

# Evangel University Social Media Policy – University-Affiliated Sites

Last updated: August 2023

Evangel University supports the use of social media to engage prospective students, current students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, donors and the community. The university recognizes the opportunity that social media provides, as well as the potential hazards. In order to effectively leverage social media, any faculty, staff, or student who has been authorized to create an official Evangel social media site should abide by the following policies.

The Marketing & Communications Department has oversight of the Evangel University social media policy. Any questions about this policy should be directed to a member of the Marketing team.

## ***Steps to creating an E.U. social media site:***

### **1. Choose an administrator**

When a department decides to develop a social media site to represent the university, an administrator should be chosen. It is best to not have a student as administrator (unless the page is for a student-run organization), however you may have a student work with you to update the site. A staff or faculty member should keep a record of log-in and password information and provide a copy to at least one other person in their office. The administrator is responsible for ensuring that the site remains compliant with the university's social media Policy, FERPA, and the terms and conditions of the social media site chosen. Please send a copy of the url for your site and the name of your administrator to the Marketing Department.

### **2. Obtain approved logos and images for the avatar.**

If you have been authorized by your supervisor to create an official Evangel social media site or a video for posting in locations such as YouTube, please contact the Marketing Department for an approved logo and other images and to ensure coordination with other Evangel sites and content. Logos that have not been approved by the Marketing Department should not be used. This is critical for promoting and maintaining Evangel's brand identity.

### **3. Create a timeline for evaluation**

Social media is not just an outlet to "push out" information (that is what the website does). Social media provides an outlet to engage your audience and create a conversation. Create a timeline to ensure that information is updated, new content is regularly added, and that messages posted by users are responded to. This timeline should include regular check points to evaluate the effectiveness of your social media strategy. A social media site must never be created and then ignored.

### **4. An important note about Facebook**

Be sure to set up your Facebook profile as a Page, rather than a Profile or a Group. Facebook profiles are only for individual users, and groups provide very few options for successful viral marketing. Facebook also offers great support for page administrators.

***Policy for all university-affiliated social media sites:***

1. Carefully read these guidelines and other EU policies.
2. **Remember that you are posting as a representative of Evangel University; therefore your views will be perceived as the views of the university. Keep this in mind as you choose content. Be sure that your social media reflects the values and mission of the university.**
3. Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news and if you make a mistake then correct it quickly. Never post any information that has not been confirmed.
4. Keep in mind that there is no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. Screenshots can be taken and forwarded. If you have any questions about whether it is appropriate to write about certain kinds of material in your role as an Evangel employee, ask your supervisor before you post. Remember that FERPA applies to social media.
5. Politics, whether related to candidates or issues, has no place on your Evangel social media site. This includes changes to your photo or avatar in relation to political issues. You may offend a prospective student or donor and put the university's tax---exempt status at risk. Even the appearance of loyalty to a particular political candidate or party can create issues for the university. Reserve politics for your personal social media accounts. Examples of politics beyond individual political candidate endorsements include the issues of critical race theory curriculum, gender and sexual identity, etc.
6. If someone from the media or press contacts faculty, staff, or students about posts made in online forums that relate to Evangel in any way, faculty/staff/students should not speak to the media on Evangel's behalf without first contacting their manager/leadership and Evangel's Senior Director of Marketing & Communications, before responding. All media or press inquiries should be directed to Evangel's Senior Director of Marketing & Communications.
7. No individual department should present its social media site, page, or posting as representing Evangel as a whole. Consider this when selecting content to post on behalf of a department. Posts should all be clearly linked to a particular department or unit rather than to Evangel as a whole.

**Managing Negative Comments**

As a facilitator of social media, be aware that a vibrant social media community will eventually involve some negative posting. It is tempting to immediately remove negative content, but a well--handled negative post can actually serve to improve your image. Often, other users on your site will come to your defense and the positive comments will far outweigh the negative. Social media is about real people having real conversations, not presenting a manufactured image. Here are some guidelines for managing negative content.

1. Review your page daily so you can manage negative situations that may arise.
2. Answer in a timely manner. Often you can provide corrected information, offer to assist the poster with their problem, or otherwise manage the situation in a positive way. Determine if there is something you can do. (Use discretion with each situation. Sometimes this is best done publicly, while other times you may wish to contact the person through a private message.)
3. Always take the high road and handle yourself professionally. You are representing the character and values of Evangel University.
4. If the poster has used profanity or otherwise inappropriate language or content, or attacked an individual or group, you may immediately delete the comments and block the user from your page (this option is possible through most social media sites).
5. Learn to recognize trolls – those who are not really a part of your community who will post just to stir things up. You can usually confirm you have a troll by clicking on their profile to look at their record of posting. Trolls can be immediately blocked by most social media sites. Never engage a troll.
6. Contact the Marketing Department for advice if you are unsure how to handle a specific situation.

### **Linking to the Evangel University website**

The Evangel University website supports the use of social media for campus departments and is eager to link to well--managed social media sites. Social media integration is a key element in social proof, which – in terms of digital marketing – refers to consumers being more confident about your message if they see that real people (not PR and marketing professionals) support it. This is why an effective social media strategy is so important to Evangel’s future in the digital information age.

The quality of your site is paramount to whether or not social proof becomes negative or positive. For this reason, the Evangel University website will only link to social media sites that are in compliance with the Evangel University social media policy.

# Evangel University Social Media Policy – EU Employees

Last updated: August 2023

Evangel University supports the use of social media by its employees as a robust networking and communication tool and recognizes that faculty and staff may have personal social media accounts whereby they express their **personal views**. It is acknowledged that faculty and staff may choose to use their personal social media accounts in furtherance of the university's mission, academic endeavors, and student recruitment, and this policy is not intended to hinder that option.

The Marketing & Communications Department has oversight of the Evangel University social media policy. Any questions about this policy should be directed to a member of the Marketing team.

In order to maintain the **reputation and brand identity of the university**, EU employees are expected to adhere to the following guidelines regarding their personal use of social media platforms:

1. Think first, post second. The things that can subject you to scrutiny and questions in real life can do the same in the digital world. Keep in mind that there is no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. Screenshots can be taken and forwarded.
2. Official communications of Evangel University will always be communicated through university – sponsored social media accounts and not through personal accounts of any member of the university community.
3. Any faculty or staff employee who identifies an affiliation with the university on his or her personal social media account and postings should make clear that their views are their own, and that he or she is not speaking for or in the name of the university. When expressing a personal opinion, acknowledge this, especially if your statement could be reasonably interpreted by the message receiver that you are speaking on behalf of the university. An example disclaimer is “The views expressed on this page/profile/post are my personal opinions unless otherwise noted and are not those of Evangel University.”
4. Each individual user of personal social media accounts is responsible for his or her actions online.
5. Employees are prohibited from using the Evangel University name or image to endorse an opinion, product, cause, business, or political candidate or otherwise serving as an official spokesperson for the university.
6. Because use of personal social media accounts is not in furtherance of an employee's official job responsibilities unless explicitly stated, Evangel University will not be liable for and will not indemnify an employee for any liability that results from the employee's use of personal social media accounts.

7. Employees must not reveal confidential or proprietary information about Evangel University's students, employees, or alumni. Employees must adhere to all applicable university, federal, and NCAA privacy and confidentiality policies and the university's code of conduct for faculty and staff. All employees of Evangel University are subject to FERPA and other laws mandating the nondisclosure of personal information.