**BE GREAT AT SOCIAL MEDIA**

**Post with purpose**. Brainstorm who your audience is and target your message. Every time you post something, bring the thought full circle. Do not post a link / story without any context. Always give some sort of introduction, however brief, to why you are sharing this with your audience. At the same time, keep in mind that social media channels are always external facing, so even when you have posts that are geared to an internal audience, the subject should have relatively broad appeal. If the message is on topic and on brand, it will be relevant.

**Choose your outlet wisely**. Different social media sites work better for different audiences. To connect with undergraduate students, opt for Instagram. If you are reaching out to alumni or parents, then Facebook or LinkedIn will be stronger. Remember, you don’t have to post all of the content to all of the outlets. If your audience doesn’t use one of these sites, do not feel that you need to open an account there. Just post strong content to the sites that work for your content.

**Be a thought leader**. Social media channels are the home for the most current news. Taking a more active approach to our social media presence means joining in the conversations that are currently trending to establish Savannah State University as a thought leader.

**Make it fun**. On social media we can break from more formal writing conventions. People come to social sites to be social. They don’t want to be talked at but talked to. Stay within the tone and style of the brand. For guidance on voice and style, see the brand toolkit.

**Join the club**. Lots of social trends have developed that are globally popular like Throwback Thursday (#TBT). Join in. Show followers that we’re there and in-the-know. Do a bit of research and see what relevant and existing topics you can add to.

**Make people feel good**. When people mention, follow, and engage with Savannah State directly on social media, reciprocate! Show users we’re paying attention. A simple thanks for a like or mention or a return of a follow makes users feel good about engaging. They’ll be more likely to do it again. We can’t reciprocate every little thing. Use your best judgment to stay engaged with followers.

**Keep track**. Most social media sites have analytics tools that you can use to see which posts are performing well. Take advantage of these tools to see what people like on Savannah State’s social media channels. Hone in on what's working, what isn’t, and why. If something isn’t working, change it.

**Let people know**. Take every opportunity to encourage your stakeholders to engage on social media. People can’t use our hashtags or be part of our social media campaigns if they don’t know they exist. Publicize our social media channels through our other media channels (website, radio station, print materials, etc.). And share the social media stream page with people who don’t have social media accounts so they can engage as well.

<http://www.savannahstate.edu/social-media/>

**Share strategically**. Savannah State University has a lot of associated social media accounts that aren’t all managed by one person. It’s important that Savannah State’s social media managers keep each other in the loop. Share interesting ideas, insights and information. If you know about something (event, game, accomplishment) but it really belongs in a “fellow” SSU’s feed, call or email to let that person know. They may have it slated to go at a specific time. Posting content that is only loosely related to your audience causes confusion for the end users and can disrupt another department’s editorial calendar.

Be sure to follow all of the SSU social media accounts that you don’t manage and share/retweet compelling content that your counterparts are posting. If you see something relevant to your audience, you can “like”, comment or share. **Please share (repost) rather than rewrite the post.** This directs users back to the original content and makes all the analytics numbers stronger for everyone. It also keeps the message consistent.

(**NOTE**: **Be careful that you are sharing / liking as the proper persona**. It is easy to re-post as the same page that posted it initially, rather than the account you intended. If you need more information on this aspect, ask Marketing & Communications)

**Link it up**. Our social media, websites, and other marketing materials should reinforce each other. When you feature content on social media make sure you point followers back to that original content with links.

CONTENT:

Savannah State University – Overall institutional news, kudos, press releases

Savannah State Admissions – Content directly related to potential students, recruitment, scholarship opportunities

Savannah State Athletics – Sports-related topics, games, scores

Other known accounts are listed in the directory. Accounts that have not posted for six months will be removed from this page:

<http://www.savannahstate.edu/social-media/directory.shtml>

NETWORK GUIDE:

**Twitter**: Short and snappy is the name of the game. With only 140 characters at your disposal, being concise and clever is an art. Although its usership is less than Facebook, its extremely public nature allows people to see posts without being an active user. Hashtags were popularized by Twitter and are a great tool for this site. Aim for 3-5 posts per day, if the information is relevant, but be sure you are not just repeating yourself.

**Facebook**: The social media giant offers a great space to give a little more than you would on other social accounts. There is no word limit, but moderation is still key. Most people have a Facebook account—even grandma. Facebook is a good space to reach users who may not have ventured into other social platforms yet (i.e., parents and alumni). Don’t use hashtags on Facebook. Shoot for a least three Facebook posts a day – and posts with photos get several times the number of “likes” than text-only posts.

**Instagram**: It’s all about creativity. On Instagram, the user feels like a professional photographer. It’s very popular with younger generations. Instagram is a great place to engage with students, both current and prospective. Show off this beautiful campus and our events. Hashtags are commonly used on Instagram. Use them freely but don’t over do it—stick to around two-three per post. Links won’t work in Instagram posts so just focus on posting great content that will make users eager explore learning more about SSU on their own.

IMAGES:

**Use bold, rich images** that illustrate the story. When connecting to a link in a post, please verify the image is consistent with the story before posting. If you have to find an image, please be sure you have permission to use it.

**EDITORIAL CALENDAR**:

Take an hour with your staff and brainstorm some of the frequent questions your department gets. What do people always want to know? And what are they missing because they didn’t know to ask? Put yourself in the audience’s shoes. Ask yourself, “Is this what I would need to know?” Use these ideas to create a calendar for your posts.

*Ex: Monday is focused on scholarships and grants. Tuesdays is about study tips. Wednesdays is campus life.* This does not have to become a hard and fast rule but it will make it easier to figure out how and when to post your information. And you can still do those occasional “immediate” posts when something is happening in real time.

**Space out your posts**. Don’t flood your timeline. An excellent, free tool is HootSuite, which allows you to pre-write and schedule posts on several social media outlets. It also allows you to track multiple feeds on one screen and even create feeds to track hashtag use. You can use it directly at <http://hootsuite.com> and does not require any IT installation.

**QUESTIONS:**

Reach out to Marketing & Communications. We’re good at this stuff and we’re here to help you get your story out.

[marketingandcommunications@savannahstate.edu](mailto:marketingandcommunications@savannahstate.edu)

912-358-3059

**HASHTAGS**:

Although less popular on Facebook, they do work. The attached guide gives some of the hashtag campaigns that are planned. **If you have an event or campaign that needs a hashtag, please ask the office of Marketing & Communications to help set one up**. Standard ones include #seriouslyimpressive, #SavannahState and #HailSSU (athletics).

Week(end) of Welcome

#SSUWoW

Martin Luther King, Jr. Observances

#SSUMLK

Day at the Capitol

#SSUDay

Black Heritage Festival

#SavBHF

Annual Southern Regional Press Institute

#SSUSRPI

St Pat’s Parade  
#SSUStPats

Campus Visit Day(s)

#VisitSSU

Dress for Success Wednesday

#SSUDress

NOAA Coast Camp

#SSUNOAA

Honors Convocation

#HonorsSSU

All December 2018 Commencement-Related Activities

#SavState18

All May 2019 Commencement-Related Activities

#SavState19

Homecoming

#SSUHomecoming

Founders Day

#SSUFounders

Rock n Roll Marathon

#RNRSSU

#RnRSav

While hashtags can be great in terms of discovering and organizing information, don’t overuse them. It’s rare to use more than one or two in any given update. When people see too many hashtags, it looks like spam.

Invite people to use these hashtags on any of their social media outlets.

Ex: Share your stories with #SavState19

Ex: Follow the event live using #SSUHomecoming

**OFFICIAL POLICY FROM USG**

Because of its very nature, there are risks involved. As good stewards of the state’s resources, in all of its forms, we are responsible for the way in which we present information and interact with faculty, students, staff and the greater community. What affects the reputation of the System and its institutions, affects the reputation of all of us.

**First steps**

* **The reason for social media:** Are you trying to communicate a campaign, generally promote your department, or communicate with constituents? How will you social media presence be different than other communications with your audience?
* **Define your goals.** Before jumping into social media for your department, program or office, spend some time determining what you want to accomplish. Understanding this will help you choose the appropriate tools, create relevant content and understand the best way to reach your target audience.
* For a group to be recognized by SSU as an official social media account, the group administrators must **seek approval** from Marketing and Communications in writing.
* **Let the SSU Marketing and Communications know of any new efforts.** This is so information can be updated, but also so they can best support you.
* If you already have an account, **inform** the SSU Marketing and Communications of your social media channels. An assessment of the channel will be done to decide its continuance.

**Once an account is approved**

* **Name your account and notify the SSU Marketing and Communications.** Create a profile name that clearly and concisely identifies **your program** and its SSU affiliation. Do not identify yourself simply as “SSU” or "Savannah State" as that implies you are speaking for the entire organization.
* **Identify the persons** who will have primary responsibility for populating, maintaining and monitoring your site. **Ensure they have the time and enthusiasm** to devote to this project.
* **Send a list** (at least two are required) of the administrators to SSU Marketing and Communications.
* All social media accounts recognized by the System **must have a staff member as administrator** at all times.
* Social media pages shall **clearly indicate they are maintained by the department** and shall have department contact information prominently displayed.
* A member of the **SSU Marketing and Communications team will be included as an administrator** on any social networking site that is moderated and maintained as an official presence of the SSU. This ensures that these networks are managed when staff members leave. And allows us to communicate efficiently during an emergency and it allows us to track usage and quickly remove content that violates these guidelines or any applicable laws. Site administrators are still responsible for their social media networks and the SSU Marketing and Communications typically serves as a monitor.
* **The administrators reserve the right to restrict or remove any content** that is deemed in violation of these social media guidelines or any applicable laws.
* **Have a backup system.** Make sure you have a social media back up system in place. If the person who generally handles social media is out of the office, someone else on the team should have log in access and be trained on how to monitor and update the pages.
* **Post a disclaimer,** such as: “Users are fully responsible for any content they load on any of XXXX's social media sites. Comments posted here do not represent the opinions of the SSU.”
* **Familiarize yourself with copyright and fair use laws.** They also apply to social media.

**For the administrators/employees**

* **Keep personal and professional accounts separate.**
* If you identify yourself as an employee, faculty, or staff member, please clearly state that the content shared are **your personal views and opinions and do not represent the official views of the SSU.**
* **Do not use any SSU logos, marks or images on your personal online accounts.** Do not use SSU's name to promote or endorse any product, cause, political party or political candidate
* **Reporting violations:** Any employee becoming aware of or having knowledge of a posting or of any website or web page in violation of the provision of these guidelines shall notify his or her supervisor immediately for follow-up action.
* **Problems or concerns regarding the use of a social media site or page should be reported immediately** to the SSU Marketing and Communications**.**
* You are responsible for what you post on your own site and on the sites of others. **Be sure that what you post will not expose USG or you to legal liability.**
* **Protect important information.** This includes passwords, but also anything that could conflict with HIPPA, FERPA, NCAA or other regulations.

**Being social**

* **Post regularly and consistently.** Posting too much can cause your audience to leave the community. So can posting too little.
* **Be accurate.** Be sure that **content is relevant, credible and consistent** with your professional role and with the SSU's standards.
* Make sure **all of the details and facts are accurate and grammatically correct** before posting or responding to inquiries. It's better to **verify information** with a source first than to have to post a correction or retraction later.
* **Cite and link to sources whenever possible**.
* **If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly.** Deleting inaccurate data is discouraged on social media because of the amount of emphasis put on transparency, so it is important to get things right on the first post.
* **Regularly monitor** official social media sites. **Remove** posts and/or comments that are inappropriate, offensive in nature, violates policies or that create a threatening environment.
* **Be prepared to accept and respond to comments.** Social media is, by design, a conversation and not a one-way broadcast.
* **Have a comment response plan.** Both positive and negative comments require a response from the organization in a timely manner. Who will respond to these comments? What is your unit's acceptable time frame?
* **Engage** in the conversation. **Respond** to questions or inquiries in a timely manner.
* **Be a valued member of the social media community.** If you join a social network, make sure you are contributing valuable insights and posting quality content regularly.
* **Be responsible and judicious.** Please keep in mind that comments may be made that aren't favorable or may not coincide with our own personal views. Take the high ground and be civil in your postings and responses.
* **Stay away** from statements involving sensitive language, including but not limited to obscene language, profanity or ethnic slurs.
* **Do not engage** in a back and forth argument. We allow freedom of speech as long as it does not violate any guidelines, laws, etc.
* **Correct misinformation.** If a user posts a false accusation or an inaccurate statement, don't delete it. Instead, respond – in a respectful and friendly manner – with the accurate information. If a user posts, an ignorant and/or offensive remark, you can use the opportunity to help educate the person without being condescending, pointing him or her to reliable resources and correcting false impressions.

**What to leave to SSU Marketing and Communications**

* **In a crisis situation** **refrain from posting on social media accounts.** Refer all social media activity around the crisis to the SSU Marketing and Communications.
* **Refer all news media inquires** to the SSU Marketing and Communications.
* The SSU Marketing and Communications is responsible for posting and publishing online official information on behalf of the <Institution name>.
* The **SSU Marketing and Communications may immediately remove your page and its content** if any policies are violated. Other disciplinary action may follow if the action violates any policy of SSU or USG.

**What not to do**

* In particular, department personnel are **prohibited from the following**:
  + speech containing obscene or sexually explicit language, images, or acts and statements or other forms of speech that ridicule, malign, disparage, or otherwise express bias against any race, any religion, or any protected classes of individuals.
  + speech involving themselves or other department personnel reflecting behavior that would reasonably be considered reckless or irresponsible.
* **Do not divulge information gained by reason of their authority**; make any statements, speeches, appearances, and endorsements; or publish materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of this department without express authorization.
* To not be **subject to civil litigation**, do not:
  + publish or post false information that harms the reputation of another person, group, or organization (defamation);
  + publish or post private facts and personal information about someone without their permission that has not been previously revealed to the public, is not of legitimate public concern, and would be offensive to a reasonable person;
  + use someone else's name, likeness, or other personal attributes without that person's permission for an exploitative purpose; or
  + publish the creative work of another, trademarks, or certain confidential business information without the permission of the owner.
* Generally speaking, do not post images without obtaining **prior permission from individuals whose images are identifiable.**
* **Do not use social media pages to post detailed policy or procedure information,** for example, program admission criteria. Rather, users should be directed to the official SSU publications for such information.
* **Do not include sensitive personal information in a post** unless the subject of the information has given express consent for the disclosure of that information.

**Branding/logo usage**

* **Follow branding guidelines** posted online: https://www.savannahstate.edu/marketing-communications/brand.shtml
* **The name or logo should not be used to promote or endorse** any activity, event, product, cause, political party or political candidate.
* The SSU logo **should not be altered** in any manner.
* The SSU logo is trademarked. The SSU Marketing and Communications **must approve use of the System logo and branding.**

**Assessing your social media accounts**

* **Measure results.** Evaluate post activity and interaction with a community, make use of analytics and tracking tools, and refine your strategy.
* **Adjust** your strategy in response to who is viewing your site and how they are doing so.
* If you realize that social media is not meeting your needs or the needs of your audience or public, it is best to **close the account rather than leave it inactive.**