

# MOUNT VERNON NAZARENE UNIVERSITY

## *Social Media Policy*

### *Purpose*

This policy serves as pro-active response to the preponderance of social media tools that individuals use professionally and personally. Because, in many instances, the lines between one's personal voice and the institution's have become blurred, Mount Vernon Nazarene University has crafted the following policy to clarify how best to utilize and protect personal and professional reputations when engaging in social media.

### *Commitment to Protecting Privacy*

Mount Vernon Nazarene University is committed to protecting the information it holds on individuals from unscrupulous uses in the general public. The University expects its employees and students to follow the same online code of conduct outlined in their respective handbooks that they would use in face-to-face interaction. The same laws, professional expectations, and guidelines for interacting with students, parents, alumni, donors, media, and other university constituents apply online as in face-to-face interaction. Employees may be liable for anything they post to social media sites that denigrates, defames, or otherwise causes the institution harm.

The social media policy operates under the University's broad privacy of constituent information policy <https://mvnu.edu/uploads/About/Policies/PrivacyofConstituentInformationPolicy.pdf>

### *Definition*

**Social media** are defined as any communication through popular media outlets which include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Pinterest, and Instagram.

### *Guidelines*

**General Provisions.** The following broad protocols are in effect for all social media sites, including personal ones.

- **Protect confidential and proprietary information.** Individuals should not post confidential or proprietary information about Mount Vernon Nazarene University, or its students, employees, and alumni. Employees must still follow the applicable federal requirements such as FERPA and HIPAA, as well as NAIA regulations. Employees and students should adhere to all applicable University privacy and confidentiality policies, as identified above. Persons who share confidential information do so at the risk of disciplinary action or termination. When in doubt, please consult the immediate supervisor or the Coordinator of Communications and Public Relations.
- **Be Mindful:** Members of the MVNU community are encouraged to consider the essential beliefs, habits and practices of the Church of the Nazarene and exhibit professionalism in all interactions with one another and the public on social media.
- **Respect copyright and fair use.** When posting, individuals should be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the University. For guidance, consult the copyright policy posted on the library's website. Any questions regarding fair use or copyrighted material can be directed to the Instruction/Catalog Librarian.
- **Use MVNU logos only with prior consent.** Individuals can use the MVNU logo or any other University images or iconography on personal social media sites only with prior consent. The University's name cannot be used to promote any product, cause, political party or candidate;

this prevents the appearance that the person speaks for or represents the University officially. Individuals who need to use an MVNU logo should contact the Director of Creative Services and Marketing Production or an appointed designee. To use an MVNU logo, the individual must have the social media site approved by the Director of Web Development, in consultation with the Coordinator of Communications and Public Relations. Please consult the University's copyright and trademark policy (<http://www.mvnu.edu/policies>).

- **Use MVNU logos, seal or trademarks only in their approved forms.** Logos, seals, fonts or any other official MVNU insignia cannot be modified, added to or subtracted from. Please see the previous point for information on logo usage. Should questions persist, please contact the Director of Creative Services and Marketing Production or the Brand Toolkit on the University portal (<http://portal.mvnu.edu>).
- **Respect University time and property.** Computer facilities and equipment at the University are provided for instructional and administrative use to help the University more effectively fulfill its mission to provide a Christian liberal arts education. Please consult the University's technology infrastructure policy (<http://mvnu.edu/policies>) and refer to the computer use policy (<http://mvnu.edu/policies/computeruse.pdf>) for further information.
- **Terms of service.** Individuals are expected to comply with the terms of service of any social media platform used.

**Institutional Social Media Provisions.** The following broad policies are in effect when individuals post on behalf of an official University office, as well as are the general and best practice guidelines.

- **Have a plan.** Departments should consider the messages, audiences, and goals, as well as a strategy for keeping information on social media sites up-to-date. The University's Coordinator of Communications and Public Relations can assist and advise with social media planning from the naming of the social media account, hosting possibilities, overall look and feel, etc.
- **Notify the University.** Any University office that has a social media page or would like to start one should contact the University's Marketing Department to ensure all institutional social media efforts are coordinated and consistent. All institutional pages must have an appointed employee who is identified as being responsible for content and updates. Ideally, this should be the department chair or his/her appointee.
- **Link back to the University.** Whenever possible, link back to the University's website. Ideally, posts should be brief, redirecting a visitor to content that resides within the MVNU web environment. Always make sure the links are correct.
- **Protect the institutional voice.** Posts on social media sites should protect the University's institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. Each individual MVNU entity should regard its social media site as representing the University as a whole. Please consider this when naming pages or accounts, selecting a profile picture or icon, and selecting content to post — names, profile images, and posts should all be clearly linked to the particular department or, in some cases, to the institution's home page.

Individuals should not share information that is confidential and proprietary to the University. This includes information about trademarks, upcoming plans, budgetary information, finances, university strategy, and any other information that has not been publicly released by the University. If there are any questions on these items please contact the direct supervisor.

**Best Practices Provisions.** If individuals are posting on behalf of an official University office or department these guidelines may be helpful, although they apply to anyone posting in any capacity.

- **Think twice before posting.** The line between private and public content has been severely blurred through social media. A post can be found by search engines often years after its creation, and comments can be forwarded or copied. Posts reflect both on the individual and the

University. If individuals are unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, ask the immediate supervisor for input or contact the Coordinator of Communications and Public Relations.

- **Be accurate.** The facts should be correct before posting on any social media outlet, and the content reviewed for grammatical and spelling errors. This is especially important if posting on behalf of the University in any capacity.
- **Be respectful.** Writers should understand that content may encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. The responses should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on others and on the University.
- **Remember your audiences.** Posts on social media outlets may be seen by multiple audiences, including prospective students, current students, pastors and church leaders, current employers, colleagues, and peers. These potential audiences should be carefully considered before publishing to ensure these audiences are not alienated, harmed, or provoked.
- **Photography.** Photographs posted on social media sites can easily be appropriated by visitors. If individuals need to use a photo taken by official University personnel, they should seek permission from the Marketing Department. Users should indicate that photos or graphics are being used courtesy of the Marketing Department, and when possible a watermark should be added, and photos posted at 72 dpi (small enough to prevent outside sources from appropriating them for print). If individuals have any questions about a photo, its source, ownership or how to post, they should contact the University's Marketing Department.

### Questions

The following individuals can be contacted for questions on the social media policy as outlined here.

For	Contact
Any question	Marketing Department supervisors
Permissible uses and good practices	Members of the Marketing Department
Reporting misuse of social media	Coordinator of Communications and Public Relations

\*The following outlines the approval, review, and revision history of the social media policy.

Version	Approval Date of Version	Version Type
1.0	Web Advisory Council, June 2, 2010	Initial release
1.1	Web Advisory Council, June 14, 2010	Minor revision
1.2	Institutional Effectiveness Office, August 1, 2012	Update related to re-organization of University policies, re-formatted for consistency across policy documents, and changes in position titles within the University