THE TRUSTEES OF TRINITY COLLEGE
POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Trinity College Policy No. 6.1

Policy Statement
Social media are platforms used extensively for people to interact with individuals and organizations. Social media provide a mechanism for information delivery and consumption through the publication of and interaction with timely and relevant content. Trinity College regards the use of social media as an element of institutional communication to be shaped and guided by the mission of the institution and by appropriate policies.

This policy provides guidelines to help Trinity College faculty, staff, and students who create and manage social media presences as representatives of the college, either as individual professionals, on behalf of their academic or administrative departments, or as students representing college student organizations.

Definitions
Social media are defined as pictures, videos, texts, podcasts, etc. ("media") shared ("social") on web-based applications that enable others to interact by posting, sharing, commenting, etc. This policy pertains only to official and affiliated college social media that are intended to represent the institution. This policy does not apply to personal use of personal social media, e.g., an individual's Instagram account, Facebook account, Snapchat account, etc. (See section on Posting on Your Own Personal Social Media Accounts below.)

Types of Social Media
Social media include a variety of online tools and services that allow users to publish content and interact with their audiences. Today's most common types of social media include:
- Social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn)
- Media sharing networks (e.g., Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube)
- Discussion forums (e.g., Reddit, Quora)
- Bookmarking and content curation networks (e.g., Pinterest)
- Consumer review networks (e.g., Yelp, Tripadvisor)
- Blogging and publishing networks (e.g., Medium, WordPress, Tumblr)
- Interest-based networks (e.g., Goodreads, Last.fm)
- Social shopping networks (e.g., Etsy)
- Sharing economy networks (e.g., Uber, Airbnb)
- Anonymous social networks (e.g., Whisper, Ask.fm)

Through its institutional social media presence, the college communicates directly with and receives instant feedback from online communities that include students, faculty, staff, alumni, prospective students, families, fans, and the media. Faculty, staff, or students who manage social media on behalf of or as representatives of Trinity College must perform their responsibilities diligently and professionally. Social media posts, including comments and responses, can be stored by and shared with millions around the world. For more information on internet and

computer usage at Trinity, view the [Acceptable Use Policy](). It is important to note: applications developed for any mobile devices (i.e., iPhones or other smartphones and tablet computers) that use the college's name, word mark, or other institutionally identifiable information should meet the standards set forth in the Appropriate Use Policy as well as this policy.

Posting on Official College Accounts: Support, Policies, Expectations, and Best Practices

Support from the College
The Office of Communications maintains the social media platforms that operate as the recognized voice of the college. This includes the college's accounts on Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

NOTE: The Office of Communications manages crisis communications, public relations, and media responses via social media and is the only office authorized to communicate for the college under these circumstances. The Office of Communications also manages responses to media inquiries and other messages to the campus community. The college's Emergency Management Team manages campus incident messages (i.e., TrinALERT messages) and emergency global email messages.

Departments, programs, and individuals at the college are welcome to have a social media presence that promotes and showcases their work at the college. Those wanting to create an official college social media presence should visit the [social media section]() of the Office of Communications website for information on creating an official college social media account and obtaining access to resources and guidance. The Office of Communications is available to guide you on strategy and planning.

Policies, Expectations, and Best Practices for Managing College Social Media Properties
The following guidelines apply to posting on college social media accounts on behalf of the college. The college is committed to free speech, academic freedom, diversity of thought, and mutual respect. The best practices below are not in any way intended to infringe upon or limit those forms of expression. They constitute and should be regarded as a set of thought-provoking guidelines on how to best navigate a rapidly changing field of communications.

Comply with College Policies
College policies apply to employee and student activity on social media as they would in other venues. In particular, employees must not use social media to harass, threaten, discriminate against, or disparage employees or others associated with Trinity College. Employees should not respond to job-related requests via social media (e.g., employment references) and should refer any requests for employment verification to the Office of Human Resources. Other college policies and guidelines that impact use of social media include the Major College Policies and Rights and Responsibilities sections in the *[Employee Handbook]()* (password required); the Policy Statement on Academic Freedom at section B.1 of the *[Faculty Manual]()*; and the codes of conduct outlined in the *[Student Handbook]()*.

Adhere to Social Media Comment Policy
Trinity College encourages all members of the college community, including parents and prospective students, to connect on social media. We welcome all viewpoints and expect that comments will be on topic and respectful of the rights and opinions of others.

Trinity College reserves the right to delete posts or comments on any official college social media accounts or affiliated accounts that represent the college and its athletic teams, groups, clubs, and departments that contain:

- Profanity
- Personal attacks
- Bullying/harassment
- Racist/sexist/homophobic/other slurs
- Abusive, wildly off topic, or threatening content
- Sexually explicit or obscene visuals or text
- Violations of copyright/privacy laws
- Spam or commercial solicitations

All content, comments, and posts on Trinity College's social media channels are bound by the terms of service for that social media service and should uphold the college's mission and values at all times.

Adhere to Terms of Service
Read, understand, and obey the terms of service of all social media you use. Below are the terms of service for accounts in use by the college:
- [Facebook terms of service](#)
- [Twitter terms of service](#)
- [Instagram terms of service](#)
- [YouTube terms of service](#)
- [LinkedIn terms of service](#)
- [Flickr terms of service](#)

Notify the College
Departments or units that have a social media presence or would like to start one should contact the Office of Communications to ensure that all college social media sites coordinate with other college sites and their content. Visit the social media section of the Office of Communications website for more information.

Acknowledge Who You Are
If you are representing Trinity College when posting on official college social media platforms, acknowledge this. Employees should discuss with their supervisors any questions they have as to whether and when they are authorized to respond directly to users. If the supervisor is unclear about levels of authority, please contact the Office of Communications.

Be Thoughtful

If you have any questions about whether it is appropriate to write about certain kinds of material in your role as a Trinity employee or as a student representative of the college, consult your supervisor or the Office of Communications before you post.

Have a Plan

Departments should consider their messages, audiences, and goals as well as strategy for keeping information on official college social media sites up-to-date. Consider the audiences you are hoping to reach and the kind of information that they would most like to have from the college. Recognize that the consumers of social media are accustomed to significant interaction. When you establish or manage a social media account, plan to monitor and update it frequently. Sites that are dormant should be reassessed or taken down. You should have a clear plan for keeping the site fresh and up-to-date. The Office of Communications can assist and advise you with your social media planning.

Protect the Institutional Voice

Posts on official college social media sites should protect the college's institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. If you see unfavorable opinions, negative comments or criticism about Trinity, do not try to have the post removed or send/post a written reply. Instead, forward this information to the Office of Communications, which may advise you on responding or may respond on behalf of the college.

Be Respectful

Be respectful of and do not disparage Trinity, its students, other employees, vendors, suppliers, and other institutions, being mindful that social media are widely viewable on the web. Do not vent personal complaints about supervisors, co-workers, or Trinity or engage in name-calling or other behavior that will reflect negatively on your or Trinity's reputation. Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the author and/or the college and its institutional voice.

On All Social Media, Think Twice before Posting

Social media have the ability to send your message around the world instantaneously. Before you publish the content, you need to be sure that you want everyone to read what you've written. Any comment that you would not want to make in a public forum is not one that you want to publish on a social media account. Even comments or posts intended to be private can be made public by anyone who has access to them (for example, through screenshots of material posted in public places).

Check your posts carefully

By their very nature, social media communications move quickly. The ease and speed with which you can post on these sites fly in the face of careful editing and fact gathering. Be sure of your facts. Take time to look over grammar and spelling. This is especially important if you are posting on behalf of Trinity.

Understand that Social Media Represent a Conversation, Not a Monologue
Your posts may well generate responses. That is what social media try to encourage. But those conversations should not degenerate into uncivil, heated arguments. Evaluate responses carefully with this policy in mind.

Protect Your Identity
Never publish the kind of personal information that could be used against you by identity thieves. This includes your home address and your telephone numbers.

Posting on Your Own Personal Social Media Accounts
Release of proprietary information about Trinity College or its students, faculty, staff, alumni or any other confidential information about any members of the Trinity community is strictly prohibited at all times and in all media, including personal social media.

Although the college does not seek to regulate the use of personal social media beyond the policy pertaining to confidential information, as an employee of the college or as a student enrolled at the college, you should be aware that the general public might view you as speaking as an official representative of the college. As a reminder, any content posted in any online space, regardless of the intent for privacy, has the potential to be publicly and permanently visible.

Anyone who posts to a blog or other social media site is liable for that content. Individuals have been held personally liable for commentary deemed to be proprietary, copyrighted, defamatory, libelous, or obscene (as defined by the courts).
Responsible Officer: Vice president for strategic marketing and communications (or a designee appointed by the president)

Key Offices to Contact Regarding the Policy and Its Implementation

Office of Communications: See the social media section of the office's website.

Date of Initial Policy
The effective date of this policy is December 20, 2021.