



# Websites and Social Media Platforms Policy

## POLICY INFORMATION

**Policy Number:** ADM.09.03  
**Policy Category:** Administrative  
**Section:** Marketing and Communications Office (Marcom)  
**Responsible Executive:** Executive Vice President (EVP)  
**Originally Issued Date:** August 2011  
**Last Date Revised:** May 2022  
**Effective Date:**

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

The use of Websites and Social Media platforms is increasingly common for BU departments, students and employees, and those communication channels have the potential to create a significant impact on organizational and professional reputations. BU has developed a policy to properly portray, promote and protect the institution and to assist BU entities in creating and managing their social media accounts. The policy also provides suggestions on how to protect personal and professional reputations while using social media. This policy requires that:

1. Officially-recognized BU social media accounts and web pages be reviewed and approved through an application process.
2. Each social media account will have responsible administrators assigned. At present, it is the Communications Officers' responsibility to manage these main accounts.
3. Each officially-approved account must include a disclaimer statement (in the prescribed form)\*, regarding content and opinions contained on the site.
4. Inappropriate, offensive, injurious and illegal content may be removed by BU employee(s) identified as account administrators or at the direction of the Communications team. Comments also regarded as inappropriate are those which:
  - a. promote commercial enterprises;
  - b. sell, or solicit offers to sell, goods or services for personal gain; or
  - c. promote a specific political candidate or political party view/opinion.
5. Best practices for social media accounts should be considered.

It must be clear that the Bethlehem University Facebook page and other social media platforms are not the official pages for emergency communications. Though the Communications team does its best to provide updates and information in a timely matter via social media platforms, one should always check



the university's E-mail correspondence, BU Official Website, or call the University Switchboard Operator at (02) 271-1241, for official notifications about closings, postponements and other emergency information.

For more information on creating and using official BU social media accounts, contact the Communications team.

**\* Prescribed Disclaimer:**

*Posts and other content specifically added by administrators of the Bethlehem University Facebook page are official Bethlehem University content. Opinions expressed by other Facebook users do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Bethlehem University. User provided content is not screened or evaluated during the submission process. We encourage users to report content that violates Facebook's Code of Conduct by using the official Facebook procedure.*

## 2. DEFINITIONS

**Communications:** are any officially released BU news, statement, publication, announcement, articles or messaging for audience interested in the activities of the University.

**Poster (User):** a person(s) submitting content to any social media site that is officially recognized by BU, whether a faculty, department, center, group, office, or other organizational entity of the University or an official grouping of employees or students.

**Communications Team (Officers):** BU Marcom employee(s) responsible for producing, disseminating and overseeing the University communications.

**Websites and Social Media Platforms:** internet based tools for online publication, commentary, discussion and sharing information on both personal and business levels. Some popular social media platforms include Twitter, Facebook, , Flickr, Mobile Applications, and any other form of communication that may now or in the future be classified or generally regarded as social media platform. Comprised of user generated content which enables “many-to-many communications.”

**Social Media Accounts:** all official BU social media accounts purporting to represent the University or any BU entity or any account bearing the official brand identity of BU in social media outlets i.e. Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr...etc.

**Social Media Best Practices:** widely recognized guidelines, conventions, and ethical considerations for creating responsible yet effective social media campaigns and accounts.

**Social Media Terms and Conditions:** the terms and conditions set by the social media website which the User is using.



**BU Stakeholders:** are individuals and/or organizations and/or agencies considered to have a genuine direct influential relationship with BU activities and progress. They may include faculty, staff, students, alumni, former staff, Members of the University Boards, current students' parents, prospective students and parents, donors, suppliers, contractors, the community, the media, local government agencies, and others affiliated with the University.

### 3. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

The purpose of this policy is to assist faculty, staff, and others in the implementation of Bethlehem University's (BU) Communication Strategy and Branding Policy in order to help achieving a consistent, clear, professional and unified identity in all produced electronic material in addressing BU stakeholders while preserving a positive image of the University. This policy is part of the University's Communication Strategy, and in line with the University's Communication Policy.

The Websites and Social Media Platforms Policy guides on the standards to be used in all aspects of websites and social media pages.

### 4. APPLICATION / SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the Bethlehem University community and others affiliated with the University – including faculty, staff, and members of the University Boards.

This policy will apply only to social media accounts created by the University employees for the official business purposes of the University, including Bethlehem University faculties, groups, departments, programs, entities, etc. It will therefore impact students, faculty, and staff who utilize various social media for communication in conjunction with representing Bethlehem University. Some examples of the various communication media included in this policy are Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, and YouTube. The Communications team has been entrusted to assist in the campus-wide implementation of this policy.

This policy will not apply to private social media accounts. University employees acting in an individual capacity should exercise caution to communicate clearly that they are not acting in a representative capacity, or expressing the views of the University.

### 5. STATEMENT OF ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The EVP has overall responsibility for administering this policy.

One of the core duties of the Communications team is to use the official BU social media platforms to promote a positive image of BU and to raise awareness of the university's activities, programs and achievements. Under the direct supervision and guidance of the Director of Marcom, the Communications Team is responsible for the overall implementation of the Social Media Policy and the production of materials to support faculty & staff in implementing this policy.

Responsibilities of the Communications Team:

- a. The team is responsible for the overall compliance with this policy.



- b. The team has been entrusted to provide input and assist in University outreach and information provision on this policy and best practices.
- c. The team will manage the day-to-day application process and update the social media portion of the web page and account directory as needed.
- d. Should a BU employee administrator of an account leave the University for any reason or no longer wishes to be an account administrator, it is the Communication Office's responsibility to designate another BU employee to be an account administrator and remove the former employee's administrative permissions to the site.
- e. BU employees identified as administrators of accounts are responsible for managing and monitoring content of their social media accounts. Administrators are responsible to remove content that may violate the University standards or the Social Media Terms and Conditions.
- f. Although the Communications Officers do their best to maintain open and honest lines of communication on the University's social media platforms, they reserve the right to remove offending or inappropriate content. Posts that attack an individual or group, use obscene or graphic language, or are deemed advertising or spam, will be reported to the Social Media sites and can result in loss of privileges for the offender.
- g. It is the responsibility of the Communications Officers and all enrollment management staff to abide by, be familiar with, communicate and ensure that policy is followed by their respective employees who may produce items that represent Bethlehem University.
- h. The team is responsible for keeping records or achieve for all correspondence pertaining to social media.

**In case there is any question as to whether produced materials meet guidelines, please contact the Communications Officers.**

## **6. PROCEDURES**

### **1. Guidelines for the Digital Communications and Social Media Usage:**

The following are guidelines and policies to assist the Bethlehem University campus community to better understand how the university's confidentiality, privacy and professionalism policies are applicable to the use of new communications technologies such as Bethlehem University's web site, the Internet, and social media platforms and networking sites (like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, blogs).

in a Bethlehem University encourages the use of social media, blogs and the Digital Communications for use professional, academic and appropriate way when posts, sites and blogs reference Bethlehem University. Social networks and web sites are excellent vehicles for Bethlehem University to share knowledge and connect with key audiences, but because these mediums are evolving daily the following polices are important. These guidelines were modified from well-respected industry sources to provide guidance on the effective use of these tools in a way that protects personal and professional reputations and promotes accuracy and professionalism.



The following policies apply to material Bethlehem University’s marketing, communications, alumni, human resources, academic affairs, and others post on Bethlehem University-related web sites, blogs and social network sites like the University’s Facebook fan page. Current policies and procedures are as follows:

- a. To establish a BU social media accounts or web pages, a written application or an email request describing the rationale and reasons behind such demand has to be submitted by the applicant to his superiors through the command hierarchy up to the concerned Vice President. The approval of the concerned Vice President on the application is then submitted to the Marcom Office for studying and processing. The Director of Marcom communicates the final decision in writing or through an email to the applicant.
- b. All applications for officially recognized social media accounts are required to submit the profile image of each account as part of the application process, to ensure that BU’s branding standards, set forth in the Branding Guidelines, are upheld.
- c. All social media accounts officially recognized by BU must have at least two BU employees as administrators at all times to ensure adherence to this policy, and the general BU Facebook account.
- d. For members of the Bethlehem University community who are developing, or have developed, a web site or blog that will reference Bethlehem University in any way, the prescribed disclaimer must be included that clearly states the views expressed on the blog or web site are the creator’s and do not represent the views of Bethlehem University.
- e. For those who are developing a web site or blog for university or personal use that references or names Bethlehem University: as a courtesy, please inform the Communications team and your professor, advisor or supervisor.
- f. Unless you are given permission by the Offices of the Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs, Finance, Advancement and Estates, Human Resources or Executive Vice President each within its area of responsibility, you are not authorized to speak on behalf of Bethlehem University.
- g. You may not post or share information about Bethlehem University that is confidential and proprietary. This includes information about research, finances, trademarks, strategies, and any other information that has not been publicly released by the University. If you have questions concerning this matter or whether information has been released publicly, discuss specifics with the Communications team prior to releasing information.
- h. The Bethlehem University logo, word mark, seal or name may not be used on personal blogs or web sites without explicit permission in writing (email communication is acceptable) from the Director of Marcom.
- i. Do not post or write content that is inflammatory or disrespectful to colleagues or the members of the Bethlehem University community or its partners. Misrepresentation, derogatory statements or the unauthorized use of copyrighted materials is not allowed.
- j. Write or post only accurate, knowledgeable and professional, spell-checked content.
- k. Honor the privacy of students, staff, faculty, alumni and partners by seeking their permission before writing, posting or displaying internal university occurrences that might be considered to be a breach of their privacy and confidentiality.



- l. Social media sites, web pages, blogs, groups or similar community internet destinations created by individuals working in an official capacity as representatives of Bethlehem University or related entities thereof are solely the property of Bethlehem University. Individuals who create such ventures should, upon request or at the end of said person's official relationship with Bethlehem University, turn over all rights, privileges, and access thereto to the administration of Bethlehem University.
- m. Official Email signatures should be unified in accordance with the BU Branding Policy No. ADM.09.04, and will be communicated from the Marcom Office.

### **Unofficial "Courtesy" Web Sites**

As resources allow, unofficial — or "courtesy" — pages may be accommodated within the University's Web network. Such pages might include pages developed by individual students and university personnel, and pages representing student clubs, unions, and other groups. All such pages shall include the name and e-mail address of the individual responsible for managing it. Such pages may be removed from university computing resources at any time if, in the determination of the Communications team, their content is inappropriate or if, in the determination of the Information Technology Services (ITS) Office, their activity hampers official university activities. The use of official university graphic elements - including logos, seals, and other identifying marks - is allowed as per this policy as long as the graphic standards are adhered to. A version of the Bethlehem University Style Guide and downloadable versions of the approved institutional logos can be provided by the Communications team.

### **2. Guidelines for Content:**

- a. BU employees are expected to adhere to same standards of conduct online as they would in the workplace. Employees are fully responsible for what they post to social media sites.
- b. Use good judgment about content and respect privacy. Do not include confidential information about the University, its staff, or its students.
- c. Post only content that is not threatening, obscene, a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, or otherwise injurious or illegal.
- d. Representation of your personal opinions as being endorsed by the University or any of its organizations is strictly prohibited. The Bethlehem University name or marks may not be used to endorse any opinion, product, private business, cause, or political candidate.
- e. By posting content to any social media site, the poster represents that the poster owns or otherwise has all of the rights necessary to lawfully use that content or that the use of the content is permitted by fair use. Posters also agree that they will not knowingly provide misleading or false information, and that they will indemnify and hold the University harmless for any claims resulting from the content.
- f. When using or posting online material that includes direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos, or videos, always include citations. Provide a link to the original material if applicable.
- g. To avoid creating confusion over whether or not the account is associated with Bethlehem University — If you identify yourself as a Bethlehem University faculty or staff member online, it



should be clear that the views expressed on your site are not those of the University and you are not acting in your capacity as a BU employee. While not a requirement, BU employees may consider adding the following disclaimer to personal social media accounts. "While I am an employee at Bethlehem University, comments made on this account are my own and not that of the University."

- h. Faculty are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the proposed guidelines and to engage in discussions concerning the ethical use of social media sites in an academic setting.

**Administrators may contact Bethlehem University's Communications Officers at any time for consultation.**

### **3. Use of Social Media Sites for the Placement of Advertising:**

This Policy does not authorize University departments to enter into advertising agreements with social media sites. Any BU unit wishing to purchase advertising services from social media sites, or from any type of publication, must follow all applicable rules and policies governing both the communication considerations and the procurement and contracting considerations related to such services.

It is important to note the following:

- a. Because most, if not all, social media sites will require a "clickwrap" agreement (online contract that can be accepted by clicking "Yes" or "I accept"), University employees generally do not have the authority to place advertising without administrative approvals. Requests for approval should be directed to Communications Officers. Agreements may also require legal review and approval by the Finance Office.
- b. Remember that the ease of clicking "I accept" does not mean that the license agreement is without risk to the University. If you are in doubt about your authority to accept an online agreement on behalf of BU, or the content of an agreement that is within your authority, contact the Communications Officers for guidance.

## **7. COMPLIANCE**

Since the EVP is entrusted with this policy, and in coordination with the Director of Marcom, is responsible for implementing this policy and report in writing or through email on any breach to this policy by any BU user(s) to the VP of Human Resources, stating the breach details and recommending any disciplinary action as per BU policies in this respect

## **8. RELATED INFORMATION**