

Howard Community College

Social Media Accounts Procedure - 61.18.01

College Policy Number/Title: [61.18 Social Media and Networking](#)

At Howard Community College (HCC), official social media accounts are administered by HCC employees; have undergone an approval process through public relations and marketing (PR&M); and are expected to follow certain policies, procedures, and guidelines for social media usage. As a whole, these accounts present a cohesive, professional, brand-appropriate representation of HCC across multiple social platforms. Official accounts are listed in the college's social media directory and, when appropriate, are connected through the college's primary social media accounts.

HCC's official social media accounts must comply with college policies and procedures, including:

- Publications and Electronic Media, 61.03 and 61.03.01
- Public Information, 61.04 and 61.04.01
- Proper Use of Information Technology, 61.12
- Internet Use, 61.12.03
- Protection of College Information and Electronic Resources, 61.13
- Safeguarding College Information, 61.13.01
- Ethics and Conduct, 63.09

In addition, confidential and proprietary information about the college, students, faculty, staff, alumni, and donors may not be posted on social media. It is also prohibited to post content on official college social media accounts from the following categories:

- information that violates federal or state laws;
- commercial activity unrelated to the college;
- political activity;
- online gambling;
- endorsement of any product, service, or private organization;
- personal information, including credit card information and other information that could lead to identity theft;
- student information that is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA);
- gossip or negative information, harassment, or bullying that can potentially harm an individual, organization, or the college; and
- lewd or offensive entries.

These prohibitions apply only to social media accounts (e.g., Facebook page, Twitter account, YouTube channel, etc.) created by college employees for the express purpose of officially representing HCC groups, departments, organizations, etc. However, college employees acting in an individual capacity on privately held social media accounts must not share student information protected under FERPA and are cautioned to communicate clearly that they are not acting in a representative capacity or expressing the views of the college.

Social Media Usage

- One official, primary HCC account shall exist per social networking platform, as created by the office of public relations and marketing (PR&M). This account will be maintained by PR&M and will be the predominant venue for general college interaction on that particular platform. Official accounts for departments or organizations within the college will be secondary to this account and **may only be created with approval from PR&M.**
- Official social media accounts must comply with the terms of use for the respective social media platform. Consideration must also be given to the college's recommended social media guidelines, available online or from PR&M.
- College officials reserve the right to remove any content for any reason from any official social media account, including but not limited to, content that it deems threatening, obscene, a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, or otherwise injurious or illegal.
- Unless otherwise directed by PR&M, employees do not have authority to speak on behalf of the college on any social networking platform.
- Official social media accounts must have at least two HCC employees, in addition to one PR&M staff member, as administrators at all times. Should an administrator of an account leave the college for any reason or no longer wish to be an account administrator, it is the responsibility of the remaining administrator to remove the former employee's administrative permissions, designate a replacement, and notify PR&M.
- Administrators of official social media accounts are expected to frequently update their account with relevant, engaging, and accurate content. Administrators must also regularly monitor their account, promptly respond to user concerns or questions, and address or remove inappropriate or questionable content or communications.
- The college's logo may not be used for any purpose without consent from PR&M. Furthermore, all official social media accounts are expected to follow naming conventions and guidelines for visual identity as mandated by PR&M.
- Before posting photos or videos to any social media account, appropriate consent must be received from any individual who is clearly perceived as the subject.

Process for Creating an Official Social Media Account

To preserve and promote the college's brand and reputation and ensure a consistent "voice" online, requests for a social media account to represent an HCC entity must be approved by PR&M prior to creation. If a request is approved, applicants must sign and submit a Content Owner Agreement form, acknowledging that, as a designated social media "content owner," they agree to the terms outlined in the agreement. Once the Content Owner Agreement form has been submitted, a PR&M staff member will create the social media account and assign the account administrators. The responsibility for monitoring and maintaining the social media account then falls to the content owner/administrators, with PR&M providing assistance as needed. To have an existing social media account designated as an official, college-approved account, employees must contact PR&M.

All official, college approved social media accounts will be listed on HCC's social media index pages, which are accessible via the social media icons on the front page of the college's website. Accounts will remain indexed this way as long as they maintain the minimum standards set forth in the Content Owner Agreement form. Conversely, accounts that do not follow the outlined standards will be removed from the index and subject to suspension or termination.

Effective Date: 12/12/14

President's Office Use: EDPRM