CORNERSTONE UNIVERSITY
SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

*CREATED BY CORNERSTONE UNIVERSITY
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
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INTRODUCTION

By definition, **social media** is a form of web-based communication in which people, companies, and brands can engage in conversation. As an institution, Cornerstone University recognizes the value of engaging in conversations as a means to interact on the topics relevant to our institution, students, community and constituents as well as build the reputation of our institution.

To help you build a positive and professional social media presence—whether on behalf of CU or for yourself—the following guidelines have been established using industry best practices as well as recommendations from other higher education institutions. The guidelines apply to the use social media as part of your work responsibilities and/or your personal online activities which may reasonably leave the impression that you are officially representing the university.

 You should always be cognizant of current university policies and guidelines including the university's **branding guidelines,** the Information Technology Reliable Usage Policy (located on the CU Portal), the **Cornerstone Confession** and Employee or Faculty Handbook (located on the CU Portal).

GENERAL GUIDELINES

BE THE MISSION.
You are an ambassador of CU online and offline, in your professional role as well as your personal. Just as you do in face-to-face conversations, interact with others in ways that positively reflect our mission and adhere to the CU Code of Conduct.

BE TRANSPARENT.
Who you are—name, title and affiliation with CU—should clear.

BE RESPECTFUL.
Seek first to contribute meaningful, respectful comments. Any material presented on social media networks should represent the university as accurately and honestly as possible. Always think twice before you post, especially when discussing something that is of a sensitive nature.

ADD VALUE.
You have tremendous knowledge and perspectives to share, so focus on these when joining or starting a social media conversation. Stay positive and on subject.

INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTS

For those conversations in which your sole purpose for using a social media account is to connect with current or prospective students, partners, listeners, volunteers or anyone whom you meet as a part of your affiliation or position with CU, it is recommended that this happen via an "institutional" CU account.

> **EXAMPLE:**
> If someone in Admissions wants to connect regularly with prospective students via Facebook, the recommendation is that an institutional account be created (e.g. CU Colleen) as opposed to the employee using their name/personal account (e.g. Colleen Cox).

If you are considering an institutional account, keep the following two guidelines in mind:

1. **ASK PERMISSION.** For any new social media account, make sure you seek approval of your direct supervisor as well as inform CU Marketing & Communications. Your direct supervisor will need to have your password and for any institutional account.

2. **COMMIT TO THE CONVERSATION.** Having a institutional account that is not utilized creates a negative impression on you and us. It is recommended that all institutional social media accounts have at least two full-time university employees as administrators. It is also recommended that each account posts at least once every month in order to increase engagement. Review each account annually to ensure engagement is optimal and conversations are positive/productive. Updates should be provided to marketing@cornerstone.edu by Sept. 1 of each year.

Note: Should you decide you no longer are able to be an administrator on institutional account, your supervisor will need to designate another employee to be an account administrator and remove your administrative permissions to the account.

GUIDELINES FOR POSTING TO AN INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNT

Knowing what to contribute to the conversation on social media can be hard. In addition to the general recommendations above, here are some more specific direction to help you know what content (e.g. photos, articles, events, messages, comments) should and should not be posted.

DO: Post content consistent with your work, faith, the values of CU institutional standards and Code of Conduct.

DO: Post photos. We have a great learning environment that we should proudly share. If there are people in your photos, make sure they are aware of, and agree to you taking their photo. The majority of CU students have signed a waiver acknowledging to their photo being taken for promotional/ marketing purposes.

DO: Link to CU's webpages. To ensure content is up to date, relevant and provide ways for readers to get more information, link often to our main websites. This will also help with our SEO, which makes everyone happy.

DO: Use CU logos for avatars. The use of CU logos and protected trademarks as profile pictures and avatars is allowed and encouraged for institutional social media accounts. Breaking **identity standards;** however, is not. Please contact **marketing@cornerstone.edu** for the proper files.

DO: Engage in conversation. Social media is meant to be an interactive experience, so be sure to respond to comments or questions in a helpful and positive way.

DO NOT: Tag people in photos without written consent.

DO NOT: Post photos of minors, your children, family or pet (#catsofinstagram) to a CU institutional account.

DO NOT: Post something if you are unsure if it aligns with values and mission statement of Cornerstone.

DO NOT: Comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation or any parties CU may be in litigation with.

DO NOT: Engage in arguments on social media. For more details on crisis communication, reference our communication guide posted on the Portal.

DO NOT: Post proprietary information especially as it relates to **prospective and/or current student information.**

DO NOT: Attempt to impersonate or portray another person on social media as this is an illegal practice.

Note: Management reserves the right to report or remove any post or account if it does not follow the guidelines.

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

As you engage in social media conversations, separate from any that occur under institutional accounts, we encourage you to adhere to the General Guidelines and know that you are an ambassador for CU online and offline. With this in mind, we would also encourage you to:

BE YOU.
Your social media interaction should be authentic to you. Any postings should be consistent with your work, faith and values.

- Make sure you are clear that any social media conversations taking place on your personal account(s) are not representative or otherwise expressing views of the university.

- The use of CU logos as personal avatars is not permitted.

THINK BEFORE YOU POST.
Remember you are legally liable for everything you post.

POLICY & PROCEDURE LINKS

- **CU Mission and Vision**

- Employee or Faculty Handbook (located on the CU Portal)

- **FERPA**

- CU Reliable Use Policy (located on the CU Portal)

- **Identity Standards**

- **Copyright Laws**

RESOURCES

These resources are recommended by the CU Marketing & Communications office for information on social media industry best practices, tips and tricks for social media engagement.

- **Inconosquare Blog**

- **Hootsuite Blog**

- CU Social Media Monthly Newsletter Contact **marketing@cornerstone.edu** to sign up.