THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

INTERIM

Number	08.01.05
Division	Vice President for Strategic Communications – Marketing and Communication
Date	February 25, 2024
Purpose	The University of Alabama in Huntsville ("University") seeks to ensure all official University social media accounts ("OUSMA") align with the University's identity standards and strategic goals; provide opportunities for two-way communication with its audiences; and comply with all applicable University policies and state and federal laws.
Policy	This policy applies to all official University social media accounts, campus-wide. This policy also applies to anyone that posts on official University social media accounts. Social media allows the University to share information, raise awareness of the University's mission and values, and build support within local, national and international communities. OUSMAs provide the opportunity for easy and instantaneous, two-way communication with prospective and current students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents of prospective and current students, media and other audiences.

The University is committed to free and open inquiry and expression for members of its campus communities—faculty, staff, and students. Except as limitations on that freedom are appropriate to the functioning of the campuses and permissible under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, the University respects and supports the freedom of all members of its campus community "to discuss any problem that presents itself." This policy is not intended to restrict free speech or the free expression of ideas; it will be interpreted and implemented with First Amendment protections and academic freedom principles in mind.

OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Brand Standards

OUSMAs must adhere to the University's Brand Guidelines and the Social Media Guidelines.

Creating an Official University Social Media Account

OUSMAs created after the effective date of this policy must first be approved by the Division of Strategic Communications. Anyone seeking to create an OUSMA must complete the Social Media Request Form for review and approval. All requests will be evaluated by the Division of Strategic Communications or their

designee, based on the proposed content of the account and how it relates to the University's overall strategic goals. Vice Presidents, Deans, and/or Directors must be included in the final approval process for accounts created below the college/office level. The Division of Strategic Communications will typically provide written approval or denial of a request within sixty (60) days after receiving the completed Social Media Request Form.

OUSMAs created after the effective date of this policy, without prior approval by the Division of Strategic Communications, will be subject to review, amendment, and/or removal.

Personal email addresses or faculty/staff/student University email addresses should only be used when necessary or as a secondary contact on an account. When possible, OUSMAs should be associated with an entity-account University email address (example: omc@uah.edu.) When setting up new OUSMAs, account manager(s) are required to follow the Social Media Guidelines.

Existing Official University Social Media Accounts

OUSMAs created prior to the effective date of this policy are not required to submit the Social Media Account Request Form. However, all other portions of this policy are applicable to these accounts. These accounts must come into compliance with this policy within sixty (60) days from the effective policy date.

Management of Social Media Accounts

The unit creating the OUSMA must designate at least one (1) full-time University faculty or staff member as the account manager. OUSMAs may be co-managed by University students with supervision of a University faculty or staff member. OUSMA manager(s) must be well versed in this policy and the University's Social Media Guidelines and are responsible for all account content, monitoring account engagement on a consistent basis, and ensuring the account is in compliance with this policy.

In addition to the account manager(s), OUSMAs must have at least two (2) full-time University faculty or staff members with login information (user name and password) and account access at all times. All account login information should be maintained with the highest level of security.

Units must change account passwords immediately when an account manager or person with login information for an OUSMA separates from the University or unit or is no longer allowed access to the OUSMA for any reason.

Account manager(s) are not allowed to post University announcements on OUSMAs that have not already been announced by the University. This includes situations where the University is waiting to officially release information to the public and/or members of the press.

Moderating Comments

When an OUSMA posts on a social media platform, a public forum may be created. Constitutionally protected comments and remarks to a public post that allows commenting may not be removed by OUSMAs.

However, social media platforms often have community standards that may drive the platform to unilaterally remove or hide a comment or post. Additionally, the University and OUSMAs shall have the right, but not the obligation, to remove or hide comments or posts that contain constitutionally unprotected speech, including among other things obscenity, harassment, illegal activity, attempts to sell services, and defamation or other falsehoods.

For concerns about content posted on OUSMAs or questions regarding content moderation, please contact social@uah.edu.

Social Media Account Directory

The Division of Strategic Communications shall maintain a Social Media Directory. All OUSMAs must be registered with the Social Media Directory by submitting a Social Media Request Form.

The following is required information to be maintained by the Division of Strategic Communications for each OUSMA (note that account manager information will not be publicly posted on the Social Media Directory website for privacy reasons):

- Name of the Unit
- All social media accounts (examples: Facebook, Instagram, X, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.)
- Social media account name(s)
- University email for the account(s)
- Name, email, and phone numbers (work and mobile) for all account manager(s)

For OUSMAs created after this policy's effective date, the Social Media Request Form must be submitted before the account is created. For existing OUSMAs, the Social Media Request Form must be submitted within thirty (30) days from this policy's effective date.

Any changes to the information listed in the Social Media Account Directory for an OUSMA must be updated within 2 business days by emailing the changes to social@uah.edu. The Division of Strategic Communications shall record all Directory listings and changes.

Account Inactivity & Platform Removal

OUSMAs must comply with the Social Media Guidelines related to account inactivity. If an OUSMA account is closed, an account manager must notify the Division of Strategic Communications of this closure within 2 business days by emailing social@uah.edu.

The University shall also have the right to separate itself from any social media platform that no longer serves the University's strategic goals, in which case the Division of Strategic Communications may require all OUSMAs on a particular platform be closed in accordance with the Social Media Guidelines.

Compliance

OUSMAs must be compliant with all applicable laws, regulations and University policies, with an emphasis on those related to computer use, privacy, and human resources.

The University is also committed and obligated to the principle of institutional control in operating its athletics program in a manner that is consistent with the letter and spirit of NCAA, Gulf South Conference, and University rules and regulations. All interactions between The University of Alabama in Huntsville and student-athletes or prospective student-athletes are governed by the aforementioned rules and regulations.

The NCAA has determined that an institutional department other than athletics (such as admissions, schools/colleges, etc.) may send electronic correspondence that is not private (such as a public post/repost, tweet/retweet, like/favorite) at any time, provided the institution's athletics department is not involved in any way and the correspondence is not created for recruiting purposes. For further questions, email the Director of Athletic Compliance. If you are not sure whether you should share/post something regarding a prospective student-athlete, refrain from sharing/posting.

Copyright

OUSMAs must comply with the University's copyright statement. Do not plagiarize. Attribute sources by linking to the website where the original content was generated. Likewise, do not use pictures, images, or other intellectual property that the University does not own or have a license and/or permission to use.

Privacy

OUSMAs must comply with all applicable state and federal laws, including but not limited to FERPA, HIPAA, GDPR, and the official university privacy statement.

Website Security

OUSMAs must comply with the security standards set by OIT and any current University security policies or any security policies implemented in the future by the University.

EMPLOYEE PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

If faculty and staff identify themselves as employees of the University on their social media profiles, they are encouraged to clarify that content posted on their social media accounts is representative of their personal views and/or opinions and not the views/opinions of The University of Alabama in Huntsville. When using these accounts, University faculty and staff should comply with Board Rule 304 and consider their commitment to the standards which embody Board Rule 106.2 and the promotion of ethical conduct.

Faculty/staff/students publishing content on their personal social media account related to their work at the University are encouraged to use the disclaimers provided below.

Disclaimer for account bios or comments:

> *The views expressed on this [post/page/profile/website/blog] are my own and do not reflect the views of The University of Alabama in Huntsville.*

Disclaimer for restrictive word counts: *Opinions/views my own.*

Definitions

Content – text, images, graphics, audios, videos, etc. that are posted/published to a social media account.

Engagement – the measure of shares, likes, comments, views, etc. that are associated with a social media account.

Account manager(s) – University faculty or staff member designated by a unit to oversee all OUSMA operations, including but not limited to, account content and engagement and policy compliance.

Official University social media account(s) (OUSMA) – social media accounts created for use in a professional communications or marketing capacity and representing a recognized University unit.

Personal social media account – University faculty, staff, and student accounts that are created strictly for personal use and have no affiliation with The University of Alabama in Huntsville or an OUSMA.

Social media – Any website or application, now existing or hereinafter developed or created, that facilitates the sharing of information, ideas, personal messages, and other content online, including without limitation Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, YouTube, TikTok, and Reddit.

Unit – Any University of Alabama in Huntsville official college, office, department, division, program, organization, center or other area of campus.

Review   The Office of Strategic Communications is responsible for the review of this policy every five (5) years or sooner when circumstances require.