



Institutional Media and Messaging Policy

Effective Date: July 2025

Last Updated: July 2025

1. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear and consistent guidelines for the creation, management, and use of social media accounts that represent Southern Union State Community College (SUSCC). This policy governs conduct for faculty, staff, student workers, affiliated organizations, and members of the public interacting with SUSCC on social media platforms.

This policy ensures:

- Consistent representation of SUSCC's brand and reputation.
 - Alignment of social media content with the College's mission, values, and policies.
 - Professionalism, credibility, and security in all official social media communications.
 - Clear understanding of responsibilities and expectations for those posting on behalf of SUSCC.
 - Compliance with applicable laws and regulations, including FERPA, HIPAA, Alabama Public Records Laws, and copyright laws.
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2. Scope

This policy applies to:

2.1 Official SUSCC Social Media Accounts

- College-wide, departmental, program-specific, and organization-affiliated accounts representing SUSCC.
- Accounts created by employees or student workers in an official capacity.

2.2 Internal Users

- Faculty, staff, and student workers managing or contributing to SUSCC's social media presence.



2.3 External Users

- Students, alumni, prospective students, and members of the public who engage with SUSCC's social media platforms or represent the college online.
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3. Internal Social Media Guidelines

3.1 Account Creation & Management

- All official social media accounts must be approved and registered with the Public Relations Office prior to launch.
- Account managers must be current SUSCC employees or designated student workers supervised by a full-time employee.
- The Public Relations Office must be granted full administrative access or emergency login credentials to all official accounts.
- Personal accounts may not be used for official SUSCC communications and employees are strongly discouraged from speaking on behalf of the college on any media channel.

3.2 Branding & Content Standards

- All logos, colors, fonts, and visual assets must strictly adhere to SUSCC's official branding guidelines.
- Content must be professional, inclusive, and accessible (e.g., alt-text for images, no excessive jargon).
- Official accounts must avoid political endorsements, controversial subjects, and personal opinions.
- Third-party content must be verified and credited properly. This applies to both internal and external communications.
- All posts must support SUSCC's mission and must not misrepresent the college or its affiliates.

3.3 Privacy & Confidentiality

- Do not share private or sensitive student or employee information in accordance with FERPA and HIPAA.
- Do not publicly discuss legal matters, internal issues, or confidential college operations.
- Obtain written consent before posting any identifiable photos or videos of individuals.

3.4 Posting & Engagement

- Posts must be grammatically correct, professional in tone, and fact-checked.
- The Southern Union Public Relations Office reserves the right to deny or not post submitted materials that do not align with the College's mission, standards, or messaging strategy.
- Unapproved artwork or graphics will not be posted on Southern Union's main social media accounts and will be brought into question on other accounts.
- Engagement with followers should be timely, courteous, and appropriate.
- Report any negative comment, controversy, or potential crisis to the Public Relations Office before responding.
- Monitor platforms for inappropriate content and take action when necessary.
- In the event of inappropriate or controversial comments on SUSCC-affiliated posts, all responses must be coordinated with the Public Relations Office **before replying publicly**.

3.5 Employee Personal Use

- Personal opinions must be clearly distinguished from official SUSCC positions.
- Avoid discussing sensitive college matters or internal disputes on personal accounts.
- Use of personal accounts for official SUSCC business is strongly discouraged.
- Publicly available content—such as job postings or announcements about new programs—may be shared, provided it has already been formally announced by the College.

4. External Social Media Guidelines

4.1 Community Engagement

Southern Union encourages interaction but expects all public engagement to be:

- Respectful and free of hate speech, threats, or harassment.
- Relevant to the College and its discussions.
- Non-commercial and non-promotional unless previously approved.

4.2 Commenting & Moderation

SUSCC reserves the right to hide, delete, or report content containing:

- Hate speech, discriminatory language, or personal attacks.



- Obscenity, profanity, or inappropriate imagery.
- Misleading or false statements about the college.
- Harassment or bullying.
- Unapproved commercial content or spam.
- Information in violation of FERPA, HIPAA, or copyright regulations.

Repeat violations may result in users being blocked or reported to platform administrators and/or being subject to discipline.

4.3 Crisis Communication

- Only the Public Relations Office may issue official statements during emergencies or crises.
- All crisis-related concerns must be reported to the Public Relations Office immediately.
- Do not speculate or share unofficial information during emergency situations or speak to the press without first consulting with the Public Relations Office.

5. Security and Account Protection

5.1 Password & Access Management

- Credentials must be stored securely and shared only with authorized users.
- Use strong passwords and two-factor authentication where available.
- Report suspected breaches or account compromises to the Public Relations Office immediately.

5.2 Platform Compliance

- Social media managers must comply with each platform's terms of service.
- Any violations or account suspensions must be reported to the Public Relations Office.

6. Policy Enforcement

6.1 Internal Users

Violations of this policy may result in:

- Formal warnings and mandatory retraining.



- Loss of access or administrative rights to official accounts.
- Disciplinary actions consistent with SUSCC's employee handbook.

6.2 External Users

Violations by external users may result in:

- Comment or post removal.
- Temporary or permanent bans from SUSCC platforms.
- Further legal action for defamatory, harassing, or harmful content.

7. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically by the Public Relations Office. All updates will be communicated to relevant stakeholders, including social media account managers and SUSCC employees.

8. Contact Information

For questions, approvals, or clarification regarding social media usage, contact:

Southern Union Public Relations Office

Phone: 334-745-6437 Ext. 5145/5581

Email: Shondae Brown - sbrown@suscc.edu or Harper Hollon - hhollon@suscc.edu

9. Addendum: Design & Content Request Protocols

- Only designers **approved by the PR Department** may create promotional content on behalf of the college.
- Approved designers are required to **sign an acknowledgment** form confirming receipt and understanding of the College's branding guidelines. This form is available upon request from the Public Relations Office and must also be submitted to that office upon completion.