

UC Berkeley Social Media Guidelines

Social media is a powerful channel used to disseminate relevant news to your community, listen to voices and perceptions about your department, and connect with your audience online.

Unlike traditional communication, social-media communication brings with it a number of challenges: publishing speed, 24/7 connectivity, and a desire for a two-way conversation versus one-way promotion.

The following guidelines are intended to support all UC Berkeley units, departments, schools and colleges in their social media efforts. This initial living document will be periodically updated to reflect current needs and changes in social media.

Please contact Kathryn Bader (Director of Social Media, Office of Communication and Public Affairs), with any questions, suggested updates or new channels, or consultation requests at klbader@berkeley.edu or 2-6044.

Published January 2016

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Planning

Before you launch a social-media channel, please consider the following questions:

1. What do you want to accomplish?

Outline your goals like you would with any communication or marketing campaign. Social media is another channel for your content. Use it wisely.

2. Where is your target audience?

Determine where your audience is and concentrate your efforts on building one platform before adding another. It takes concerted time to listen, engage, and inform. Social media is meant to be a conversation, not a one-way broadcast.

3. Do you have the content to sustain a presence?

Your social media channel(s) will reflect on your department and, ultimately, the university as a whole. Consider whether your unit has the time and personnel to 1) create or curate quality content on a regular basis (that drives traffic to your own website as much as possible), 2) post engaging content daily, and 3) monitor and respond often. Social media doesn't *create* your stories, it *tells* them.

4. Do you have time to keep up with rapid changes to social media?


Settings and policies may change with no notice from the provider.

5. Are there other university social media accounts that are already connecting with your target audience?

Using established campus platforms might reach your target audience faster than it takes to build your own fan base.

Execution

1. **Set a goal and strategy.** Otherwise, you're shooting in the dark.
2. **Engage your audience.** Post content that your followers enjoy and want to share. This will not only keep them coming back for more but also increase your chances for better reach (via Facebook's algorithm).
3. **Remember less is more!** Don't feel the pressure to use every social-media channel out there. Start with a realistic plan for one or two and get good engagement with those first.
4. **Develop a social media plan for each channel.** Different channels are better suited for certain goals and audiences.
5. **Measure your results.** Establish performance metrics upfront that are tied to organizational strategy. Find out what did well, and why. Adapt accordingly.
6. **Involve actual students in your planning** (if they're your main audience). You may think your campaign content is interesting and written in a way that appeals to students. Find out if that's really true.
7. **Reach out to subject matter experts.** Don't respond on behalf of the university, your department or a professor unless you have the correct facts and information. Direct the questions to the appropriate website or person in your network.
8. **Think twice about posting, or responding.** Exercise sound judgment and common sense. Trust your gut. Familiarize yourself with compliance obligations under FERPA and university policies prohibiting discrimination and harassment. Refrain from conversations that may create the appearance of lobbying.
9. **Respect copyright laws.** Show proper respect for laws governing copyright and fair use. Be sure to receive permission for sharing images, protected by copyright. A best practice is to always credit a source, unless the photo credit is referenced in the linked story itself.

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10. **Be supportive.** Collaborate with other social media managers across campus to help amplify your or their content. Be courteous with considerate lead-time when possible.
 11. **Use brand guidelines.** Support campus efforts to build a strong brand when creating graphics, using logos or composing Facebook posts or tweets.
 12. **Keep updated on social media trends.** Subscribe to quality newsletters and blogs. Make it a habit each week to pick out articles you think may help your efforts—and set aside time to actually read them.

Bonus: Experiment! Don't be afraid to fail. But be smart about it. ;-)

Approach

Please keep the following concerns in mind:

1. **Confidentiality:** As stated in the *UC Electronic Communications Policy* (page 10, “Privacy and Confidentiality”):

“The university recognizes that principles of academic freedom and shared governance, freedom of speech, and privacy hold important implications for the use of electronic communications. This policy reflects these firmly held principles within the context of the university’s legal and other obligations. The university respects the privacy of electronic communications in the same way that it respects the privacy of paper correspondence and telephone conversations, while seeking to ensure that university administrative records are accessible for the conduct of the university's business.”

2. **Privacy:** As stated in *UC Statement of Privacy Values* (page 2, “UC Privacy Principles”):

- a. *Free inquiry:* “The university is guided by First Amendment principles and is committed to encouraging its members to exercise free discourse without fear of reprisal or intimidation, subject to the privacy and safety of other individuals or university resources.”
- b. *Respect for individual privacy:* “The university is committed to respecting the privacy of individuals, including their interactions with others, and expects university members to esteem each other’s privacy and well being.”
- c. *Surveillance:* “The university is guided by Fourth Amendment principles regarding surveillance of persons or places, whether in person on campus or electronically, and is committed to balancing the need for the safety of individuals and property with the individuals’ reasonable expectation of privacy in a particular location.”

3. **Social media account access:** We recommend:
 - a. Access to login and passwords to each social media account is known by a minimum of three staff members.
 - b. Warning all staff of the unfortunate possibility of making “accidental” posts or tweets to an official Berkeley account rather than their own. They should be sure to always check which account they are actively logged into before every post or tweet.

4. Personal responsibility and liability:

- a. *Assume copyright protection:* As stated in the *UC Electronic Communications Policy* (page 2):
“In accordance with federal law, users should assume that material created by others, in electronic or other form, is protected by copyright unless such material includes an explicit statement that it is not protected, or unless such material is clearly in the public domain.”
- b. *Avoid infringement:* As stated in the *UC Electronic Communications Policy* (page 9, “Intellectual Property”):
“The contents of all electronic communications shall conform to laws and University policies regarding protection of intellectual property, including laws and policies regarding copyright, patents, and trademarks. When the content and distribution of an electronic communication would exceed fair use as defined by the federal Copyright Act of 1976, users of University electronic communications resources shall secure appropriate permission to distribute protected material in any form, including text, photographic images, audio, video, graphic illustrations and computer software.”
- c. *Avoid endorsement:* As stated in the *UC Electronic Communications Policy* (page 7):
“Users of electronic communications resources must abide by university and campus policies regarding endorsements. References or pointers to any non–University entity contained in university electronic communications shall not imply university endorsement of the products or services of that entity.”

5. Counter cyber–security risks:

Social networking is built upon mutual trust. Attackers seek to exploit this trust relationship to damage reputation, disrupt operations, or for financial gain. Their tactics include taking control of social media sites and posting links to websites controlled by them to distribute malware or exploit vulnerabilities in web browsers, web browser extensions or applications.

- a. Change your passwords often. As a precaution: use strong passwords (see bit.ly/1Tap8jl), avoid re–using passwords for other sites, and where available use two–factor authentication.
- b. Hover over links and look at statistics bar at the bottom of your browser to see where the link goes before clicking on it.
- c. Install software patches within 48 hours.
- d. Prepare an incident response plan to expeditiously identify, contain, eradicate, and recover from incidents.

Online resources

[UC Berkeley Brand Guidelines](#)

[UC Berkeley Editorial Style Guide](#)

[UC Berkeley Photo Gallery](#)

[UC Berkeley Business Contracts and Brand Protection](#)

- [Report trademark/intellectual property misuse](#)

[UC Berkeley Privacy Guidelines](#)

[UC Berkeley Websites Privacy Statement](#)

[UC Berkeley Standards of Ethical Conduct](#)

[UC Copyright & Fair Use](#)

[UC Electronic Communications Policy](#)

[UC Principles of Community](#)

[UC Privacy and Information Security Steering Committee Report](#)

[UC Statement of Privacy Values and Privacy Principles](#)