

Guidelines and Best Practices for Social Media Usage

Overview

Middle Georgia State University encourages the use of social media by internal units or student organizations interested in communicating with targeted audiences. The university periodically monitors strategies and best practices for using evolving social media tools to maintain a positive image for the institution. These guidelines are designed to help units of the university that create social media sites. Middle Georgia State expects all students, faculty and staff using social media on the institution's behalf to understand and follow these guidelines.

Middle Georgia State's Institutional Social Media Sites

Middle Georgia State University Office of Marketing and Communications (MarComm) maintains the university's institutional social media accounts. These accounts are used to interact with followers and communicate various messages that promote Middle Georgia State primarily to prospective students and other external stakeholders. Other departments or offices are encouraged to submit content to promote to these external audiences.

Unit Social Media Accounts

Units may establish a unit-moderated site when the institutional accounts are not sufficient for their needs. Units should have a social media strategy that includes the type of content to be posted and the frequency of those posts. MarComm can provide basic consulting/advice to individual units that would like to establish a social media presence.

Before creating a unit-moderated site, the unit administrator should register the site by:

- completing a Social Media Account Registration Form and returning it to MarComm or;
- sending an email to marketing@mga.edu containing the names/email addresses of at least two individuals in the unit's area of responsibility who will be administrators of the account.

MarComm strongly recommends units authorize multiple account administrators to ensure continuity. MarComm does not maintain unit-moderated sites; those responsibilities lie solely with unit supervisors.

Registered sites will be added to the authorized social media site directory on the institution's website.

Student Club/Organization Accounts

Recognized student organizations (RSOs) are encouraged to notify the Office of Student Life of all organizational social media sites. This will allow Student Life to help promote the sites. Student Life recommends that an RSO advisor or other university administrative staff member be included as an administrator of all RSO social media sites.

General Usage Guidelines

1. **Maintain confidentiality.** Do not post sensitive or proprietary information about the university or personal, medical, or financial information about our students, alumni or employees. Follow applicable policies and requirements, such as the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#) and the [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act](#).
2. **Respect copyright and fair use.** (More information about Middle Georgia State's [Appropriate Use Policy for IT Resources](#) .
3. **Use official marks of Middle Georgia State** with the understanding they are trademarked. Official units may use approved secondary logos. Recognized student groups may use logos with their social media sites as long as they follow the visual identity standards posted on MarComm's website. Groups not officially recognized by the Office of Student Life or any unit not officially connected to the institution should not use Middle Georgia State's logos on their social media sites.

4. **Refer to the institution as Middle Georgia State University or Middle Georgia State where possible. MGA where constrained by characters.** Please do not use any other variation of the institution's name. Other acronyms (MGSU) are not used officially. Old acronyms, such as MGS and MGSC, should not be used.
5. **Follow all terms of service on the social media platforms utilized.**

Guidelines for use of Social Media in Academic Instruction

Middle Georgia State encourages innovative strategies such as the use of social media for instructional purposes. Faculty engaged in these strategies should be knowledgeable of and adhere to the following guidelines detailed in the Faculty Handbook.

Faculty should also consider equal access to instructional materials for students with disabilities. More information can be obtained [at this location](#) and also from the Office of Disability Services.

Faculty are responsible for their individual and student support needs related to social media. Traditional campus IT support may not resolve technical issues that arise while using non-MGA applications and services, and users may be required to deal with the service provider directly.

Use of Photos/Videos

The university does not routinely attempt to collect photo-release forms from members of the faculty, staff, or students captured in photos or video in public spaces on our campuses. The university assumes that its faculty, staff and students are excellent resources for marketing the institution and they welcome involvement in these activities. Exceptions are made for photography of minors attending the Georgia Academy and/or university-sponsored camps/programs; and for students in areas where there is an expectation of privacy, such as in residence halls. Photos/videos taken for these exceptions require the use of the appropriate written consent form linked to from [this webpage](#). Classrooms are normally considered private space, but for photography and videography approved by the Office of Marketing and Communications, verbal consent is sufficient if students/faculty are permitted to opt out without penalty.

Best Practices

1. **Understand how others interpret what you say in regards to speaking for the institution.** When posting to unit social media sites, be clear about what is, or is not, official information. Unit social media sites are not official publications of the university; however, readers may interpret them as official. When possible, quote official policy, link to documents or publications, webpages, statements or other items of official authority.
2. **Assign at least two account managers.** Units of the institution, including student clubs/organizations, are encouraged to assign at least two account managers to update and monitor their social media sites. MarComm will maintain a list of account managers for registered accounts. In the event of personnel changes, administrator rights should be transferred to a current Middle Georgia State employee.
3. **Define the goals for social media accounts.** What do you hope to accomplish? With whom are you trying to engage?
4. **Contribute regularly.** If you join social media, you should fully commit to regularly posting pertinent information and responding to comments promptly. Sites should be checked at least once each weekday and updated regularly. MGA-affiliated social media accounts that are not regularly updated – at least once a month - during the fall and spring semesters of each academic year should be deactivated.
5. **Be accurate and respectful** when posting content on social media sites on behalf of an official student group or unit of Middle Georgia State. In personal posts, you may identify yourself as a student, faculty or staff member, but be clear that you are sharing your personal views and are not speaking as a formal institutional representative.



6. **Use hashtags effectively.** Consistent hashtags like #MGA encourage familiarity. In order to establish consistency with the brand and website, #MGA is the preferred institutional hashtag. The use of other institutional hashtags, such as #MGSU, is discouraged. Units may develop hashtags for their areas.
7. **Link to helpful institutional information.** When posting information about Middle Georgia State, if possible link to pages on our website where additional information may be obtained. Long website URLs should be avoided and hyperlinked via text or shortened through the use of sites such as <http://bitly.com>.

The Office of Marketing and Communications provides basic consulting and advice to individual units that would like to establish a social media presence.

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Middle Georgia
State University

SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT REGISTRATION

FACEBOOK PAGE

Name of Page: _____

Purpose of Page: _____

Target Audience: _____

Facebook Page Address (URL): _____

Administrators of Page

Name: _____ Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Name: _____ Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Note: The Office of Marketing and Communications does not maintain unit-moderated sites -- those responsibilities lie solely within the unit. Contact us if you have questions.

TWITTER ACCOUNT

Username (ex. @MGASateU): _____

Name of Account (ex. MGA): _____

Target Audience: _____

Administrators of Account

Name: _____ Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Name: _____ Email: _____

Telephone: _____

OTHER ACCOUNT

Type of Account: (ex. Facebook, YouTube) _____

Details of the account: _____

Submitted by:

Name: _____ Email: _____

Date: _____

Please send this form to marketing@mga.edu. By submitting this form, you agree that you and the other administrators listed on this form have read, understood and will adhere to Middle Georgia State University's Social Media Guidelines.