
BUSINESS POLICY

TO: All Members of the University Community 2020:4

DATE: October 2020

Ferris State University Social Media Policy

Section 1 – Scope

This policy and related [social media guidelines](#) and [best practices](#) apply to Ferris State University faculty, staff and students who manage and/or participate in the maintenance of official University social media accounts, which are defined as channels that speak on behalf of the University and have some oversight by University staff. These include, but are not limited to, social media channels for colleges, schools, academic departments and offices at Ferris to communicate to their audiences, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Snapchat or any other social media platform that may be developed during the life of this policy. This policy does not apply to non-official/personal social media use that is not related to a user’s official duties or to student-generated social media sites, such as those of registered student organizations.

Section 2 – Policy Statement

Every social media account that operates on behalf of Ferris State University (or some part of it) has value in promoting University programs and activities, encouraging responsible dialogue, building online awareness of the Ferris brand, recruiting and retaining students, and fostering a sense of community among Ferris audiences. To achieve the overall advancement of Ferris’ brand identity and reputation and hold the University harmless, social media account managers are required to follow all University and [social media policies, procedures, guidelines and best practices](#). Other than basic identification information described in the University’s [social media guidelines](#), this policy is not intended to regulate content, but it does preserve the University’s right to remove any infringing content and comments at its discretion and report violations to the appropriate University offices. Violations of this policy may result in revocation of a faculty, staff or student’s access rights to their respective University/departmental social media accounts.

Section 3 – Implementation

- A. Responsibility: University Advancement and Marketing is responsible for regulating the use of the University’s social media and assisting departments comply with this policy. All official University social media sites (i.e., college, program, department, division, and unit pages/profiles) are required to register with UA&M’s Social Media

Manager prior to being created. To register your site, please fill out the [Social Media Registration Form](#). Registering your site will allow it to be added to Ferris' [Social Media Directory](#) and to be recognized as an official University account. [The social media homepage](#) on ferris.edu offers resources for those who are already active on social media platforms and for those just getting started.

- B. Proper supervision: All sites must have at least two individuals who have the highest level of account access so if one team member is unavailable the other can fully service the account. UA&M also will be granted full access privileges to all official University social media accounts should there be circumstances where action needs to be taken to ensure the University's best interests are maintained. Social media account managers are required to complete training provided by UA&M's Social Media Manager and follow established [social media guidelines](#) and [best practices](#), such as appropriately maintaining a site through regular posting and continuity, responding swiftly to issues and questions, and adhering to [University identity and brand standards](#).

While the use of student social media managers is permitted, granting these privileges should be done in a way that ensures the student manager will be appropriately supervised and that necessary quality checks are in place.

- C. Transparency and disclosure: Individuals must use care to separate the uses of social media for official Ferris business and personal communications. If you are officially representing Ferris when posting or commenting on any University social media platform, your communications are viewed as representing the views of Ferris, so make sure to post/comment responsibly and in a manner consistent with the University's mission, vision and values. You also are required to post identifying information, such as name, affiliation and contact information on that platform, where possible. This also can be achieved by publishing a social media transparency page, on an appropriate University web page, that clearly states the account's social media managers with University contact information. If you are engaging in social media as an individual, and not as a representative of Ferris, make it clear that you are expressing your own opinion and not that of the University.
- D. Official University Announcements: Announcements such as a [University closing or cancelling of classes](#) because of weather or other conditions or [Clery Act](#) timely warnings related to campus security and safety will come directly from the University's main accounts. In the event of an emergency or important official University announcement on or off campus, departmental social media account managers should refrain from posting any content and direct followers to @FerrisState or to ferris.edu. In some situations, University communicators will receive an email with direction.
- E. Privacy Policy: Follow all University policies as well as federal regulations as they relate to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996

and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The University has provided a [FERPA reference sheet](#) for staff.

Specifically, you are prohibited from posting [confidential information about Ferris State University, its students, employees, alumni or vendors](#). Furthermore, it is important that University employees are responsible for abiding by NCAA regulations when interacting on social media platforms. University employees are requested to refrain from contacting and interacting with potential student athletes until after they have signed a letter of intent with the University.

- F. Mitigate both personal and institutional risks: Please keep the following in mind while engaging in social media:
- It is important to consider all copyright laws when you are posting materials on social media platforms. Faculty and staff are encouraged to share official information regarding the University but linking to the original source will prevent copyright infringement. Posts should be shared with appropriate recognition of copyright laws and follow best practices for sharing or otherwise redistributing content via social media.
 - Note that faculty and staff are personally responsible for their conduct on official University social media platforms, just as they are in their personal and professional lives. Please refer to the [employee dignity, harassment and discrimination policy](#) for additional guidance.
 - In addition, you must abide by the usage policies of individual social media platforms.
- G. Acceptable Use:
- Please ensure that your conduct on social media platforms respects University time and resources.
 - For students who are utilizing social media for the purpose of collecting information for projects, classroom activities and research care should be taken to follow all rules associated with accessing groups and deploying questions or surveys along with any necessary permissions. Students and faculty are responsible for understanding the rules of the platforms, proper access to specialty groups and gaining social media site permissions as well as consulting with campus advisors, or committees (i.e., Institutional Review Board) where appropriate. Data gathering from social media sites should be done in compliance with University policies for data protection and proper use of survey platforms.

Contact Office: Vice President for University Advancement and Marketing