HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY
Office of Communications

Guidelines for the Use of High Point University Social Media
At High Point University, every student receives an extraordinary education in an inspiring environment with caring people.

I.   Purpose of Social Media Guidelines

With the rapid growth and application of social media, it is important that employees who use social media either as part of their job, or in a personal capacity, are aware of High Point University's expectations regarding social media engagement. We invite HPU faculty, staff and students who are considering establishing or have already started a social media site as a University representative to contact the Social Media Specialist (curbowic@highpoint.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.

II.   Representing the High Point University Brand

If you maintain a personal blog or presence on another social media site *but there is no indication that you represent HPU either by text or photos*, please note that you still represent High Point University and need to be conducting yourself in a professional manner.

If, however, your social media presence is representing your High Point University 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 High Point University faculty, staff member or student, visitors to the site may perceive that you are speaking for your department or the University; since you are invoking your professional affiliation with HPU, it may be hard to contend otherwise if you are not explicit about that fact.

Faculty, staff members or students who manage social media as representatives of High Point University 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.

III.   Building a High Point University Social Media Presence

A. Questions you should ask yourself before creating a High Point University social media presence:

- 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.
- What do you hope to accomplish with this social media presence?
- What communications goals will the social media help you accomplish that other media, such as a website, couldn't?
- Who is your social media audience?
- What content do you want to have contributed on a regular basis to the social site?
- Who will be updating content on this social media presence?
- Do you have enough content to post? (See chart below for help)
    - In order for your High Point University social media account to remain relevant administrators are expected to update their accounts daily (even during scheduled university breaks). Please refer to the chart below to determine how often your account should be posting. Keep in mind, all administrators should be monitoring their accounts **daily**. This includes responding to messages and comments, and keeping an eye on conversations in "real time."

	Post Frequency		
	Academic Year	School Breaks (Fall, Winter, Spring Break)	Summer Break
Schools and Colleges	4 times per week	Once a week	Once a week
Student Life (HPU Recreation, Campus Activities Team, Greek Life, etc)	4 times per week	Once a week	Once a week
Student Clubs and Organizations	3 times per week	Once a week	Once a week

B. Study various social media sites to answer the question: Which of the social media platforms available to you will best help you fulfill your goals for reaching your key audiences in an efficient way?

- **Facebook Pages**
    - Facebook pages enable public figures, businesses, organizations and other entities to create an authentic and public presence on Facebook. Facebook pages are visible to anyone on Facebook by default.

- **Facebook Groups**
    - Facebook groups are the place for small group communication and for people to share their common interests and express their opinion. Groups allow people to come together around a common cause, issue or activity to organize, express objectives, discuss issues, post photos and share related content.
        - **Open Groups:**
            - Anyone can join, anyone can see the group's name, anyone can see who is in the group, anyone can see the group tags, anyone can see what members post in the group, anyone can find the group by searching and anyone can see stories about the group in their News Feed.

- o **Closed Groups:**
  - ▪ Anyone can join, anyone can see the group's name, anyone can see who is in the group, anyone can see the group tags, anyone can find the group by searching and anyone can see stories about the group in their News Feed. ONLY members can see what other people post in the group.
- o **Secret Groups:**
  - ▪ Anyone can ask to join the group but they have to be added or invited to the group. Current members can see the group's name, only members can see who is in the group, current and former members can see the group description, current and former members can see the group tags, only members can see what members post in the group, can find the group by search or have stories about the group appear in their News Feed.

- **Twitter**
  - o An online social networking and micro-blogging service that enables users to send and read short 140 character text messages

C. **If the social media presence will be for departmental rather than individual professional purposes, identify the faculty, staff member(s) or student (s) who will manage the site.**

- Choose at least one person from your department or group 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**.
- 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.
- Assign and train a backup who is familiar with the communications goals you have set for the site.

D. **Complete the Office of Communication Social Media Request Form BEFORE creating a site.**

- Accounts made for High Point University MUST be created by the Social Media Specialist. Be sure to visit the Office of Communication website (http://www.highpoint.edu/ooc/social-media-guidelines/) to complete the High Point University Social Media Request form. The Social Media Specialist will set up a meeting with you to discuss your needs and decide which platform best suits your department's request.

E. **Start small and build your site before officially launching.**

- Once your site is completed, begin populating it with content for several weeks before announcing it broadly.
- 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.**

- Use more traditional means, such as e-mail, websites and newsletters, to announce the official launch of your social media site.
- Briefly describe the focus of your site and the kinds of information you plan to share and encourage people to join.

- 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, HighPointU.
- 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.**

- Manage your site regularly and track which content is most popular and best communicates your goals.
- 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.

IV. *Helpful Hints from the Social Media Specialist*

- Keep in mind that you must have a personal Facebook account to create a page or group for your entity on Facebook.
- No High Point University Facebook group should have a single admin. This makes sure that you have coverage when someone is away or has left High Point University.
- Be sure to select a profile image that meets High Point University brand standards. Please contact communication@highpoint.edu if you need assistance creating an appropriate profile picture or cover photo.
- Frequently add photos and photo albums from events to your Facebook page.
- Use official hashtags promoted by the university (such as #HPUCares, #HPURoadTrip, #HPUFallConcert, etc.)

V. *High Point University Social Media Expectations*

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

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 High Point University. Do not misrepresent who you are or post as another individual.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 High Point University and how that personal site might lead to your being perceived in your role as a faculty or staff member.

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. Have you seen a site with great tips for using Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, or other social media sites? Send it to us at communication@highpoint.edu. We'll periodically add new sources of information here.

Related 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 High Point University 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 High Point University social media platforms for commercial or political purposes.

Do not use High Point University social media platforms for fundraising activities not endorsed by the University.

For further advice on High Point University's social media policies, please contact:

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Social Media Specialist
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