

# Social Media Policy and Guidelines

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# Oklahoma Baptist University

## Social Media Policy and Guidelines

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### **Social Media Policy**

This policy applies to any social media account that officially represents Oklahoma Baptist University at any level.

### **Protect confidential and proprietary information**

Employees must follow applicable federal requirements such as HIPPA and FERPA to protect confidential information. Employees must not post confidential or proprietary information about OBU or its students, employees or alumni.

Do not include any personally identifiable information that can be used to locate someone offline.

Do not post any private information of a third party, including addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, student IDs, social security numbers, credit card numbers, etc.

### **Follow copyright and fair use policies**

When posting, respect all copyright and intellectual property laws. Refer to OBU Policy 2.10.7.3 Oklahoma Baptist University Policy on the Use of Copyrighted Material.

### **Registration and administration of social media sites**

New social media sites created to represent University departments must be approved by the department manager and the AVP of Marketing and Communications. These sites may only be created and administered by authorized representatives of OBU. Students may not be named as page administrators for pages other than student clubs and organizations.

OBU departments or other units with existing social media sites must register their site with Marketing and Communications if not already registered. Registration includes the name and contact information of the individual named as the site administrator and site account information.

The Social Media Coordinator in the Marketing and Communications office must also be set up as an administrator of Facebook accounts or provided the account login information for other social media accounts. Although Marketing and Communications does not intend to actively engage in maintaining department sites, this designation will enable them to properly track social media sites and respond in the event of the unavailability or departure of the site administrator.

The social media site administrator must maintain the security of the site login credentials and is fully responsible for all use of the account.

Department pages should follow the main OBU social media pages and engage as appropriate. This will improve the strength of our social media, allow the sharing of information and improve the cross promotion of programs and events.

### **Maintenance and upkeep of sites**

Social media accounts must be monitored and updated on an ongoing basis by the departments that create them.

University social media sites are not to be used for commercial purposes and posts that attempt to solicit non-university related business should be removed.

Posts containing personal attacks, profanity, nudity, hate speech, references to alcohol or illegal material are prohibited, must be removed and could result in the removal of a user's privilege to post to our page. Problems or concerns should be reported immediately to Marketing and Communications.

### **Protect the institutional voice**

Posts on social media sites should protect the University's institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. No individual OBU department or unit should construe its social media site as representing the University as a whole. Posts should clearly reflect the department or unit.

### **Post the following message on University affiliated social media sites**

OBU welcomes all visitors to become fans and to engage with the University and other fans through our social media channels. We ask those participating in this dialog to be respectful to others and to OBU. Posts containing personal attacks, profanity, or other offensive material are prohibited. Posts may not be made to solicit funds or promote non-university related entities. We reserve the right, at our discretion, to edit or remove any post or to revoke a user's privilege to post to our page. Please be aware that we cannot immediately review every comment posted on the page and that the opinions expressed by others are not necessarily those of the University and its employees. All content posted by OBU is the property of the University and is subject to copyright laws.

### **Personal social media use**

As an OBU employee, you are a representative of the University even when using your personal social media accounts. While OBU doesn't actively monitor personal social media accounts, posted content is public and subject to review in accordance with employee policies as outlined in OBU handbooks.

OBU branding is not approved for use on personal social media pages. Personal social media accounts should not be used to release campus news or official university statements. However it is acceptable to repost items OBU has released through official channels.

### **Emergency communication guidelines for social media**

OBU will use @OBUNews to deploy emergency messages. In the case of an emergency, managers of OBU social media channels should share or retweet the emergency message exactly as posted by @OBUNews. Managers of OBU social media channels should not post their own emergency updates or

versions that differ from what is posted on @OBUNews or reinterpret, add to or delete language used by @OBUNews.

## Social Media Guidelines

### Introduction

Social Media Channels are powerful tools that culminate the synthesis of branding and communication for organizations and professional reputations. Oklahoma Baptist University participates on a number of social media sites as a way of communicating and receiving feedback from students, potential students, parents, faculty and alumni.

Oklahoma Baptist University's official social media accounts include but may not be limited to:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Google+
- LinkedIn
- Instagram

The Marketing and Communications office would love to help you in your social media efforts. Please contact Lane Castleberry with any questions at ext. 5402 or lane.castleberry@okbu.edu. As technology changes, this handbook will evolve. The Marketing and Communications office encourages feedback and suggestions.

### Social Media Guidelines

These guidelines are intended for and apply to anyone involved in creating, contributing to or distributing information pertaining to Oklahoma Baptist University via social media channels.

We strongly encourage the consideration and strategic integration of any social media platform that can help achieve the objectives of your organization, department or college. These communication platforms are valuable ways to connect with a targeted audience.

In doing so, it is important to remember your efforts are part of Oklahoma Baptist University's voice and we ask that you be mindful of the content you post. Not only will current faculty, staff and students have access to content you publish, but prospective OBU students, alumni and other visitors might also. As with any OBU communication effort, we always want to convey a positive OBU image.

Anyone who formally communicates on behalf of any University organization, department or college is responsible for understanding and following these guidelines as they relate to their personal and professional usage of social media accounts. Failure to do so can have far-reaching ramifications,

potentially damaging the University's image and reputation, as well as those of your colleagues, peers and everyone affiliated with OBU.

### **Be Transparent**

Always make sure you are honest about your identity and relationship to OBU. Be sure to state the purpose of any site or page created. When possible, provide contact information for individuals to connect with your group through other channels.

When posting, as an individual, on social media platforms, honesty is the best policy and other users will tolerate nothing less. Use your real name when posting rather than a pseudonym or posting anonymously. When appropriate, clarify your position with OBU. If you have a vested personal or professional interest in a topic you are discussing, acknowledge this.

### **Protect Your Privacy and that of Others**

While it is important to disclose your true identity when engaging in any online community, for your own protection you should not share personal information such as phone numbers, complete physical addresses, passwords, etc.

When managing a social media site, review the settings to determine what information is being disclosed and adjust the settings accordingly. Likewise, don't pass along personal information about others.

### **Protect your sites**

It is your responsibility to protect every site for which you are responsible. Passwords should only be shared with those who will manage the site or are responsible for the overall effort. In all cases, more than one person should have access to make administrative changes to ensure a timely response to any needed action. Sites using OBU copyrighted or trademarked material should adhere to University branding guidelines.

### **Offer Value to Others**

Digital media initiatives should be created when there is an opportunity to share information and build relationships. Listen and engage to get to know the others who are there. Your level of participation will determine the level of success of your site.

### **It's a conversation**

Talk to your readers like you would talk to real people in professional situations. It's okay for your comments to reflect your own personality and to say what's on your mind. Try to engage with questions or content that are open-ended, invite response and encourages comments. You can also broaden the conversation by citing others who are posting about the same topic and allowing your content to be shared. Make sure you post in ways that easily enable sharing.

### **Respect others**

Treat others as you would like to be treated. Keep in mind everyone is entitled to his or her own opinion and spirited debate can be a good thing. Always maintain a level of respect for others and their viewpoints. Resist the temptation to make fun of people even if it would get you a laugh or you feel they

might deserve it. When disagreeing with others' opinions, be polite. OBU is known for its friendliness and this should be reflected in our online efforts just as it is in our personal interactions. Remember that you are speaking on behalf of the University and your area. Make sure your personal life is reserved for your personal accounts.

### **Keep Your Engagement Clean and Tasteful**

Do not post offensive, obscene, racist, sexist or sexually explicit language or photos. This type of content will not be tolerated and will be dealt with according to applicable University policies. As the administrator or manager of a site or page, it is your responsibility to ensure such content is removed immediately.

### **Adhere to Legal or Regulatory Requirements**

Never share proprietary or confidential information or comment on anything related to legal matters without the appropriate approval. Please be familiar with University policies and procedures as well as FERPA limitations.

### **No Alcohol or Drugs Allowed**

The University's alcohol and drug policy still applies online. Do not post content or images involving the use of these substances.

### **Admit Mistakes**

If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your correction. If you're making changes to a blog to correct an earlier post be clear that you have done so.

### **Create Some Excitement**

Your audience is inundated with information every day. Give them a reason to follow or engage with you.

### **When in Doubt, Don't Post**

If you are concerned whether posting something is appropriate, go with your gut feeling and don't post the content. Take a minute to review these guidelines again and modify your approach accordingly. If you're still unsure, you might want to discuss your concerns with someone in authority. Ultimately, what you publish is yours, as is the responsibility.

### **Managing Social Media Channels**

Every social media platform should be part of an overarching effort, beyond simply sharing information. Let the following guide you in these efforts:

#### **Identify the purpose**

Your creation of any site or engagement on any site should have an identified purpose. The information you provide should be unique and specifically support the stated objectives of your group. Strive to be a valuable resource to your audience by providing important information not easily obtainable elsewhere.

## Determine your voice

When crafting your written content, remember that you are speaking on behalf of your organization or department. Remain professional in tone and taste, but allow your personality and voice to bleed through your writing. Model your writing to fit these descriptors: friendly, caring, passionate, helpful and conservative. Write in first person when possible (e.g., We would love to help you find what you are looking for). Make sure you have your facts straight before making posts. Be certain to double check for spelling errors.

## Have a plan

Creating an online presence takes time and dedication. Make sure you have a plan and follow it for the most effective use of your time and to achieve your objectives. Try to post at least once each business day, but don't post solely because you feel you need to. Make sure your content is meaningful and aim to not post over four times a day. Your platform is only as good as your last post.

## Designate responsibilities

Social platforms open a portal for others to communicate with you. You must be prepared to respond to these posts as well as proactively engage with your audience to maximize the impact of your online efforts. This will require monitoring your social media channels periodically throughout working hours. Each social site, page or account for your group should have a member of your department, organization or college designated as a manager/administrator, as well as a succession plan should that person leave. These responsibilities should be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure adequate coverage. Inactive accounts or sites can have a detrimental impact on your group's efforts and image. They should be removed immediately.

If you are considering using multiple platforms, we suggest using a service such as Hootsuite to create a one-stop shop. Hootsuite provides analytic tools and the ability to schedule and post content to multiple accounts at one time. Hootsuite offers a free basic account, as well as a paid subscription for more advanced tools.

## Facebook

As of right now, Facebook is the most dominant media outlet – and many would argue – the most powerful. First, let's take a look at the differences between a Facebook page and a Facebook group.

- **A Facebook Fan Page** is effective for reaching a broad audience of people, while promoting your department/organization's events, photos, videos and other pertinent information. Consistently updated pages are good for displaying what your area has to offer to the general public.
  - Make sure to name your page "Oklahoma Baptist University \_\_\_\_" and fill in the blank. The reason for doing so is to ensure consistency in branding and allowing Facebook users to easily find all OBU associated pages.
  - "Like" other OBU affiliated pages and "share" their content with your audience. In order to reach an audience, people have to "like" that page. Accruing Facebook likes can be difficult, but the best way is for other pages to promote your content. In short, keep an eye out for other OBU pages and they will do the same for you.

- Post at least one piece of content each week, whether that be a photo, creating an event, a status with information, sharing relevant content etc. (Get creative and continue to learn what works best for you)
- Register your site with Marketing and Communications and follow policy requirements.
- **A Facebook Group** gives you complete control of its members, making a group the best option to reach a select group of people. There are three options for groups: Open, Closed, and Secret. An open group is visible to all Facebook users, and anyone is allowed to join the group. A closed group is visible to everyone, but you may become a member by invitation only. A secret group is not visible to others, and is by invitation only.
  - Groups offer a distinct advantage over pages. Rather than posts going to the news feed (like pages), every member of the group is sent a push notification
  - When creating a group, members are added automatically. However, those made members can choose to opt out of the group or turn off notifications.
  - Open groups would best serve a continually changing group of people (like a future class of OBU or open groups).
  - Closed groups should be considered by organizations to communicate internally (e.g., Bison Glee Club, class projects, or social clubs).
  - Secret groups don't serve any function for public uses.
- Visual elements such as photographs and video increase the chances of your followers seeing content. While text alone could become successful given high engagement through comments and likes, adding visuals helps significantly by increasing the duration the post will stay in the news feed.
- **Photo Dimensions:**
  - Profile photo: 160 x 160 (pixels)
  - Page and Group cover photos: 851 x 315 (pixels)
  - Event cover photos: 714 x 264 (pixels)

## Twitter

Twitter is heavily used by those in their 20's and 30's. While Facebook offers a medium to reach a broad range of people using elongated content, Twitter is meant for quick information, and often, is used to link to external Web pages.

- Your message is limited to 140 characters.
- Many ways to engage with others:
  - Reply to someone else's tweet using "@ + user." Your reply will show up on your Twitter feed.
  - Retweeting (e.g., "sharing" on Facebook) is a great way to engage with students and the community.
  - Directly message a user (private).
  - Make a tweet a "favorite" (essentially "liking" on Facebook).
  - Create hashtags, which are keywords following a "#". Users can click on/search hashtags to view similar posts.

- When creating hashtags, make sure to coordinate with other content creators for consistency, or create a unique hashtag that isn't already in use.
- Using broadcast style updates (active verbs), Twitter is a great way to get timely information out to your audience.

## LinkedIn

Essentially a Facebook for connecting with business professionals and resume building, we encourage everyone to use LinkedIn on an individual basis. However, there are a few exceptions in which LinkedIn could prove useful for a collective group.

- LinkedIn groups could be useful in seeking/providing student internships and post-graduation jobs (e.g., a group for OBU graphic design professionals).
- LinkedIn University pages launched not too long ago – and while there is not much application to students right now – there is good potential for the future.

## Tumblr

Blogging is not an encouraged medium due to its long-form delivery. Attention spans are growing shorter and shorter when it comes to Web. Not only are blogs a lot to read, but it's a lot of content to write. So, only pursue blogging if you will be committed to the time it will take to create posts. If you feel like blogging could be effective for you, we suggest creating a Tumblr account because of the variety of content you can input. Contact [lane.castleberry@okbu.edu](mailto:lane.castleberry@okbu.edu) for website requests. Below are a few necessities when writing long-form content.

- Use hyperlinks to other social media and the OBU website. Integrate your blog with your other social media.
- Enable comments and be interactive.
- Write with an active voice.
- Use lists and bullet points. Make your writing easier for the reader to read and scan.
- Write using the inverted pyramid technique

## Instagram

Technology affords most people a descent camera right from their phone. Using Instagram, people can share photos and 15-second videos instantly. You can also alter those photos and edit videos using filters. Like other social media, Instagram also offers many ways to have a conversation with others.

- Instagram is owned by Facebook, and the accounts can be linked together. However, we suggest posting one out of every five Instagram photos on Facebook to avoid redundant content.
- Instagram allows comments and hashtags as well.
- The best way to gain followers is to interact with others. Search hashtags that relate to your area and "love" relevant pictures, comment, or re-post using [Iconosquare](#).

## Youtube

OBU has an official YouTube channel where we host all OBU-related videos. Please send videos for submission to [lane.castleberry@okbu.edu](mailto:lane.castleberry@okbu.edu), so your video will reach the largest possible audience. Once uploaded, we will send the link back to you, so you can share through social media.

## Other Services

You will notice that not every social media service is listed above. Those listed are the ones that we find most effective for a university environment. This isn't to say that you cannot use any other services, but you may not find them as useful as the ones previously mentioned. Some of these services include:

SoundCloud

Reddit

Google+

Foursquare

Flickr

Pinterest

However, if you find a good use for these services – listed or unlisted – please let us know by sending an email to [socialmedia@okbu.edu](mailto:socialmedia@okbu.edu).

## Hashtag Appendix

Oklahoma Baptist University: #obubison, #obu

OBU Athletics: #bisonathletics, #thisisOBU

Individual sports: “#bison” + sport (e.g. #BisonTennis, #BisonSwim, #BisonTrack)

Student Life Events: Email [socialmedia@okbu.edu](mailto:socialmedia@okbu.edu) for a current list of event hashtags