Rochester Community and Technical College

Social Media Policy

The goal of all social media is communication, and the following guidelines detail how the RCTC community can participate in social media and at the same time remain professional and within the standards of employee conduct. RCTC’s College Relations department is responsible for communicating college-wide events, closures and emergencies on RCTC’s official social media sites.

Transparency/Disclaimers – Identify yourself. If you are posting or commenting as an individual on an institution-related topic, clarify that you are posting your own opinion and not one of the college. When publishing on personal social media sites, be careful what work-related information you share.

Respect – Social media is all about community and communication. Be professional and consider the reader when relaying controversial information or a bad experience. The more respectful you are, the more respect you will garner in return.

Quality and Quantity – More isn’t always better. If you are posting on a college-sponsored site or account, the content is what pulls more views; make sure what you post is useful, informative and quality. Know your venues: some, like Twitter, are conducive to more frequent postings. With Facebook, too much information may overwhelm. If you are commenting, this ties into respect; rethink your comment if it adds nothing to the discussion or incites anger.

Privacy – Never assume that anything placed on the Internet is private. Even if it’s out there for a nanosecond, someone somewhere may have seen it. Private emails and messages can be considered private, but a recent ruling has declared that no Twitter posts are private, and Twitter has an obligation to give records to authorities. If there is a photo of you posted to an RCTC social media site that you don’t want out there, please contact College Relations so we can remove it.

Free speech/Unprotected speech – Freedom of speech is protected under the First Amendment. Don’t delete someone else’s comments and opinions. If you don’t agree, this would be a good time to cultivate a constructive discussion. However, some speech is not protected – libel or slander, obscenity and fighting words (incitement) are all examples of unprotected speech. Posts of this nature should be deleted. If you are unsure, please contact College Relations.

Copyright – Never post copyrighted photos, video, music, cartoons, etc. as your own when it contains the work of a person who has not granted you permission to use it. You can link to videos and other web sites containing copyrighted material. Images you find on the Internet are probably copyrighted so do not use these photos unless you pay for them or get written permission from the owner. If you do get written permission, it’s a good idea to credit the creator or photographer. Social media sites
monitor activity, and they will disable all RCTC-controlled content if they find a copyright violation. Contact the College Relations office with any questions on content BEFORE you post.

**College time and property (personal use)** – RCTC computers and work time should be used for college-related purposes. If your comments and posts are college-related, then it's appropriate to use work time for social media. Refer to MnSCU’s Acceptable Use of Computer and Information Technology Resources procedure. It’s best to pursue social media for personal use on your own time and equipment.

**Follow policy** – Follow applicable policies and procedures when getting involved in social media: the State Employee Code of Conduct, RCTC and MnSCU policies and procedures, RCTC Values and Standards of Excellence and the College Branding Standards and Guidelines.

**Confidentiality** – Confidential information of RCTC’s students, alumni, or employees cannot be shared, even if it’s anonymous. Refer to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act for more information on this.

**Inappropriate content** – Inappropriate content will and should be removed. Examples of this are: illegal activities; wagering, betting or selling; harassment; illegal discrimination; non-college-sponsored fundraising; political or religious promotion or activities. Commercial offers may be removed based on content. Employment offers must provide full contact information, including address and phone number, otherwise they will be removed.

**Useful resources**

MnSCU Acceptable Use of Computers and Information Technology Resources
http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/522p1.html

MnSCU Employee Code of Conduct
http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/1c0p1.html

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) student disclosure information
http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/students.html

MN Government Data Practices Act
https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=13

Freedom of Speech Wikipedia page
RCTC branding standards
http://www.rctc.edu/marketing/

Twitter privacy ruling
http://www.aclu.org/files/assets/owsharristwitterdec63012.pdf

If you have any questions on this policy or regarding a particular social media problem, please contact College Relations.