Social Media Guide

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College of Liberal Arts Social Media Policy

Introduction

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) recognizes social media as a valuable and necessary tool to support the college's mission and vision. This policy is to provide guidance for student employees, staff, faculty and volunteers participating in CLA-related social media as a part of their position responsibilities. These policies do not apply to those using social media through their personal accounts.

A Cal Poly faculty or staff member must have administrative privileges to ALL official accounts and is responsible for controlling the permissions, content and security to the accounts. CLA department representatives are responsible for adhering to the specific standards and guidelines set forth.

Captions

All photos must have captions.

Comments

Reply to or like all comments or messages on your accounts. Keep the overall sentiment positive and professional, even when dealing with negative comments. Err on the side of never deleting comments (unless under very specific circumstances). See Cal Poly's Social Media Policy for what to do about harmful comments.

Content

Your content should always be authentic, engaging and compelling to your primary audience. Identify your primary audiences for each platform and allow for opportunities to engage with your users. Keep content concise and to the point where possible.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

The College of Liberal Arts sees diversity as central to its mission and is committed to fostering an equitable and inclusive environment within the college and university. This includes through our online presence.

All CLA-related social media accounts must adhere to the following DEI-focused policies when posting online and creating department-specific social media plans.

- Accessibility: Make sure your graphics and color schemes are ADA-compliant (See Cal Poly's Accessibility Policy.) If representing graphs or charts, use contrasting colors in the branding scheme for easy distinguishability. "Alt text" should always be used to

describe photos. Alt text is used by screen readers and describes the appearance or function of an image on a page.

- Closed Captions: All videos must be captioned. Instagram and YouTube have auto-caption features but we urge caution with using them as they are AI-generated and may mis-caption portions of your video. Taking the extra step to fix captions when possible is a best practice, especially captions which may be more problematic for speakers who speak with an accent, or whose names are not of European origin.

- Hashtags: If utilizing a hashtag, use "camel case." Camel casing is when you capitalize the first letter of each word in a hashtag. Hashtags not formatted in camel case cannot be interpreted by screen readers. (For example: #HispanicHeritageMonth vs. #hispanicheritagemonth.)

- Photos/Imagery: Be cognizant about diversity in representation when posting photographs on social media. Use imagery that reflects the diversity of your audience. Always get permission from subjects when using their photographs to promote or talk about DEI or DEI initiatives. Do not repurpose just any photo for these circumstances.

- Photo Captions: Though Cal Poly is growing in racial and ethnic diversity, it is important to be authentic in the way we use pictures to show Cal Poly students. At the same time, we would also like to represent the racial, or other types of diversity, we currently have so that students, staff and faculty can see those who look like them in the college's posts. One best practice in using photos responsibly is to caption them appropriately. For example, showing a group of racially diverse students on our website or for a post, but making sure to caption it as "CLA's Student Diversity Committee" allows us to be authentic about our representation while also directing students to a group that has some diversity if they are looking to find community.

- Pronouns: When interviewing a subject for a feature, always ask for their pronouns. If you are featuring an individual and their pronouns are unknown, either reach out to them to confirm or use gender-neutral language.

- Representation: Your posts and social media channels should reflect the diversity of your department and of the college. Always ask permission before featuring faculty, staff, students or alumni for DEI purposes or heritage/pride months.

- Review Process: Ideally, have at least one additional person other than the content creator review posts before they are published to ensure accountability and accuracy.

- Terminology: Be mindful about wording and stay up to date on current and appropriate terminology as it relates to groups of people and how they may choose to identify themselves.

Engagement

Follow and engage with accounts related to your department or college. Consider sharing relevant events from across campus to your story — cross-promotion is great way to increase followers and engagement! See a full list of [Cal Poly-affiliated accounts](#).

School Breaks

School breaks should be referred to secularly as "fall break," "winter break" and "spring break." Do not use "Thanksgiving break," "Christmas break" or "Easter break" in reference to these times off. The College of Liberal Arts acknowledges and respects that many religious and cultural holidays may occur during these times.

Cal Poly Social Media Policy

Content

Anything posted on Cal Poly social media sites should be accurate and appropriate for all audiences. The social media tools of a unit on campus must be representative of the institution and not the personal viewpoints of an individual or collection of individuals.

Comments

Cal Poly's social media properties are not moderated for content. However, comments remain subject to the user agreements for each platform and may be reported for violating a platform's standards (e.g. Facebook's Community Standards). Additionally, online harassment and threats of violence may be reported to law enforcement officials as appropriate.

Cal Poly is a state institution and must uphold the First Amendment rights of its campus community members and visitors; this includes their interactions with our social media accounts. The only comments we are allowed to remove from our page are speech that incites actual violence or harm, fighting words, true threats, defamation, obscenity, severe harassment, false advertising and any comment that uses public resources for partisan politics.

Before you remove a comment, always take a FULL screenshot of all of the comments, including the original post, and log the picture with the date/time and reason for removing.

Emergencies

In case of emergencies, our communications team will collaborate with the Department of Emergency Management to update the campus community. Only share or retweet content that's been posted on the @CalPoly account or the @CalPolyDEM Twitter account.

Privacy

As a participant in Cal Poly's social media efforts, you take personal responsibility for your comments, your user name and any information you choose to provide. Please do not post personal information such as phone numbers and addresses.

Account Management

We require a faculty or staff member to be an admin on any official social media account. Many departments have student assistants who work with a supervisor to maintain their platforms. Each faculty, staff, and student user of our digital communications systems is responsible for the material that he or she chooses to send or display using the campus computing/communication resources.

Copyright

Most books, journals, magazines, photographs, art, sound recordings, computer programs and websites are protected by copyright law. In some cases, architecture, motion pictures and dance choreography can also be protected. When you use ideas, words or phrases, images or sounds from another source, be sure to seek out the copyright holder and obtain permission before you include that work on social media. On social media, the best way to give someone credit is to "share" (Facebook) or "retweet" (Twitter) their posts directly. You can share someone else's content to your story if you have explicit permission.

Photo Use

Posting photos on your social media sites is an effective way to generate engagement, but it's important to follow these simple guidelines:

- Never use a photo from another source without permission from the copyright holder of that photo.
- If you're shooting photos in a public space, such as outside a building on campus, you do not need to secure permission from people you photograph. But, if you shoot photos inside a building or at a non-public event, we recommend that you get written permission from everyone in your photos. See the Cal Poly PhotoShelter for photo/video release forms.
- If you photograph minors, you need permission from their guardians or parents. You can print the standard CSU image release forms from the Web in English (PDF) or Spanish (DOC).
- Make sure you are following our brand guidelines on photography.

Things to Consider Before You Start Posting

Cal Poly has put together a useful checklist that department stakeholders should review before launching their social media presence. Take a look and start creating your social media plan by answering the following questions:

✓ *Responsible people*
Your plan should begin with deciding who will be responsible for populating, maintaining and monitoring your social media presence. List the team members and avoid relying only on students. A Cal Poly faculty or staff member must have administrative privileges to all accounts and is responsible for controlling permissions, content and security for the accounts.

✓ **Audience**
Who do you want to come to your party? Targeting specific groups, like prospective students, faculty members, or the class of '99 will help you tailor your content and conversation. List your primary audiences. Do you have secondary audiences, too? How will you reach out to them initially? Remember, simply setting up a Facebook page isn't enough. You have to invite people there and have a plan to keep them interested.

✓ *Goals and strategies*
What do you hope to do with your social media presence? List the goals you are hoping to accomplish and how you are planning on reaching your audience. Use only the social media platforms that your audience uses and that you have the time to devote to maintaining.

✓ **Content plan**
What content will you share? Is it news or engagement based? Images? Video? List the kinds of content you will be sharing and the kinds of things you think are successful. You need to be posting consistently and keeping your pages active.

✓ **Defining and measuring success**
Now that you have defined the goals, you will need to define how you will measure your success. Do you want increased traffic to your website? More energetic give-and-take with prospective students? Do you want to reach out to new colleagues on campus or around the world? Define success, how you'll measure it and the tools you need to measure it, such as Google Analytics. Most social media platforms have their own built-in analytics reporting tools as well (see Platform Management).

✓ **Evaluation**
Schedule regular evaluations of your effort's success based on the plan you outlined. Set out your timeline. Be ready to recast your content and strategy. It's okay to fail on some things. This is not a project; it's an ongoing effort.

Creating an Account

The CLA strives to maintain a united and consistent brand in line with Cal Poly's [brand guidelines](#). When creating a social media account, it is important to note that this is an extension and reflection of not only the CLA, but of Cal Poly as well. Therefore, we recommend that login information is not tied to an individual's work email, but a department-controlled email. This is especially important for posterity and to avoid losing access to accounts if staff or faculty leave their positions.

Before launching your accounts, the CLA Communications team encourages faculty and staff to meet with us to review social media plans. Additionally, familiarize yourself with Cal Poly's branded voice. If you plan to create graphics to post on social media, the Cal Poly brand guidelines will be a great resource to reference for typography, colors and more.

How to Get Started:

1. Create your new accounts with the appropriate department-owned email address.
   - Or, have a page administrator add you to an established Facebook or LinkedIn business/company account (See Platform Overviews for more information.)
2. Name: "Cal Poly DEPARTMENT NAME" (Cal Poly English Department, Cal Poly Psychology and Child Development Department)
3. Upload your profile and cover photos
   - [Profile pictures](#) are standardized for each entity on campus. Each entity will be using a version of the [university's shield](#). Your profile picture should be used on all of your social media accounts. Do not recreate the profile picture, as the file has been formatted to fit the circle crop. Departments will use the shield with the white background. Please reach out to the CLA Communications team if you need access to this image.
   - Cover Images: Use photos for your cover photos/header images on the social media accounts where they are available. Text or graphics can often get cut off depending on the device your user is using to interact with your page or profile. When choosing a photo, wide landscape shots are the easiest the use, but detailed shots can also be used successfully. If you do decide to use a custom cover graphic, please follow the university's brand colors and/or fonts to keep cohesive look and feel and remember that it may not be fully visible to your user. There should never be logos or lockups in the cover graphic or photo.

- Example:

Account Management

Assign a point person (student assistant or full-time employee) to manage the account. A faculty/staff member must have access to all social media accounts and maintain a password-protected record of all social media log in information (we recommend creating secure passwords for all platforms).

The point person(s) will be responsible for content creation, consistently posting and monitoring all social channels. To make organization easier and more strategic we recommend implementing a content calendar. Content calendars are effective in helping plan what kind of content you will post, what days and times you plan on posting them and organizing everything that will accompany the post like links, hashtags, account tags and media (photo or video). A free, useful tool is [Asana](#).

We recommend that the lead faculty/staff administrator change all passwords if employees (students or full-time staff/faculty) leave their positions and remove them from admin status on all relevant accounts.

Platform Overviews

Facebook

Audience: Parents, current students, prospective students, alumni and community members.

Content: Evergreen; Event promotion, news stories, alumni updates, department updates, etc.

All Facebook business/company accounts must be linked to a personal Facebook profile. You can do this in two ways:

i. Using a "dummy profile" — a fake Facebook account to link the business account to using a department controlled emailed.
ii. Or, someone on the team must use their personal profile to create the account and give others administrator access.
iii. [Learn how](#) to create a Facebook business account.

If logging in from a personal account, a current admin can add you (you will need to be Facebook friends first). Facebook Business Suite can be used to schedule posts in advance. Your Facebook posts should almost always include an image or video.

- Recommended photo size: 1200x630 pixels
  - If you are using graphics, keep them simple and clear of text as much as possible and put the details in the post itself. This usually means creating graphics that are different than those used in print — your graphic should be created specifically for social media.
- As a general guideline, try to post 3-5x per week
- Consider using Facebook Business Suite analytics to monitor the best days and times to post. These numbers will change and update as you continue to post and build a presence. Learn how to navigate the [Facebook Business Suite](#).
- Track analytics on or around the first of each month to see which posts are performing best. See how to view analytics for [Facebook](#).

Instagram

Audience: Current students, alumni.

Content: Student focused, high resolution and engaging photos, Learn by Doing in action.

Hyperlinks are not clickable in Instagram captions. If you are posting in reference to a website, add the link to Linktr.ee (or any other landing page where you are listing your links) and remove the link from your caption. Refer people to the link in your bio.

Facebook Business Suite can be used to schedule Instagram posts in advance. Your imagery should be specific to your unit and compelling. If you are using videos, keep them on the short side, preferably no longer than 1-2 minutes depending on the platform. (Instagram videos over one minute will become an IGTV post.)

- o Recommended photo size: 1080x1080 pixels
    - If you are using graphics, keep them simple and clear of text as much as possible and put the details in the post itself. This usually means creating graphics that are different than those used in print — your graphic should be created specifically for social media.
- o As a general guideline, try to post 1-3x per week
- o Instagram now allows users to include up to five links in their bio. If you would like to include more than five links, utilize a software like Linktr.ee.
- o Track analytics on or around the first of each month to see which posts are performing best. See how to view analytics for Instagram.
- o **TIP**: Consider new ways to engage your audience like student or alumni features, going live on your story, or host an Instagram "take over" with students, alumni or faculty.

Instagram stories can be used for a wide range of purposes. Share your own posts, others' posts, ask questions or go live. If you would like the CLA to share your content to our story, tag us at @CalPolyCLA or DM us your post.

- o Recommended photo size: 1920x1080 pixels
- o Posting stories is much more flexible, just make sure your content is tailored towards your Instagram audience.

X (Twitter)

Audience: *Current students, prospective students, alumni and community members.*

Content: *Evergreen; Event promotion, news stories, alumni updates, department updates, etc.*

This platform has the shortest word count at 280 characters. Consider drafting your posts in X (Twitter) to make sure it is below the character limit.

Successful tweets include anything that affects the Cal Poly/CSU community, posts about finals, the weather, holidays or random happenings around campus. Many faculty members are active on X (Twitter) — consider reaching out to build your following and consider tagging faculty and companies whenever possible.

- o Recommended photo size: 1024x512 pixels (Facebook size can work for this platform)
- o As a general guideline, try to post 3-5x per week
- o Track analytics on or around the first of each month to see which posts are performing best. See how to view analytics for [Twitter](#).

Threads

Audience: *Current students, prospective students, alumni and community members.*

Content: *Evergreen; Event promotion, news stories, alumni updates, department updates, etc.*

Threads is Instagram's competitor to X (Twitter). Threads is integrated with Instagram and users must sign in through their established Instagram account. Once signed in, your username will carry over and you will have the option to follow all of your Instagram friends who have a Threads account, or you can manually choose who you would like to follow.

This platform varies from Twitter in that it has a longer, 500-word character limit and allows longer videos up to five minutes. Currently, the app is only available through mobile, and users cannot view or post Threads from their desktop.

We recommend following the same guidelines as Twitter until further notice.

- o Recommended photo size: 1024x512 pixels (Facebook size can work for this platform)
- o As a general guideline, try to post 3-5x per week

NOTE: As of September 2023, once a user creates a Threads account they are unable to delete it without deleting their Instagram account. If you do not have the ability to post consistently on the platform or are unsure about your department's long-time use of it, we recommend not creating a Threads account until the ability to delete it separate from Instagram is available.

LinkedIn

Audience: Alumni, current students

Content: Alumni updates, student successes, professional opportunities.

All LinkedIn business/company accounts must be linked to a personal LinkedIn profile. You can do this in two ways:

i. Using a "dummy profile" — a fake LinkedIn account to link the business account to using a department controlled emailed.
ii. Or, someone on the team must use their personal profile to create the account and give others administrator access.
iii. [Learn how](#) to create a LinkedIn business account.

If logging in from a personal account, a current admin can add you as a page administrator. Content on this platform should be tailored towards alumni and professional news/opportunities.

o Recommended photo size: 1200x630 pixels
o Tag all individuals and businesses, when possible, to increase your post reach and engagement.
o Track analytics on or around the first of each month to see which posts are performing best. See how to view analytics for [LinkedIn](#).

Free Resources

- **Asana:**
  o The free version of this workflow management platform allows users to organize complex work and create calendars. The paid version offers additional features.
- **Linktr.ee**:
  o This platform is extremely useful to put in an Instagram bio to link out to multiple stories/webpages.
- **Canva**:
  o The free version of this graphic design platform is helpful to resize photos and create graphics.
- **Adobe Creative Suite**:
  o This suite of software programs is free and accessible to all Cal Poly staff and faculty. It is available at a discounted price of $29.99 for students. Those with more advanced graphic design skills may benefit from these programs.