Social Media Best Practices

FIT’s Office of Communications and External Relations developed Social Media Best Practices to provide the college community with a framework for the appropriate and acceptable content and use of social media on behalf of FIT. It is intended to guide users, offices and departments on building effective social media engagement on FIT-approved social media platforms.

Develop a Plan
Before creating social media accounts, administrators, users or departments should consider a strategy for keeping information on social media sites current. Responsibility for posting and monitoring can be shared among several staff members to reduce the burden on any one person. Consider creating a social media calendar where content is planned for the upcoming week or month. HootSuite and other online tools allow postings to be scheduled in advance.

Posting of Content and Comments
FIT’s social media presence is an extension of the college’s profile. Official FIT social media should focus on content related to the college’s programs, events, institutional activity, mission, and strategic goals. Content cannot violate any FIT policies, laws or harm the reputation of the college, its faculty, students, employees, trustees, donors, alumni and other related affiliations.

Keep in mind that should you create a social media presence on behalf of your unit, content should address topics of interest to your audience. It is recommended to “like” or “follow” other accounts that reflect FIT’s mission and do not harm the college’s reputation. Anything that you endorse or “like” may be seen as an official endorsement by the college. Use of official accounts to follow others for personal interest is not permissible.

Content and comments should protect FIT’s institutional reputation by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. Inappropriate/offensive/misleading language, pictures, images or postings that could be considered slanderous, unlawful or maligns an individual or group are prohibited. Please refer to FIT’s policies, e.g., Harassment and Student Code of Conduct, for additional information. Any social media activity by a student or employee that could be considered harassment or discriminatory, should be reported immediately to any FIT vice president, dean, departmental chair/director, the General Counsel or the Affirmative Action /Title IX Officer, respectively.

Understand Permanence
Keep in mind that postings may be public for an indefinite period of time, in most cases, permanent if edited or deleted. Search engines can locate posts years after they are created, and comments can be forwarded and copied.

Strive for Accuracy
Confirm, review, and proofread content before posting. Acknowledge mistakes and correct them promptly. This is especially important when posting on behalf of the college.

Remember Your Audience
While a department may primarily serve a specific audience, such as current students, a presence on social media is publicly available to all, including prospective students, donors, alumni, and colleagues at other institutions. Post content and links that are relevant to your intended audience but also consider your unintended audience.

Post Frequently
In general, increasing engagement is key; the more you post and the frequency with which your content gets shared or liked by others the more followers you gain, the more people you reach, the more opportunity there is to connect people. Update social media accounts regularly. For example, post a minimum of one update a week on Facebook and one update a day on Twitter. Unmaintained accounts reflect poorly on FIT and its departments, and the college may request that accounts be deleted if they are inactive.

Practice Civility
Content and comments should be civil, factual and respectful of others. Respond professionally and courteously to comments, even when the comment is volatile. Should disputes arise, guide the writer and your readers to the appropriate college office. Before deleting comments that may appear to be slanderous or profane, consult with the Communications and External Relations, particularly if the writer seems hostile or in need of assistance.
Monitor and Respond
Participating in social media on behalf of the college is not only about posting information. Participating is also about reading and being open to feedback from fans, followers, and other constituents and responding to their comments in a timely fashion. Monitor your social media site daily and answer questions within a reasonable time.

Due to the immediacy of the medium, potential issues may arise on social media before the college is made aware of them. Contact Communications and External Relations if a recurring topic requires an official college response.