

College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

Social Media Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

The Ohio State University is currently developing a policy that will help guide employees as they participate in social media. Once developed, employees are encouraged to review and become familiar with the policy as they engage personally and professionally with social media.

Ohio State's policy will guide the use of social media by employees of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES). However, until Ohio State's policy is developed, CFAES employees are encouraged to review the following best practices and guidelines as well as the policies at the end of this document.

DESCRIPTION

Social media comprises works of user-created video, audio, text, or multimedia that are published and shared in an electronic environment such as a social network, blog, wiki, email, or video hosting site.

Social media presents opportunities for CFAES employees, customers, and community to engage in conversations that will personalize research, outreach, and educational successes and will extend information that can better lives, businesses, and communities.

GUIDELINES

1. When using social media, CFAES employees will comply with the law and with college and university policies. Any conduct that would be illegal or a violation of policy in the "offline" world is illegal or a violation of the policy when it occurs online.
2. During work hours, CFAES employees should use social media only for business reasons, in strict compliance with all other terms of university policies. Employees should keep in mind that even when using social media for personal reasons, discretion must be used, as social media are in the public forum.
3. When using social media, CFAES employees are speaking only for themselves unless they have prior authorization from their manager/supervisor or from administration to speak on behalf of CFAES.
 - Those authorized to speak on behalf of CFAES, including CFAES Academic Affairs, Ohio State University Extension, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, or Ohio State ATI, should keep the following in mind:
 - Refer to the [CFAES Brand Guidelines](#) to make sure the language and images used in posts, tweets, etc., align with the attributes, personality, tone of voice, and core goals of the college.
 - Provide quality, timely content that encourages engagement so that CFAES is seen as a helpful resource.
 - Those not authorized to speak on behalf of CFAES still need to recognize the opportunities social media present to positively or negatively project the image of the college. Remain a credible source in your personal and your professional social presences.

4. Employees using social media and speaking on behalf of CFAES are not permitted to:
- use profanity or derogatory language
 - use sexually explicit language or material of any kind
 - share copyrighted material unless permission is granted (e.g., through a “Share” button by the originator of the material)
 - engage in academically dishonest behavior, unethical actions, or illegal activities
 - make libelous statements or aggressively attack any individual or group
 - make solicitations that are commercial in nature, except when marketing or publicizing CFAES for-sale items
 - share personal information about an individual or group without his, her, or their permission
 - share confidential Ohio State information (If you find yourself wondering whether you can talk about something you learned at work, don't!)
 - share or release customer information
 - share personnel information, including referring to coworkers in an abusive or harassing manner
 - share legal information, including disclosing anything to do with a legal issue, legal case, or attorneys
5. Employees using social media are encouraged to:
- be smart, respectful, and authentic
 - state whether their opinion is their own or that of the college's, and to state whether they are speaking for themselves or for the college
 - be careful with and protect personal information shared online
 - be responsible and act ethically (When at work, employees' primary responsibility is the work of the college: teaching, research, and/or outreach.)
6. Any employee creating a new social media presence for official business purposes (e.g., creating a Facebook group, starting a Twitter account, starting a blog) must inform [Mitch Moser](#), social media manager of CFAES Communications. This will ensure alignment with university and college policies and will present additional opportunities for support and resources. This includes but isn't limited to greater cross-promotion and awareness for all organizational channels.
7. When creating a blog for work purposes that invites members of the public to comment, the policy page must include the following Social Media Participation Requirements to prevent potential misuse of the comments section.

Social Media Participation Requirements

This [name of social presence, e.g., blog] presents an opportunity to engage The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences in conversation about [topic of content].

Please keep in mind that this [name of social presence] community is founded in trust and fairness around a central issue: [topic of content]. The successful interaction of this community rests on respect and adherence to the following.

Comments that contain the following are not permitted:

- *profanity or anything derogatory in nature*
- *sexually explicit language or material of any kind*
- *copyrighted material used without permission*
- *reference to academically dishonest behavior, unethical actions, or illegal activities*
- *libelous statements or aggressive attacks on any individual or group*
- *solicitations or any comments commercial in nature*
- *personal information of an individual or group without their expressed permission*

CONSEQUENCES

CFAES employees who do not follow university policy and guidelines are subject to the consequences associated with that particular policy or guideline.

RELATED POLICIES

Ohio State's University Policies page can be found here: osu.edu/policies. All employees should be familiar with the following university policies, procedures, and guidelines as they relate to the use of social media:

- University Social Media Policy (in development)
- Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Nondiscrimination/Harassment
- Sexual Misconduct
- Workplace Violence
- Privacy and Release of Student Education Records
- Disclosure or Exposure of Personal Information
- Responsible Use of University Computing and Network Resources
- Web Policy and Guidelines

RESOURCES

The following resources were used in the compilation of these guidelines: [Ohio State's Kiplinger Program in Public Affairs Journalism](#), and [Mashable](#).

APPROVAL

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES