal expectations for professional behavior as representatives of the University. Social media postings, including comments and responses, can be stored by and shared with millions around the world. For more information on Internet and computer usage at Bucknell, view the Appropriate Use Policy at www.bucknell.edu/AUP.xml, and please review in particular section IV below, “Key Appropriate Use Guidelines.” It is important to note as well that applications developed for any mobile devices (i.e., iPhones or other smartphones and tablet computers) and that use the University’s name, wordmark or other institutionally identifiable information should meet the standards set forth in the Appropriate Use Policy and these guidelines as well.

Social media are constantly changing and evolving. As a result, these guidelines may be updated frequently. We invite Bucknell faculty and staff who are considering establishing or have already started a social media site as a University representative to contact Web Development (webdevelopment@bucknell.edu) in the Office of Communications for advice, support and promotion, as appropriate. The office can help you to establish your goals, build a social media plan, learn about do’s and don’ts, select the appropriate social media tool to support your goals, promote your site, and otherwise navigate through the process of establishing and maintaining a social media presence.

If you maintain a personal blog or presence on another social media site but there is no indication that you represent Bucknell either by text or photos, you need not consult with the Office of Communications or be concerned with these guidelines.

If, however, your social media presence is representing your Bucknell department, group, organization or activity, you are also representing your own professional reputation and the University. Even on your personal site, if you indicate that you are a Bucknell faculty or staff member, visitors to the site may perceive that you are speaking for your department or the University; since you are invoking your professional affiliation with Bucknell, it may be hard to contend otherwise if you are not explicit about that fact.
The brief "best practices" listing near the end of this document provides suggestions on how to use social media in ways that can prevent you from inadvertently affecting your professional reputation or how your department or your University is perceived. In addition, if you discuss professional issues on your personal social media site, we suggest you include a sentence similar to this one on your profile or "About Me" page: "The views expressed on this [blog, website] are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of Bucknell University."

In this digital age, when social media comments can reach many people rapidly far behind their site of origin, it is worth taking care with such matters.

If you have questions or suggestions about these guidelines or starting or managing social media, please contact Web Development.

II. Getting Started

a. Before creating your professional social media presence as a representative of the University, discuss your intention to do so with your department chair or manager and develop a social media plan. Questions your plan should address include:
   i. What social media, if any, has already been established by colleagues or the University for this purpose? Answering this question will help you avoid duplicating efforts or mixing messages.
   ii. What do you hope to accomplish with this social media presence?
   iii. What communications goals will the social media help you accomplish that other media, such as a website, couldn’t?
   iv. Who is your social media audience?
   v. What content do you want to have contributed on a regular basis to the social site?

b. Study various social media sites to answer the question: Which of the social media sites available to you will best help you fulfill your goals for reaching your key audiences in an efficient way?
   i. Each social media platform has its own set of strengths and weaknesses in such areas as ease of use, type of content included, popularity with users, privacy controls and community user expectations.
   ii. Understanding what you’re trying to communicate will help guide your decision in selecting a platform or platforms. For example, if you’re interested mostly in sharing “headlines,” Twitter may be your best platform. If you’re more interested in developing a community dialogue, Facebook may be the better choice.
   iii. Learn what the individual platforms offer and how their communities work when developing a site plan.
   iv. Choose only one or two platforms, especially in the beginning, to focus your plan.

c. If the social media presence will be for departmental rather than individual professional purposes identify the faculty or staff member(s) who will manage the site.
   i. Choose at least one person from your department who will be primarily responsible for monitoring and updating your site. This person should be able to check the site at least once daily and, in general, depending on which social media presence you have chosen, update it with new content several times a week.
ii. Set clear expectations for this person’s understanding of the site’s tools, the privacy settings you want to follow, and the frequency of posting and reviewing site content.

iii. Assign and train a backup who is familiar with the communications goals you have set for the site.

d. **Select an appropriate name for your site.**
   
i. The site name should make it clear to visitors that it represents a specific profession, department or office associated with Bucknell. For example, a Twitter “handle” for the College of Engineering might be @BucknellEngineering.

e. **Start small and build your site before officially launching.**
   
i. Create your site and begin populating it with content for several weeks before announcing it broadly.
   
ii. Share the link with a small group of people who can join or become followers and provide feedback. Doing so will allow you to become comfortable with maintaining the site, work out any bugs and develop a small audience before launching more widely.

f. **Announce your launch, focusing on the audience you’re seeking.**
   
i. Use more traditional means, such as e-mail listservs, websites and newsletters, to announce the official launch of your social media site.
   
ii. Briefly describe the focus of your site and the kinds of information you plan to share and encourage people to join.
   
iii. Cross-promote the site through other University social media sites. For example, you may request that the University mention your site on its official Facebook page, BucknellU.
   
iv. You may find that other opportunities for promotion include your departmental website and your e-mail signature.

g. **Monitor, measure and be prepared to change.**
   
i. Manage your site regularly and track which content is most popular and best communicates your goals.
   
ii. Depending on your analysis of this information, you may decide to emphasize certain types of content or turn your focus to another social media platform that might better communicate your messages to your intended audience.

III. Best Practices

1. **Be professional and respectful always.** Anything you post on a social media site in your role as a Bucknell faculty or staff member reflects on you and the University. As such, be careful with your comments and avoid engaging in arguments or extensive debates with critics.

2. **Be obvious, honest and transparent.** Use your own “voice” but make sure it is clear that you are posting as a faculty or staff member at Bucknell. Do not misrepresent who you are or post as another individual.

3. **Be active, timely and responsive.** Social media requires diligent attention to remain engaging. Schedule time to check your site(s) at least once a day during the work week and plan to post fresh content several times each week. Social media allows you to share information instantly with wide audiences. These audiences also expect your site to be active and timely and will ignore it if it proves to be otherwise.
4. **Nothing is truly private in social media.** Think about your comments, photos or other content before posting, remembering that anything you share in social media, even within closed networks, becomes publicly available information. Your content can be stored and shared around the world instantly. If it’s not something that you would share with mainstream media, don’t post it on your site.

5. **Interact with your community.** Do more than just share news. Offer insights and information that are of interest to the network’s community that may not be available elsewhere. Comment on interesting posts and encourage related dialogues.

6. **Accept but monitor comments and postings by others.** Social media thrives because of the community’s ability to participate in the “conversation.” To support and encourage this interactivity, you should be prepared to accept and respond – judiciously – to comments, not all of which will be positive. If necessary, to correct misunderstandings or factual errors, respond to negative comments in a professional manner and by providing any information that may be helpful in clarifying the issue. Remove comments that are profane, that attack any individual or group by name or other clearly identifying characteristics and that are obviously advertising or spam. Otherwise, take a light hand.

7. **Be a valued member of your own community.** Share or re-post information from other, trusted sources that will increase the value of your site and present you as a genuine member of the community.

8. **Separate personal from professional.** Content that you might share on a personal media site may not be appropriate for sharing on an official University site. Given the public availability of website information, it is also worth considering how you are represented on your personal site as it relates to your work at Bucknell and how that personal site might lead to your being perceived in your role as a faculty or staff member.

9. **For tips on using the largest social media site.** Facebook, there is a lot of useful information online, including 10 privacy settings tips at [http://www.allfacebook.com/facebook-privacy-settings-2011-02](http://www.allfacebook.com/facebook-privacy-settings-2011-02) and 50 Facebook tips and tricks at [http://facebookflow.com/50-tips-and-tricks/](http://facebookflow.com/50-tips-and-tricks/). Have you seen a site with great tips for using Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, or other social media sites? Send it to us at webdevelopment@bucknell.edu. We'll periodically add new sources of information here.

### IV. Key “Appropriate Use Guidelines”

- Do not use University resources (including, for example, e-mail, web pages, or newsgroups) to defame, harass, intimidate or threaten any other person(s), or to promote bigotry or discrimination.
- Do not send unnecessarily repetitive messages (for example, chain mail).
- Do not publish, post, transmit or otherwise make available content that is copyrighted, obscene or legally objectionable. The University cannot protect individuals against the existence or receipt of material that may be offensive to them. As such, those who make use of electronic communications are warned that they may come across or be recipients of material they find offensive or objectionable.
● Do not forge, maliciously disguise or misrepresent your personal identity. This policy does not prohibit users from engaging in anonymous communications, providing that such communications do not otherwise violate the Appropriate Use Policy.
● Do not violate copyright laws. This includes using Bucknell computing facilities and resources to receive, retransmit, duplicate, destroy or tamper with software or data, whether stored or transmitted, unless authorized by copyright, license, University policy and all other applicable laws. Examples of protected materials include written material, sound files, pictures, photos, animations and software not originally created by you.
● Do not use Bucknell e-mail for commercial or political purposes.
● Do not use Bucknell e-mail for fundraising activities not endorsed by the University.

ADDENDUM

The institutional social media networks currently managed by the University through the Office of Communications include the following:

- Facebook: facebook.com/BucknellU, facebook.com/BucknellAdmissions
- Twitter: twitter.com/BucknellU, twitter.com/BucknellUapply
- YouTube: www.youtube.com/WatchBucknell
- B-Link (alumni social network) www.b-link.bucknell.edu
- Flickr: http://www.flickr.com/photos/bucknelluniversity

Other Bucknell University Facebook pages:

- Barnes & Noble at Bucknell University
- Bucknell Bison Softball
- Bucknell Brigade in Nicaragua
- Bucknell Consumer Products Network
- Bucknell Craft Center
- Bucknell Crew Association
- Bucknell: Davis 100 Projects for Peace
- Bucknell Entrepreneurial Network
- Bucknell Finance Network
- Bucknell Health Network
- Bucknell Katrina Recovery Team
- Bucknell Law Network
- Bucknell Media and Technology Network
- Bucknell Men's Basketball (Official Page)
- Bucknell Outdoor Education and Leadership
- Bucknell Public Service Network
- Bucknell Senior Gift Drive 2010
- Bucknell Student Government
- Bucknell University Career Development Center
- Bucknell University: Class of 2005 5th Year Reunion
- Bucknell University Cross Country/Track & Field
- Bucknell University Department of Public Safety
- Bucknell University Mathematics Department
- Bucknell University Men's Tennis
- Bucknell University Pre-Health
- Bucknell Professional Network
- Bucknell University Writing Center
- Bucknellian
- BUGlobal: Bucknell Student for Global Awareness
- Office of LGBT Awareness at Bucknell
- Residential Colleges
- Samek Art Gallery
- The Ellen Clarke Bertrand Library
- The Gathering at Bucknell
- The Hilltop Film Series at Bucknell University