



Policy

UNIVERSITY POLICY PA-02.00-08/26

TO: The University of West Florida Community

FROM: President Manny Diaz, Jr.

SUBJECT: Social Media

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: University Marketing and Communications

I. Purpose:

Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas through virtual communities and networks. Social media may include but is not limited to Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest, blogs, and forums.

The University of West Florida utilizes social media as a valuable marketing and communications tool to reach faculty, staff, students, prospective students, parents, alumni, and the general public.

In order to promote consistent University messaging, UWF has designated University Marketing and Communications (UMC) to oversee the official University social media outlets and covered use.

II. Definitions:

UMC – University Marketing and Communications

Outlet – an account created on an open and public social networking site such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, etc.

Social media – means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas through virtual communities and networks.

University-Affiliated Outlet – an account on a social media platform officially representing a University division, department, or unit. The account is managed by faculty or staff members (USMAs) at the University.

University Social Media Administrator (USMA) – an employee responsible for a social media outlet that represents the University. Responsibilities of the USMA may include managing login information, content, and responding to posts/questions.

III. Policy:

A. Application

This policy applies to all University employees for both official social media use on behalf of the University and covered social media use. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to diminish the First Amendment rights of faculty or staff when communicating on their own behalf.

Penalties for violation of this policy will vary depending on the nature and severity of the violation. Penalties include:

1. Disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, reprimand, suspension, and/or termination of employment. For in-unit employees, disciplinary action will be consistent with the collective bargaining agreement.
2. Civil or criminal prosecution under applicable law(s).

B. University-Affiliated Social Media Outlet Creation

1. UMC oversees and manages all official University-wide social media outlets. University-wide outlets are those that apply to the University as a whole. Departments are not authorized to create University-wide social media outlets.
2. Divisions, colleges, and departments may create social media outlets specific to their areas. Before requesting the creation of a University-affiliated outlet, the respective division communication liaison or college communicators should work with the area requesting a University-affiliated outlet to develop a strategy for the social media outlet. Two key aspects of social media are the strategy and goals behind the social media platform. Based on the target audience, the social media platform, content, media, and insights should all be a part of a specific strategy. These strategies should align with the UWF Strategic Plan.
3. Authorization from UMC and the applicable division communication liaison or college communicator is required before the creation of any University-affiliated outlet.
4. A University-affiliated outlet must use “UWF” and its official name as the outlet’s name, unless given permission in advance by UMC. For example, UWF Lewis Bear Jr. College of Business, UWF Center for Cybersecurity and AI, UWF Fraternity & Sorority Life, UWF Men’s Basketball.
5. Any University-affiliated outlet that utilizes a single login, such as Instagram and X (formerly Twitter), must use a department email address for the login email.
6. University-affiliated outlets must have two-factor authentication enabled, utilizing a department email address. No personal phone numbers should be used for two-factor

authentication. Any password recovery information for University-affiliated outlets must include a department email address. If a social media platform requires a phone number for two-factor authentication or password recovery, UMC must be provided the phone number for records.

7. Authorization from UMC is not required for registered student organizations, but it is recommended that all student organizations review the UWF Social Media Policy and Social Media section of the UWF Brand Portal for guidance.

C. University Social Media Administrators (USMA)

1. All University-affiliated outlets must have at least two USMAs. Suggested appropriate content providers are department chairs/directors and full-time faculty/staff. Students should not have full administrative rights to University-affiliated outlets, unless employed by the University.
2. If an employee who is a USMA separates from the University, their administrator access must be immediately removed from all University-affiliated outlets upon notification of separation. Passwords to single login accounts should be changed immediately.
3. Division communication liaisons and college communicators are responsible for notifying UMC of the identity of USMAs and confirming any changes or updates made to their respective University-affiliated outlets in the event an employee separates from the University.
4. USMAs shall adhere to UWF Social Media Standards, which can be found online at www.uwf.edu/socialmediastandards. UMC is authorized to direct the removal of content that is not in compliance with UWF standards.
5. USMAs shall adhere to the UWF Social Media Accessibility Guidelines located at <https://uwf.edu/brand/social-media/social-media-accessibility-guidelines/>.
6. USMAs shall adhere to the UWF Photo/Video Release Policy located at <https://uwf.edu/brand/photography/photovideo-release-policy/> for all photos and videos posted to UWF social media outlets.
7. USMAs are required to obtain the University Social Media Administrators Certification prior to obtaining administrative rights to a social media platform on behalf of the University.

D. Representing the University on UWF-Affiliated Social Media

These rules apply to all USMAs overseeing University-affiliated social media outlets. All administrators should periodically review their outlets for compliance with this policy and make sure that they are up-to-date.

1. Directors and department chairs are ultimately responsible for all content shared on their respective University-affiliated outlets.
2. University-affiliated outlets shall be kept up-to-date and monitored by USMAs regularly.
3. All content on University-affiliated outlets shall remain professional and positive regarding University initiatives, personnel, programs, partners, and sister institutions.
4. All USMAs are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the content they post and should verify information before posting. If a mistake is made, it should be honestly identified and corrected. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation should be reviewed for accuracy before posting. The University follows AP Style for all written content, including social media, and has a UWF Editorial Style Guide for AP Style rules to follow located at <https://uwf.edu/brand/uwf-editorial-style-guide/>.
5. The University's name, logo, or trademark may not be used to endorse an external product or service unless permitted by UMC and the applicable Dean/Vice President.

E. Representing the University on Personal Social Media

1. University employees are required to comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and University policies when engaging in covered use. Relevant policies include but are not limited to those pertaining to intellectual property, employee or student privacy, and employee or student conduct.
2. When referencing the University, University employees shall ensure that their content complies with any generally accepted professional and ethical standards for their discipline or field. In expressing their opinion, avoid the use of language that is inflammatory, threatening, defamatory, obscene, disrespectful, or unprofessional.
3. University employees shall not act as spokespersons for the University on personal social media outlets, unless authorized by the President to speak on behalf of the University.

F. Community Commenting Guidelines

1. The University of West Florida seeks to educate, inform and provide updated information on UWF news and activities through its social media platforms. While UWF encourages interaction among Argos across the globe, the Community Commenting Guidelines are in place to maintain a respectful, positive online environment.
2. UWF's intent is not to create a public forum, but to maintain a moderated online discussion directly relating to topics posted by UWF.
3. All comments made by social media users reflect the opinions of the users and not necessarily those of the University of West Florida. By posting, users agree to these

UWF Social Media Community Guidelines.

4. UWF reviews comments made on University-affiliated social media accounts and maintains the right to moderate or remove comments that:
 - a. Are off-topic.
 - b. Contain misinformation.
 - c. Contain profanity or vulgarity.
 - d. Contain links to third-party websites or content.
 - e. Constitute threats, harassment, bullying, defamation, obscenity or unauthorized commercial speech, as defined by applicable state or federal law.
 - f. Encourages illegal activity.
 - g. Compromises the safety or security of the public or public systems.
 - h. Contains disparaging personal remarks or acrimony towards another person.
 - i. Is deemed to be harmful to others in our online or on-campus community, that may negatively impact the reputation of the University of West Florida or is viewed as disparaging the work or actions of others in our campus community.
 - j. Violates a copyright, trademark or other legal ownership interest of any other party.
 - k. Violates Florida or federal law.
5. UWF maintains the right to:
 - a. Post social media content without enabling the comment feature.
 - b. Deactivate the comment feature on a post at any time.
 - c. Archive all posts and related comments in conformance with Florida law and University regulations.
6. Content shared or posted on University-affiliated social media accounts may be subject to Florida's Public Records Law.

G. Administration

UMC is responsible for administering this policy and may conduct periodic reviews of all University-affiliated social media accounts to ensure accuracy, compliance and alignment with this policy, and applicable laws and regulations.

Approved by: _____

President Manny Diaz, Jr.

Date: _____

8/3/26

Authority: BOG Reg. 1.001, University Board of Trustees Powers and Duties

Cross Ref.: UWF Social Media Standards
UWF Social Media Graphic Best Practices

UWF Social Media Accessibility Guidelines
UWF Photo/Video Release Policy

History: Adopted August 2023, August 2026

Last Review: August 2026