

Memo To: All UH-Downtown/PS Holders

UH-Downtown/PS 09.B.04

From: William Flores, President

Issue No. 1

Effective date: 03/09/2015

Subject: Social Media Policy

Page of 1 of 3

1. PURPOSE

The University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) encourages the use of social media by faculty, staff and students to connect with students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni, fans, colleagues and the general UHD community. This policy statement defines the policy and procedures for the use of social media to assure that university sponsored social media is both legal and in compliance with university policies.

This policy statement applies to the social media communication channels and to faculty, staff, and students who represent the University of Houston-Downtown.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Social Media: Social media is any on line networking service where users interact using video, audio, text or multimedia in a social environment or public setting. Examples include but are not limited to online posts, media messaging service (MMS), Twitter[®], Facebook[®], Linked-In[®], YouTube[®] and all other social networks.

3. POLICY

- 3.1 All UHD social media sites must adhere to university policies including [PS 08.A.01, Review of Information Technology Resources Requests](#), [PS 08.A.04, Computer Access, Security and Use](#), and [PS 08.A.06, Publications on the World Wide Web](#).
- 3.2 UHD reserves the right to monitor all posts to a UHD sponsored site. UHD is committed to fostering a learning environment that allows for freedoms of speech and expression in accordance with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. However, UHD will not tolerate any activity or posting that loses First Amendment protection such as any unlawful, defamatory, or obscene activity or posting. UHD reserves the right to remove any such posting without notice. The Office of General Counsel will be consulted prior to removing any postings so that they may analyze the issue from a First Amendment perspective.
- 3.3 Official UHD Social media sites should be marked “official” in some way, where appropriate (for example, in a Twitter bio or in the Facebook “about” section) and follow the guidelines outlined in the Associated Press Stylebook to ensure consistency throughout UHD electronic materials.
- 3.4 Official UHD social media properties should provide contact names and e-mail addresses, or correct web site URLs that point back to the university’s web properties.

- 3.5 Employees may use UHD's computing systems to access their personal social media sites on a limited basis. However, incidental use of UHD's computing systems for personal social media accounts must not interfere with assigned job duties and responsibilities or be in violation of existing UHD policies, or applicable state or federal law.
- 3.6 Representation of a student or employee's personal opinions as being endorsed by UHD, the University of Houston System or its components is strictly prohibited.
- 3.7 All UHD social media sites must protect confidential information including but not limited to student education records as defined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA),
- 3.8 Photographs taken of persons with the intent to publish that photo on a social media site must have a signed [Photo Release Form](#) from the subject before the photo is posted.
- 3.9 Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination for employees; or suspension or expulsion in the case of a student. Additionally, individuals may be subject to loss of access privileges and civil and/or criminal penalties/prosecution.

4. PROCEDURES

- 4.1 In accordance with [PS 03.A.22, Access to Student Academic Records/Information](#) and [PS 02.A.19, Access to and Maintenance of Personnel Files](#), no confidential information will be posted to any social networking site.
- 4.2 Before hosting, sponsoring or posting to a university related social media site, UHD faculty, staff and students should review [PS 08.A.04, Computer Access, Security, and Use Policy](#).
- 4.3 Employees and students should be aware of their association with UHD in online social networks. Personal profile and content should be consistent in the manner in which they wish to present themselves to colleagues, students, parents, alumni and others.

5. EXHIBITS

There are no exhibits associated with this policy.

6. REVIEW PROCESS

Responsible Party: (Reviewer): Vice President for Advancement and External Relations

Review: Every three years on or before July 1st.

Signed original on file in the Office of Human Resources.

7. POLICY HISTORY

This is the first issue of the policy.

8. REFERENCES

[PS 02.A.19](#)

[PS 03.A.22](#)

[PS 08.A.01](#)

[PS 08.A.04](#)

[PS 08.A.06](#)

[Photo Release Form](#)