



Social Media Policy

Effective January 1, 2016

Montreat College Marketing and Communications Office

Introduction

"Social media" is an umbrella term used to describe a wide variety of decentralized, people-based networks used to share information and resources through online social interaction. The list of different social media platforms is ever increasing and includes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Tumblr.

Social media outlets can be used to create, sustain, and improve Montreat College's brand image. In addition to the college's official social media outlets administered by the Marketing and Communications Office, college departments can utilize affiliate social media outlets to engage and build relationships with target audiences, recruit students, promote programs and events, and reach followers with last-minute news and alerts.

College employees who engage with social media are expected to follow the same laws, professional expectations, and guidelines for interacting with students, parents, alumni, donors, the media, and other college constituents online as they are in other areas.

Section 1: Policies for all Montreat College affiliated social media sites

- **Get approval for new social media accounts:** All social media accounts associated with Montreat College must be officially recognized, reviewed, and approved through an application process (see outlined process in Section 3).
- **Protect confidential and proprietary information:** Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Montreat College, students, employees, or alumni following federal requirements of FERPA and HIPA. The college's email system must be used when communicating about an issue involving a specific student. Any information that can be used to locate someone offline such as phone numbers, addresses, birth dates, and email addresses may not be posted.



- **Respect copyright and fair use:** When posting, you must have written permission prior to using any copyrighted or proprietary materials such as music, art, logos, photographs, videos, or text.
- **Content posting and frequency:** All official posting should reflect the Montreat College mission statement and values. A minimum of *one post per week* must be made to any Facebook account. A minimum of *one tweet per every three days* must be used for any Twitter account. A minimum of *one post every two weeks* must be used for any Instagram account. Social media accounts which are not updated regularly are ineffective and reflect poorly on the Montreat College brand, and the Marketing and Communications Office reserves the right to request that an account be disabled due to lack of activity.
- **Content Acceptability:** Inappropriate, offensive, injurious, illegal, or questionable content may be removed by Montreat College employees identified as social media administrators or at the direction of Marketing and Communications Office. If negative or inaccurate comments are posted that do not fall into one of the categories above, the administrator can visibly respond to the comment. As one goal of social media is authenticity, and negative comments should not be deleted but instead responded to openly.
- **Naming:** In order to provide consistency, all social media accounts should begin with “Montreat College” and then specify a department/office/team. No nicknames may be used. To help create a more centralized social media presence, please use the #montreatcollege hashtag or link to/tag the official Montreat College account whenever applicable.
 - Facebook: The official College Facebook page is titled “Montreat College – Official Page”. All other departments, athletic teams, or organizations are considered entities or affiliate groups and should be likeable pages. Any page set up as a “personal page” is in violation of Facebook’s Terms of Use and could result in those accounts being closed.
 - Twitter: The official College Twitter account is titled “@MontreatCollege”.
 - Instagram: The official College Instagram account is titled “montreatcollege”.
- **Management:** Social media accounts must be used by a staff or faculty administrator; the only exception to this is if a work study seeks administrator approval before every posting. The administrator will be liable for the use of the account and any information posted on it.
- **Brand Standards:** All college policies and brand guidelines (logo, seal, etc.) apply to social networking sites.



Section 2: Best Practices

- **Think twice before posting:** True privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Posts can turn up years after the publication date, and archival systems save information even if a post is deleted. If you would not say something aloud at a conference or to a member of the media, refrain from posting it online.
- **Strive for accuracy:** Confirm any facts before posting and review content for grammatical and spelling errors. If you make an error, correct it quickly. Use the APA style manual for any text used.
- **Be professional:** Do not use low resolution photos, heavy filtering, or cheesy fonts.
- **Be respectful:** Understand that posted content could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be polite and constructive.
- **Link back:** You are welcome and encouraged to provide a link to www.montreat.edu (or any other official Montreat College sites) from your social media platform.

Section 3: Approval Process

- Complete the Social Media Account Application. This form is designed to help administrators think strategically about launching and maintaining a social media account.
- Account approval will be based on the following criteria:
 1. New social media platform will positively support the Montreat College's values, mission, and goals.
 2. Engagement with the target audience will add value to the college and the audience.
 3. The new approach will meet identified goals more effectively and efficiently than previously established mediums (such as website content).
 4. New social media platform will enable the college to offer services it might not otherwise be able to offer.
 5. Sufficient resources exist to frequently update content and appropriately manage the interactions.



Official Social Media Account Application

To Be Approved by the Communications Office

The goal of this application is to help you strategically launch and maintain your social media account. Please respond to each section below in detail by either submitting a hard copy report or an email to Adam Caress, Director of Communications (acaress14@montreat.edu), for approval *before* the creation of any social media account associated with Montreat College.

- 1. Management:** Identify the person or persons who will have primary responsibility for populating, maintaining and monitoring your site. Ensure they have the time and enthusiasm to devote to this project. List all admins and their email addresses.
- 2. Primary Goals:** Are you trying to communicate a campaign, generally promote your department, or communicate with students or alumni? Your goals should support the College's strategic plan. Define the goals for your social media presence.
- 3. Measuring Success:** Determine how you will measure the success or lack of success of your site - Increased traffic to the Montreat College website or departmental pages - Better communication with prospective students - A new network of colleagues. List how you plan to measure the site's success, and the tools you'll use to track that success. The Communications Office can provide ideas on how to evaluate social media.
- 4. Audiences:** Identifying your primary audiences will help you tailor your content and choose the right tool to reach them. Whom do you plan to engage?
- 5. Content and Interaction:** What content do you plan to share? News updates? Research developments? Video? How do you plan to stimulate interaction on your site?
- 6. Name and Design:** Identify a simple and descriptive name for your profile that clearly identifies your affiliation with Montreat College. Please contact the Communications Office for development of a customized profile icon.
- 7. Evaluation:** Set a timeline for when you will conduct an evaluation of your site's success, using the goals and measures identified above in #3. At that time, be prepared to realign your site's strategy. Summarize your timeline.