



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN
SHORE

Policy Title:

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

POLICY No. 10.0

Authority: University President

Category: Campus-wide

Applies to: ALL UNITS

Originally Issued:

Updated:

Revised: _____

Withdrawal:

Related Policies:

Policy Location:

www.umes.edu/university_policies

AUTHORITY FOR POLICY:

The University System of Maryland, through the Chancellor and the Board of Regents has delegated authority to university presidents to establish policies and procedures for the efficient and orderly administration of the university.

REASON FOR POLICY:

This policy addresses usage of social media at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

DEFINITIONS:

To be added

RELATED POLICIES (IF ANY):

Insert specific USM Policy

POLICY:

I. POLICY

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) realizes that many of its staff, faculty, student organizations and students participate in social media. Many organizations and even departments within the University have created individual social media profiles and pages making it mandatory that the creators are aware of policies regarding social media. The rise of Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and other social media web sites necessitate that we ask each university representative to remember that the same basic policies apply in the “virtual world” as in other work areas of the University.

Social media/networking and blogging sites, when used appropriately on personal time, can be an effective means of communication and self-expression. Social media/networking or blogging websites, when used inappropriately, can adversely impact working relationships and can be disruptive and detrimental to the university brand and reputation.

UMES uses select social media outlets to support marketing activities and promote events while engaging with our public online. Messages will be posted onto official University pages through the Public Relations and/or Marketing departments (Talon Media Group) just as they are posted to www.umes.edu.

Be aware that any information published on a social media/networking or blogging site is public information and that there should be no expectation of privacy of any content that is published. Except as limited by applicable law, staff, faculty or organizations will be responsible for disruptive incidents and

conduct arising from disparaging comments on social media/networking or blogging sites that adversely impact working relationships, university business and community relations.

Therefore, be respectful and professional at all times to your fellow employees, students, visitors, faculty, volunteers, competitors and anyone else having a relationship with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

Nothing in this Policy, however, shall be construed to limit rights to engage in lawful activity.

Please Follow These Guidelines

1. **UMES computers and other communication devices must be used for work related/study related purposes only.** Employees are prohibited from using any University of Maryland Eastern Shore computer or other communication devices at any time for personal use on a social media/networking or blogging website.
2. **Work time is paid time.** You should not let social networking, personal cell phone usage or any other non-work related activities affect your ability to perform the duties of your position. Excessive use of social networking venues, the Internet, personal cell phones and other non-work related activity adversely affect your ability to do your job.
3. **Follow all applicable UMES policies.** For example, you may not share confidential or proprietary information about the University. The expectation of confidentiality, Code of Ethics and the Information Technology Policy remain in effect. When in doubt, what you see or hear at work should stay at work.
4. **Write in the first person.** Where your connection to UMES is apparent, make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the University. As part of our Core Values, we do not condone use of false identities. Be transparent and clear about who you are and consider adding the disclaimer "The views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer."

5. **Only authorized persons may represent the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. All organizations using UMES in their page title or handle should be aware that they are taking on the responsibility of representing the University.** You will be expected to act and react accordingly. You will be asked to attend quarterly meetings on how to respond and handle yourself online in a way that benefits your organization and the University.

Only the University's public relations and/or marketing department are authorized to post messages on behalf of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore using UMES News operating as Talon Media Group (TMG).

6. **Use a personal email address.** When you use the Internet to communicate for non-work related purposes, use a personal email address (not your umes.edu address) as your primary means of identification. Just as you would not use UMES letterhead to write a personal letter, do not use your work email address to express personal views. Your umes.edu address may not be used on personal social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc... or any other form of online publishing you participate in on a personal level. With respect to copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws, UMES proprietary information should never be used in online communication.
7. **No employee may represent the University.** No one other than designated individuals may act as a representative of the University with respect to posting messages on behalf of UMES. Posts and messages on personal social media pages/sites should be posted as from an individual who is not representing the University.
8. **Using the Internet as part of your position or part of a student organization.** If in the course of your work you use the Internet to communicate with others on behalf of UMES or for university related matters, you must disclose your connection and role with the University. Use good judgment and strive for accuracy in your communications. Errors and omissions reflect poorly on UMES and may result in liability for you, UMES and/or the University of Maryland System. If you are communicating on behalf of UMES, you should be pre-approved to do so by the PR or Marketing Department, IT and Human Resources. You must

use your real name and your umes.edu email address when using online services as part of your work.

9. **Register your pages with Talon Media Group (PR/Marketing).** If, as your role in a student organization, you are identified as the gatekeeper for that organizations' social media pages, please email that information to Talon Media Group (PR/Marketing) so that you may be kept up-to-date on the latest in best practices for social media.
10. **Use common sense.** Employees who post communications on their personal computers or other communication devices should also be aware that they may be personally liable for any postings and commentary that is considered harassing, threatening, slanderous, defamatory, obscene, proprietary, libelous or otherwise unlawful by any offended party. Remember what is posted online stays there indefinitely.

Use common sense when participating in online communication. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a posting, discuss it with Public Relations, Marketing or Human Resources in advance.

11. **Corrective action may occur in instances of non-compliance.** Incidents of non-compliance with this policy that are not lawful discussions may be addressed through corrective action up to termination of employment and/or legal action depending on the nature and severity of the infraction.

II. **PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION OF ALL FORMS OF HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND RETALIATION**

A. **Employee Responsibility**

1. Show good taste, respect for every individual including co-workers and supervisors whether interacting on social networking sites or face-to-face with others.
2. Accept personal responsibility for comments on social media/networking or blogging sites that adversely impact employee working relationships, student relations and community relations.

B. Supervisor/Manager Responsibility (incl. Student Activities Coordinators)

1. Serve as a resource to employees who have questions related to the “Social Media/Networking and Employee Blogging Policy”.
2. Coach and mentor employees as opportunities arise or as needed with respect to appropriate use of social media, networking and blogging sites.
3. After consultation with the Human Resources Department, take appropriate corrective action when disruptive unprotected incidents or conduct at work arise from disparaging unprotected comments on social media/networking or blogging sites that adversely impact employee working relationships, student relations and community relations.

C. Talon Media Group Responsibility

1. Talon Media Group (TMG) will remain current with best practices in social media and share the knowledge with other stakeholders.
2. TMG will maintain all designated ‘official’ social media sites using UMES NEWS. We will post at least two times per week on each designated site and maintain current, useful information for our publics.
3. TMG will maintain transparency and encourage two way dialogue whenever possible including striving to return inquiries and direct comments within 24 hours.
4. TMG will only delete posts that violate our code of conduct including those using profanity, indecency or direct advertising where not preauthorized.

D. Human Resources Responsibility

1. Nothing in this Policy, however, shall be construed to limit a student or employee's right to engage in lawful activity.
2. Remain current with legal requirements and prevailing employer practices,
3. Serve as a resource for supervisors, managers and employees who have questions related to this policy.



This policy, and all policies may be found on the University website at www.umes.edu/universitypolicies