

# Social Media Policy

It shall be the policy of Bevill State Community College to use social media to educate, inform, and collaborate with its students, staff, faculty, stakeholders, and members of the communities it serves. Content is guided by the Public Relations Department.

Bevill State expects its employees and students to be honest, respectful, and transparent in their social media communication as they would be in person and to respect privacy, confidentiality, and copyright laws. Posted content on the college's social media sites should always be accurate, concise, student-oriented, sensitive to diverse audiences, and respectful of the college and its constituents.

Individuals engaging in and communicating through official Bevill State social media outlets must agree to respect the terms of the College's social media policy and must understand that Bevill State officials have the right to remove any content that is deemed offensive, profane, inappropriate, of a threatening nature, or can be construed as a defamation of character. Bevill State reserves the right to block any individual who violates these guidelines. Bevill State is not responsible for posts or comments made by visitors using its social media outlets. Abusive content posted by visitors to Bevill State's social media outlets should be reported to the Public Relations Office immediately. Concerns about any content posted on any official social media outlet of the College should also be reported to the Public Relations Office.

Because technology and terms associated with social media change and evolve continuously, this policy may be updated with additional guidelines related to the management and implantation of the College's social media efforts as needed. Such changes will be published as quickly as possible.

## Employee Guidance for Institutional Social Media

Bevill State Community College employees should be mindful that all postings through the College's social media are public and are expected to follow acceptable behavior and comply with Alabama law, Alabama Community College System policies, and policies outlined in the Bevill State Employee Handbook.

The Bevill State Community College Public Relations Department is the primary administrator for the College's official website and social media outlets. Those who wish to contribute information, make suggestions for content, or request administration roles for the College's social media, should contact the Director of Advancement Public Relations via email.

Divisions/Departments /Program/College-Approved Clubs of Bevill State wishing to create a social media account for the benefit of BSCC must make a request to the Public Relations Department. Consideration should be given to whether information can be effectively communicated via social media, the intended (target) audience, and what is being communicated. The Public Relations Department will make decisions regarding social media sites, including authorization of sites; evaluating requests for usage; and, maintaining a list of social media accounts, domains, active account logins, and passwords. Club sites will be administered by the faculty or staff advisor, not student members or officers.

### **REQUIRED DISCLAIMER**

All BSCC department and student social networking platforms must include or link to the following disclaimer:

This [TYPE OF SOCIAL MEDIA] account and/or page is a resource of an organization affiliated with Bevill State Community College. Content on this page may not necessarily reflect the opinions of the College or its leadership. In addition, any and all content posted by "fans" is the property and responsibility of the fans, not BSCC, and the College accepts no liability or responsibility for any fan-posted content or target site linked to from this page. While we appreciate and encourage the thoughtful exchange of ideas, conversations will be monitored and comments may be deleted if threatening, inappropriate, offensive or libelous language is used, or if comments on a post veer off-topic from the original post. Any commercial offers may be removed from the site.

For Facebook pages, the above disclaimer verbiage should be copied and posted in the "Story" section, accessible through the page's "About" area. In the case of social media platforms that do not include the ability to post a long disclaimer, such as Twitter and Instagram, the Communications Department will assist with the appropriate disclaimer process and link.

### **PERMISSIBLE USE OF GRAPHICS INCLUDING BSCC LOGOS AND OTHER BRANDING**

Departments maintaining social networking platforms are only permitted to use the College logos that have previously been approved by the Public Relations Department, unless the department is required by an outside, affiliated or parent organization to post a specific logo. Contact the PR Department for help with official College logos, or to gain approval of any personalization planned for the department/student social media logo. Graphics, videos and other content not specifically generated by the College, including content retrieved from a search engine, are not to be used without express legal permission. Contact the PR Department for assistance in obtaining appropriate forms of media.

### **GENERAL RULES FOR POSTING**

All BSCC faculty, staff and students should consider their messages, audiences and goals. Keep information on social media platforms frequent and up-to-date. Pages that are not being used regularly must be deactivated and removed. Social media channels at Bevill State must be continually updated and monitored. Accounts that have been inactive for more than one month may be subject to deactivation or deletion. Deactivation and deletion will be carried out by contacting and working with the department. Link back to content on Bevill State's website where possible: If you are unsure how to do this, please contact the Public Relations Department. Protect our institutional voice and reputation: Posts on social media platforms should support the College in a professional tone and with good taste. While online, faculty, staff and students should always be mindful that they are representatives of the College. Maintain confidentiality: Do not post confidential or proprietary information about BSCC, its students or its employees. Internet postings should respect copyright, privacy, fair use, financial disclosure and other applicable laws. Be discreet, respectful and accurate: Verify facts before you post. Use proper spelling, punctuation and grammar. Poor grammar and spelling reflect negatively on you and the College. If you are unsure about the content of a post, see the "Style Guide" below, or contact a member of the PR Department for assistance.

### **PERMISSIBLE SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT**

Employee administrators are responsible for all content on the social networking platforms they manage. Examples of content permitted on BSCC social media include: · Links to media stories concerning the school (e.g. news releases, articles written by the local paper, videos produced by local TV broadcasters, etc.) · Event announcements with links to or images of fliers and recaps of events · Posts from instructors announcing they are available to tutor, information about student support services, career center information, etc. · Information on graduation · Interaction with "fans" such as polls about what kind of academic programs the College should offer · Important updates or announcements · Posting photos or videos of events, and marketing videos created by BSCC · Interesting facts (e.g. "This semester, Bevill State has students enrolled from ages 15 to 83; the oldest student to ever attend was 96.") · Updates on athletic teams and student clubs and activities · Announcements on discounts at the College's bookstores · Enrollment information with a link to student services.

Account administrators are also responsible for deleting inappropriate postings by external social media users and third parties from their page. These include, but are not limited to: derogatory language including any use of language that discriminates based on race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity or religion

### **STUDENT GUIDANCE FOR PARTICIPATING IN SOCIAL MEDIA**

All Students of Bevill State Community College should understand that all postings through the College's social media are public and are expected to follow acceptable behavior and comply with Alabama law, Alabama Community College System policies, and policies outlined in the Bevill State Student Handbook located in the College's Catalog.

Officially recognized student organizations are encouraged to develop a social media presence. Since these organizations are affiliated with the college, these social media activities should comply with all college policies found in the Catalog. College organizations seeking to have a social media presence should make a written request to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students will approve requests. Maintenance and content development of the approved social media sites will be the responsibility of the student organizations.

Abusive content posted to Bevill State's social media outlets, or violations of the College's Social Media Policy should be reported immediately. Any student who believes that he or she has been treated unfairly or unjustly with regards to social media, should report it as outlined in the College's Student Grievance Policy.

### **EMPLOYEE GUIDANCE FOR PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA**

The College recognizes that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics using a wide variety of social media. The College further recognizes that employees and students have free speech rights to engage in speech on topics that are of public concern. At the same time, employees and students' use of social media can pose risks to the Colleges' safety, operations, confidential information, or reputation. To minimize those risks, the College expects its employees and students to adhere to the following policy regarding social media use.

Social media should never be used in a way that violates any ACCS or Bevill State Community College policy. For example, employees and students are prohibited from using social media to violate confidentiality or privacy obligations, or to engage in unwelcome, harassing, threatening, or discriminatory conduct, regardless of forum.

True threats, intimidation, and stalking on social media directed at ACCS or College students or staff is prohibited. A true threat is (1) a serious expression of intent to commit an act of unlawful violence against a particular individual or identifiable group, if (2) the group would reasonably fear the threatened violence. This includes threats to self. Intimidation is physical conduct threatening a specific individual with the intent to place those individuals in fear of bodily harm or death. Stalking is (1) a course of conduct committed with the intent to kill, injure, harass, or intimidate another person that (2) places that person in reasonable fear of the death of, or serious bodily injury to (3) that person, an immediate family member, a spouse, or an intimate partner of that person; or (4) causes, attempts to cause, or would be reasonably expected to cause substantial emotional distress to a person listed above.

Employees and students shall not use College names, images, logo, or other branding in social media without the written approval of from the BSCC Public Relations Department.

Free speech rights apply in the classroom, in all other programs and activities of our institutions, and to the speech of students and employees. Great care must be taken not to inhibit open discussion, academic debate, and expression of personal opinion, particularly in the classroom setting. Nonetheless, speech or conduct of a harassing, sexual, or hostile nature exceed the protections of academic freedom and constitute prohibited harassment.

Any speech by students or employees that prevent the Bevill State Community College from (a) operating safely or effectively, (b) maintaining proper discipline, (c) that threatens the integrity and/or public trust of the College, or (d) causes reputational harm to the College as determined by the President can result in disciplinary action, including reprimands, suspension, or termination. This includes posts, comments, or likes that are or could be perceived as offensive to any current or potential student or employee of the college. The College may also require deletion, withdrawal, or apologies related to personal social media activity.

While the right to free speech applies to communication in all forms, including in social media, the College encourages civil and respectful discourse, especially by its employees. We are all responsible to one another and to the thinking and thoughtful community of which each of us is a valuable part. The College encourages and requires professionalism, maturity, and honesty in social media communications. The College believes that derogatory, incorrect, misleading, cruel, obscene, crude, vulgar, offensive, profane, threatening, harassing, hostile, racist, or sexist comments are unprofessional and have no place in the community or in public discourse.

The College encourages and requires its employees to use good judgment about what is posted on social media. Remember that anything you say can reflect on the College. Whether you identify yourself as a College employee or not in personal online social media profiles, even if such accounts are private or have otherwise restricted access, make it clear in your social media activity that you are speaking on your own behalf. However, be aware that making this statement will not shield employees from disciplinary action if the posts otherwise violates this policy.

This policy is not intended to restrict speech protected by state or federal law. However, unprotected social media speech that violates this policy can result in disciplinary action.

Additionally, please include the following disclaimer in the About/Bio section of any social media accounts: The opinions expressed on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of Bevill State Community College or its agents.

Bevill State Community College's Internet access should only be used for College-related business as outlined in the Bevill State Community College Administration, Faculty, Staff Internet/Network Access Agreement. While it may be appropriate to engage in social media during work hours if activity is directly related to accomplishing work-related goals or official college business, maintenance and usage of personal social media sites should be during personal time and using nonwork computers.