

H. Councill Trenholm State Technical College



SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

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Introduction

This is the official social networking policy for Trenholm State Technical College. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the Internet. These guidelines will continually change as new technologies and social networking tools become known. Please be aware that violation of these guidelines may result in disciplinary action.

All college employees are expected to adhere to these guidelines when engaging in the use of social media. This document outlines the publication policy for Trenholm State's page (s) related to all social media sites. Examples of social media sites are blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Google, LinkedIn and YouTube.

The primary purpose is for information sharing, marketing tools and communication between students, faculty, and the general public. Trenholm State uses these platforms to share daily news and events, college deadlines, college closings, relevant photos, discussion topics, open courses, presentations, training, podcasts and videos in the online environments that our students access regularly.

Guidelines for Social Media Use

- **Be Accurate and Consistent:** All content published by the College must be accurate and consistent; as such, information distributed via social media must match the information distributed through our print materials and website.
- **Respect Intellectual Property Law:** Employees should not use text or media without the permission of the owner. All sources must be cited. Intellectual property may be protected by copyright laws. Employees must adhere to all copyright laws.
- **Be Aware of Liability:** Trenholm State employees are personally responsible for the content they publish on blogs or any other form of user-generated media as it relates to Trenholm State employee guidelines. Employees may be held accountable for content published in affiliation with Trenholm State that contains content which is defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that creates a hostile work environment.
- **Maintain Confidentiality:** Use good ethical judgment and follow college policies and federal requirements, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Do not cite or reference students, faculty, staff, administrators, partners or suppliers without their written approval. When you do make a reference, always link back to the source. You must make sure you do not disclose or use confidential or proprietary information in any online social computing platform. Employees are encouraged to get approval from their supervisors before publishing sensitive information.
- **Respect Your Audience:** Do not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in Trenholm State's workplace. You should also show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory.

- **Maintain Transparency:** All social media efforts on behalf of Trenholm State must be open and transparent. Identify yourself by name and, when relevant, by your role at Trenholm State when you discuss college-related matters. Use your own voice; speak in the first person. Talk with your readers like you would talk with people in professional situations. In other words, avoid overly obscure or “composed” language.
- **Use Clear and Correct Language:** All employees acting as representatives of Trenholm State should adhere to rules of good grammar, punctuation, and spelling when publishing social media content. Write in the first person.
- **Be a Leader.** Write to invite opposed points of view without provoking others. Always be careful and considerate because once the words are there, you cannot erase them. Always seek approval from the Public Information Officer (PIO) before representing Trenholm State.
- **Notify the Public Information Officer:** As a courtesy, if Trenholm State is mentioned using social media, inform the PIO. Media contacts about Trenholm State should be referred to the PIO. If your personal content is featured by the media or you are interviewed, notify the PIO so that the college can promote the story.
- **Add Value:** Provide worthwhile information and perspective. Trenholm State’s brand is best represented by its people and what you publish reflects on the College. Blogs and social networks that are hosted by Trenholm State should be used in a way that adds value to Trenholm State. If it helps people improve knowledge or skills, build their businesses, do their jobs, solve problems, or understand Trenholm State better, then it is adding value.
- **Use Good Judgment Before Posting.** Remember there are always consequences to what you publish. If you are about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncertain, review the suggestions in these guidelines. Feel free to discuss it with your supervisor. Ultimately, you have sole responsibility for what you post to your blog or publish in any form of online social media.
- **Use a Disclaimer.** Whether you publish to a blog or some other form of social media, make clear that what you say represents your views and opinions alone. You should include the following standard disclaimer: "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent Trenholm State's position or opinion."
- **Be Cautious When Bookmarking:** When bookmarking websites, others can view them. Be mindful of the words and phrases used to tag and describe bookmarks, photographs, etc. Always verify the content and validity of websites before bookmarking.
- **Be Careful of the Message You Convey:** Be mindful of the message conveyed when creating a profile and uploading digital pictures. Profiles and pictures should convey a professional image.
- **Be Aware of the Authorized User Agreement:** All Trenholm State employees and their use of college resources to use social media platforms are subject to the college’s Authorized User Agreement.

Social Media Used for Trenholm State Courses

Social media used as part of a Trenholm State course is the responsibility of the faculty member teaching the course to develop and maintain. Classroom use of social media is not considered an official Trenholm State social media site. Internet postings should not include Trenholm State's logos. The faculty member is legally responsible for his or her postings.

Request to Represent Trenholm State through Social Media

Trenholm State's divisions, offices, organizations or College-wide initiatives may submit an online request to set up their own social media tools to represent Trenholm State. In a selective environment such as Facebook, the individual or unit creating the social media on behalf of the College must accept his/her supervisor and the PIO or Marketing Director as a site user so that the page can be monitored. Passwords, etc. will be generated by the MIS Director or PIO/Marketing Director so that control of the site will rest with the College for monitoring and removal, if necessary.

The following information must be completed and submitted online through the Marketing and Public Information Office:

- Name
- Phone number and email address
- Name, phone number and email address of the approving supervisor
- Name of division, office, organization or initiative to use the social media
- Type(s) of social media to be developed
- Purpose of the site
- Name, phone number and email address of the person(s) who will be posting the information and maintaining the social media

Once the use of the social media is approved, it is the responsibility of the unit who requested the use of the social media to develop and maintain the site. The Web Developer will keep a record of all official Trenholm-approved social media use. The Web Developer will work with the unit to provide the Trenholm State branding for use on the official social media. Links to the approved specific social media sites will be added to the official Trenholm State social media that is maintained by the Web Developer. When approved specific social media is no longer being used, the Web Developer should be notified.

Posting Policy

All contents and posts are bound by Facebook and other applicable sites' terms of use, codes of conduct and acceptable usage policies as well as Trenholm State Technical College's Computer Use Policy. The College reserves the

right to block or remove the content of any post that violates college policies, including but not limited to harassing, threatening, or profane language for the purpose of creating a hostile or intimidating environment. Contents may be removed without prior notice at any time for any reason deemed to be in the best interest of the College.

Any campus, division, office, organization or club of the College can post to Trenholm State's social media. You must email information you want posted to the PIO@trenholmstate.edu. The PIO is the primary administrator for the College's main pages on any social media site. This information will be reviewed and approved by the Marketing Committee. The information will then be submitted to the Web Developer for posting. The Web Developer will maintain and post to all of the above listed official Trenholm State social media.

The following information is needed in the email:

- Name of the person submitting
- Phone number and email address of the person submitting
- Name of campus, division, office, organization, club associated with the message
- Deadline for posting
- List of the social media where you want the message posted
- Message (250 maximum word count; maximum 140 characters for Twitter)

The above details must reach the Web Developer one week prior to deadline for posting to ensure that the information will be published in a timely manner on the official social media sites.

All content must relate directly to College business, programs, and/or services. Content placed by Trenholm State employees cannot promote individual opinions or causes which are not directly related to the College purposes.

Disclaimer

Many social media users include a prominent disclaimer stating their employer's company name, but that they are not speaking officially. This is good practice and is encouraged, but don't count on it to avoid trouble – it may not have much legal effect.

Official Trenholm State Blogs

Official College blogs require approval. Blogs requiring College approval are those in which campuses, divisions, offices, organizations and clubs may blog about Trenholm State. Requests to host an official College blog are emailed to the Web Developer who maintains the Trenholm State blog site located on the Trenholm State website. Only official Trenholm State blogs may include the College's logo. All official Trenholm State blogs must include a legal disclaimer, stating that all posts by the author, guest author and visitors reflect personal thoughts and opinions which are not necessarily those of the institution.

Please follow the following guidelines regarding blogs:

- Identify yourself by name and role at Trenholm State when you discuss Trenholm State related information.

- Comply with all state and federal laws and regulations regarding disclosure of identity. Trenholm State may request that you withdraw certain posts from any official Trenholm State blog if it is not in compliance with applicable state and federal laws.
- Respect your audience. Trenholm State reserves the right to remove any posted comment on an official Trenholm State blog site(s) that uses inappropriate language.
- Always be truthful and post meaningful messages.
- Respect copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws. Trenholm State reserves the right to remove any posted comment on an official Trenholm State blog site(s) that violates these laws.
- Internet postings should not violate any applicable policy of the Alabama State Board of Education or Trenholm State. Trenholm State reserves the right to remove any posted comment on an official Trenholm State blog site(s) that violates these laws.
- Trenholm State shall not be liable, under any circumstances, for any errors, omissions, loss or damages claimed or incurred due to any of your Internet postings.
- If a member of the news media or blogger contacts you about an Internet posting that concerns the business of the College, please refer the person to the Public Information Officer. Employees are responsible for regularly reviewing the terms of these blog posting guidelines.

Personal Blogs about Trenholm State

For personal blogs or social media interactions that reference Trenholm State, please follow the guidelines below:

- If employees write anything related to Trenholm State on personal pages, posts and comments, they will clearly identify their Trenholm State affiliation.
- The manner of disclosure can be flexible as long as it is clear to the average reader, directly connected to the relevant post, or provides a means of communicating further (Example disclosure methods could include: link to bio or “about me” page, or statement in the post itself: “I work for Trenholm State and this is my personal opinion.”)
- Employees will specifically clarify which posts/comments are their own opinions vs. official College statements.
- Writing which does not mention work-related topics does not need to mention the employment relationship.
- If employees blog anonymously, they should not discuss matters related to Trenholm State. If Trenholm State topics are mentioned, they should disclose their affiliation with Trenholm State.