

TEXAS STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE
STATEWIDE OPERATING STANDARD

No. GA 1.18	Page 1 of 4	Effective Date: 08/31/15
DIVISION:	General Administration	
SUBJECT:	Employee Use of Social Media	
AUTHORITY:	Minute Order # 76-09	
PROPOSED BY:	Jeff Kilgore	
TITLE:	Vice Chancellor & Chief Marketing Officer	Date: 08/31/15
RECOMMENDED BY:	<i>Original Signed by Jeff Kilgore</i>	
TITLE:	Vice Chancellor & Chief Marketing Officer	Date: 08/31/15
APPROVED BY:	<i>Original Signed by Mike Reeser</i>	
TITLE:	Chancellor	Date: 08/31/15

STATUS: Approved by Chancellor 08/31/15

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 Approved by BOR 8/14/09 MO# 76-09
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POLICY

Texas State Technical College supports employee use of social media for business purposes, given that such use:

- Reflects the values of TSTC including excellence, leadership, innovation, collaboration, responsiveness, accountability, and stewardship,
- Contains a site disclaimer which states, ‘The messages contain the thoughts and opinions of <individual name> and do not represent official TSTC policy’,
- Protects confidential information and relationships, including copyright protected information,
- Is respectful to the company, employees, customers, partners, and competitors, and,
- Extends and does not interfere with work objectives,
- Reserves the solicitation of news media coverage for and refers inquiries from the news media to the public information officer,
- Is registered (by providing the employee’s name and urls of business related social media sites) with the campus/TSTC public information officer, and

- Follows applicable records retention guidelines.

PERTINENT INFORMATION

TSTC has been growing its participation in social media (also known as new media, or Web 2.0) to strengthen its brand and its connection with prospects, customers, and key influencers.

Networking sites like *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *MySpace*, and *LinkedIn*; blogging sites like *Blogger* and *WordPress*; news sharing and bookmarking sites like *StumbleUpon*, *delicious*, and *Digg*, and photo--- and video--- and slide sharing sites like *flickr*, *YouTube*, and *Slideshare* can be exciting new avenues for communication in the professional and personal lives of TSTC employees. Used responsibly, they provide an effective way to keep abreast of new trends and topics, and to share information and perspectives to build and strengthen relationships. TSTC has thousands of individuals who connect with TSTC via “tweets,” fan pages, photos, and video channels regularly.

Transitory information – *Twitter* tweets, wall postings on *Facebook*, bookmarking or ratings on *Digg* and the like, are considered transitory communication which has fulfilled its purpose and is required to be kept and maintained only until the purpose of the record has been fulfilled. Transitory information is of temporary usefulness that is not an integral part of a records series, not essential to the fulfillment of statutory obligations or to the documentation of agency functions. Some examples of transitory information, which can be in any medium (voice mail, fax, email, hard copy, message, slips, etc.) are routine messages, telephone messages notifications, internal meeting notices, or other similar routine information used for communication.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

The Vice Chancellor/Chief Marketing Officer for TSTC has the authority and responsibility to ensure this Statewide Operating Standard is followed.

The Vice Chancellor/Chief Marketing Officer serves as the Statewide designated public relations officer, brand manager, and social media leader.

Throughout TSTC, there are employees who are responsible for managing the official social media sites, in addition to others who have responsibility for maintaining their personal sites that they use for business purposes.

OPERATING REQUIREMENTS

Given the reach of the internet and its future development and expansion, the campuses shall clearly communicate the freedoms and responsibilities that employees of TSTC hold as well as offer basic guidelines for using these various forms of new media, keeping in harmony with our Dissemination of Information and News to the Public SOS GA 1.7 and Brand Management SOS GA 1.12.

Any employee wishing to use social media to further his or her relationship with prospects, customers, and key influencers should work under the following guidelines.

1. Reflect the values of TSTC. One's presence in social media should build our brand by living the values of excellence, leadership, innovation, collaboration, responsiveness, accountability, and stewardship.
 - Part of the appeal in social media is that the conversation occurs almost in real time. So, participants need to be prepared to be active, and be willing to take the time to refresh content, respond to questions, update information regularly, and correct information when appropriate.
2. Contain a site disclaimer. Even when employees are commenting as individuals, the perception may be that they are representing TSTC. Therefore, if TSTC employees blog or discuss areas of expertise, they shall emphasize that their thoughts and opinions are not company policy. A disclaimer should essentially state, "These messages contain the thoughts and opinions of <individual name> and do not represent official TSTC policy."
3. Protect confidential information and relationships, including copyright protected information. Online postings and conversations are not private. Employees must be cognizant that postings will be recoverable for an extended time period and could be shared by others. Given that,
 - employees are required to obtain permission when appropriate before posting pictures of others, or before posting any copyrighted information; and
 - TSTC is an open record state agency, employees should never discuss unannounced technical or organizational changes, personnel issues, or anything considered "confidential."
4. Be respectful to the company, employees, customers, partners, and competitors.
 - Avoid identifying and discussing others by name – including customers, partners, suppliers, friends, co-workers unless it is public record or you have their permission. And, when discussing others, employees should use good taste, refraining from insult and disparaging remarks.
 - One of the aims of social media is to create dialogue, and individuals will not always agree on an issue. When confronted with a difference of opinion, employees are expected to maintain level-headedness. Points are to be expressed in a clear, logical manner, and inflammatory comments are to be ignored.
5. Use of extends and not interferes with work objectives. Social media is an opportunity to develop and strengthen relationships as well as to expand the reach of messages in a viral way. Therefore, TSTC encourages employee use of social media in recruiting, communicating with absentee students, event notification, and establishing faculty as authorities in their field among other work functions.
6. Reserves the solicitation of news media coverage for and refers inquiries from the news media to the public information officer.

Know that social media, while building relationship and credibility, also is an opportunity to share our message. While employees should not solicit news media coverage, members of the traditional media will be alerted to online messages. Thus, it

is extremely important that TSTC ensures all statements are truthful and substantiated. Should an employee need to respond or make a comment on something specific, details must be verified through current TSTC-published information. If engaged by a member of the media, employees are to refer inquiries to the public information officer.

7. Register with the campus/TSTC public relations office. Any employee who uses social media for discussing or promoting TSTC related business, should simply notify in writing the campus or TSTC public relations officer and provide the employee's name and urls of any social media sites they use for business purposes. If social media is integrated within the TSTC Website, TSTC intends to promote and feature some of these sites to build TSTC's brand, and the faculty and staff's professional brand as well.
8. Follow applicable records retention guidelines. Employees will need to ensure that, depending on the nature of their communication in the social media, compliance is maintained with records retention. In most cases, the information is transitory and retained for its period of usefulness only.

Social media is growing at an amazing rate – and TSTC has the ability to engage its customers, prospects, partners and influencers as an important part of its marketing and brand strategy. Operating procedures detailed in the TSTC Marketing & Communications Standards Manual will help ensure TSTC stays on course as an institution.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

1. Each campus is to adhere to the SOS
2. Employees register their personal social media sites that are used professionally for TSTC.
3. Confidentiality and copyright is protected.
4. Media relations are managed through the appropriate public relations officer.