



## Social Media Guidelines

Social media is a strategic tool that promotes the office, department, organization, or team. Springfield College embraces and encourages the opportunities it offers for publicity and engagement. Department and team use of social media can be beneficial on many fronts: it strengthens our overall brand, promotes our accomplishments, and builds community among our audiences.

Check out Springfield College's official social media accounts:

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[X \(formerly Twitter\)](#)

[Snapchat](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

[Youtube](#)

[TikTok](#)

[Flickr](#)

Following the guidelines below will help social media managers develop a successful online presence and avoid potential problems.



# COLLEGE GUIDELINES

## CREATING ACCOUNTS

Social media accounts should only be created for Springfield College, office, department, program or organization upon approval. Do not create accounts for events, conferences, or any potentially temporary topics or initiatives. Exceptions may be requested by emailing [marketing@springfield.edu](mailto:marketing@springfield.edu) . We are happy to help you with your account and answer questions.

The Office of Marketing keeps an up-to-date listing of all Springfield College accounts, including login information to be used in emergencies. *If you already have active social media accounts and have not done so already, please confirm your site, administrator contact, and login information with the Office of Marketing. At least one member of the Office of Marketing should also be listed as an admin on any Facebook pages.*

### Authorization/Contact Person

All profiles should have a contact person or administrator. This person is responsible for regularly monitoring posts and content. The administrator must be a full-time College employee and all accounts should be linked to a Springfield College email account.



**By registering accounts with the Office of Marketing, we can ensure that necessary communications such as emergency alerts and changes to social media procedures can be communicated to account managers.** The Office of Marketing must be notified when a new administrator takes over.

You may choose to have other staff members or students assist with site management, in which case be sure that they are aware of these guidelines and policies. Site administrators are responsible for additional employees and students linked to the account.

### **NAMING ACCOUNTS**

All accounts created on behalf of the College should begin with “SC” and be followed with the name of your division, department, etc. For example: SC School of Engineering, SC Alumni Association, SC School of Law. Following this naming convention supports College branding and helps users when they search for our pages and accounts.

**Note:** *Springfield College should always be written with a mix of capital and lowercase letters – never with all caps. The Springfield College wordmark is the only instance where capitals appear to be used, but this is actually a custom font that uses small caps.*



## **SUPPORTING THE SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE BRAND**

If you create a social media site on behalf of the College, use simple graphics that reflect the Springfield College brand. Our brand standards are outlined at our [branding guidelines](#) with information on logos, colors, fonts, and more.

The Springfield College brand should be reflected in your profile pictures, icons, and other imagery. You are not required to utilize the Springfield College wordmark, but please create artwork that complements the brand. Below is an example of the acceptable profile picture to be used:



### **MODERATION**

Social media is about engagement; once you post to a platform like X (formerly Twitter) or Facebook, don't allow the account to sit there until it is time for another update! When



managing an account for the College, be sure to regularly monitor comments or inquiries and respond in an efficient manner to all followers in a timely manner.

Content (e.g. comments, replies, and posts) that is positive or negative, favorable or unfavorable, must be allowed. As a College, we support our community's freedom to voice their thoughts and opinions. If you are unsure whether the content could be viewed as threatening or obscene, please contact the Office of Marketing to discuss your concerns. We also do not allow commercial promotion. Here is the disclaimer that is currently used on [Springfield College's Facebook page](#) in the [About section](#): *We reserve the right to remove content that we determine is threatening, libelous, defamatory, obscene or otherwise objectionable or violates any party's intellectual property or Facebook's Terms of Use. Advertising or any form of commercial promotion or solicitation is not allowed on this page.* The same rights are reserved for our Instagram and any other channels.

### **BE CAREFUL AND ACCURATE**

Before hitting "share," be sure to carefully review and check facts and grammar before posting anything publicly. Your posts become part of the public record and should never contain content that you would not want seen published or broadcast publicly. If there is an error made in posting, quickly acknowledge and correct it immediately; also avoid oversimplifying or sensationalizing issues.



Any messages which might be perceived as representing the voice or position of the College require prior approval by the Office of Marketing.

## **POLICIES AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

It is important to comply with existing institutional, state, and national policies when managing social media sites. Please consider the policies outlined in the [Official Faculty and Staff Handbook](#) and [The Student Code](#).

Do not post confidential information about Springfield College or members of our community. Use good judgment and follow College policies and federal requirements, such as the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

## **KNOW THE TERMS OF SERVICE**

Learn and follow the Terms of Service/Community Guidelines of each platform you use, especially with regard to images/music/promotions. Social media sites may even block or delete your account if they deem you in violation of their Terms of Service/Community Guidelines.



## GETTING STARTED

Social media may appear simple to set up, but creating an effective presence requires careful planning, skill, and time investment. Before beginning on this path, please refer to this guide to ensure you fully comprehend all that goes into managing an account for Springfield College.

### DEFINE GOALS

- What are your communications goals? Are you trying to engage students or alumni, share updates, news, or spark conversations? Your answers to these questions will have an effectful influence on your strategy as you select platforms and create content.
- Are your goals short or long term? Social media accounts require continuous upkeep, so it is crucial that you commit to keeping them active over time. Inactive accounts reflect poorly on the College. Carefully consider whether you have enough time and resources available to run an account. For short-term needs such as promotion of an event, alternative solutions could include using Facebook Event creation with additional promotion through other College channels (i.e. websites, emails, *Triangle Monthly* subscription). Alternatively, you can contact the Office of Marketing to seek assistance in helping promote it further.



- How will social media integrate with your website and existing communications to be in the best interests of Springfield College? Social media activity conducted on behalf of the College must directly and measurably align with its strategic mission and priorities.

### SELECT THE RIGHT PLATFORM

- Do you want to know which social media platform your department should join? It's important to understand the differences and ramifications of each platform before creating a new account.
- There are many social networks on the internet. New platforms are constantly being launched, but it is best to focus your attention on the platforms where you will most likely find your target audience, such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, Snapchat, and LinkedIn. Be careful not to lose interest in new platforms. Instead, maintain consistent activity for the first year and monitor the performance.
- If you need help selecting the best platforms, or you want to be sure that you are on the right track, please email [marketing@springfield.edu](mailto:marketing@springfield.edu) with any questions.

### CHOOSE YOUR ACCOUNT MANAGERS

Selecting the ideal person to manage your social media presence is an integral component of successful strategy.





### What Makes an Ideal Social Media Manager

- Experienced user of social networks who utilizes them regularly for personal and professional purposes.
- A social media manager interested in keeping up with social media and marketing trends. A strong communicator with strong writing abilities. At an institution of higher education, it's vital that our social media posts reflect the quality of our programs - we expect well-written posts with proper grammar and no typographical errors from followers on these social platforms.
- Engaging with the Springfield College community by attending events and being connected to students. Skilled in image editing as well as possessing basic design knowledge which will aid in producing dynamic content.
- Effective judgment. Social media tends to be light-hearted and enjoyable, but unexpected issues may arise that require swift responses - an ideal manager will know how to react when under pressure.

### DEVELOP A CONTENT STRATEGY

- Content is king, no matter which platform(s) you select. Grab your audience's attention by providing valuable news and links. Your posts should always speak back to this expertise in some way.
- Content curation can be done expertly without necessarily needing to create original pieces; focus instead on discovering content already being shared across



the Web and finding ways to adapt it for yourself - taking care to include proper attribution, links back, and credit when sharing that material.

- Which tone and style of communication will appeal to your target audience most effectively? Establish an identifiable voice that embodies the character and brand of your School, College or department. Social media allows users to be informal yet professional when communicating.
- How often will you post? Establishing a regular and consistent posting frequency is vitally important. While exact timing will differ for each platform, and may depend on factors like department needs and types of content being created, an ideal posting frequency would depend on you having enough time available for regular social media posts if possible; otherwise, other solutions for reaching the community might be worth exploring instead.

### CREATE YOUR ACCOUNT

- Establish your social media accounts following the steps outlined on each platform. Please review our College Social Media Guidelines above for information on creating accounts, account names and more.
- Include information about your office or department that is both descriptive and historical if possible. Incorporate details such as description, contact information, and any available history.
- Social media platforms have made applying for verification easier, particularly X (formerly Twitter). Verifying your account adds credibility to it; Facebook owns



Instagram too, so applying for Facebook verification allows you to also apply for Instagram verification at once!

#### EXPAND YOUR REACH

- Connect with Springfield College accounts to engage with their content. Like, comment or share when it suits your content strategy.
- You may discover hidden values through networking! You can encourage them to do the same by liking, sharing and commenting on their content!
- Integrate social media links or icons into your marketing communications. Look for opportunities for cross-promotion.
- You should use all of the tools available on each platform. X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram users can utilize hashtags. On Facebook, you can mention other pages or encourage your followers to tag people they know when posting photos.

#### TRACK AND IMPROVE

- Use URL shorteners like Springfield College's URL shortener or Bitly to track click-throughs and shorten URLs. Then, use this data to determine which posts are the most engaging for audiences. Review the analytics provided by most platforms to determine what content resonates with your audience. Then, adapt your strategy according to this information.
- A management tool like Sprout Social, TweetDeck or a similar one that automatically posts or collects data can make tracking easier. If you are



considering paying for services, be sure to ask about a discount for education/nonprofits.

## BEST PRACTICES

### DETERMINE YOUR VOICE AND TONE

Create a voice that reflects the character and individuality of your School, College, or department. Think carefully about who your audience is before writing in an engaging tone that speaks directly to them. Although social media allows users to be informal in their tone of writing, remember that you represent Springfield College by following its brand culture as your guide.

### ADD VALUE

Social media networks are overrun with users offering different messages and agendas, and finding yourself lost among the noise is difficult. One way to break through is by crafting and posting valuable content that engages your target audience - this way they'll pay attention and remember you.

### KEEP THE SOCIAL IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is about relationships, so focus on connecting with your followers and finding ways to engage with them. Divide your time between creating content and engaging with your followers on a regular basis. If they ask a question, be sure to provide an answer. If they comment, thank them for their input.



### KEEP IT CONCISE

While X (formerly Twitter) limits messages to 280 characters, Facebook, Instagram and other networks do not impose such limitations. Even without an actual character limit in place, keep your messages succinct. Generally speaking, shorter posts tend to get more engagement; however longer ones might also become more noticeable. It's best practice to vary post length for optimal results.

### DON'T OVER POST AND SHARE

Though posting regularly can keep your followers connected, overdoing it could bore them and turn them away from your brand. Don't post just for the sake of posting; rather share items of value to your community that reflect positively on your brand.

### SIT THIS ONE OUT

Do not participate in every conversation that revolves around your School, College, or department; nor should you jump on every viral trend that surfaces online. Sometimes it is best just to listen.



## BE TRANSPARENT

On social media, openness is key. When posting, try to be as honest and transparent as possible. Responding is important! Acknowledge mistakes or admit that there are no solutions available.

## HANDLING THE NEGATIVE

You may receive negative comments, and while it may be tempting to delete these, do not. This can lead to even more negativity, which has led to disastrous public relations for companies and institutions. Focus on whether you should respond or not, and avoid engaging with trolls that try to provoke reactions. Need help handling negative comments? Reach out to the Office of Marketing at [marketing@springfield.edu](mailto:marketing@springfield.edu) for support.

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## Social Media Resources

Here are some resources and tips:

### GETTING STARTED

Need some assistance as you navigate social media? Check out our [Guide to Getting Started](#) for some advice and assistance in starting off on this exciting journey.

### DESIGNING FOR SOCIAL

Visual content is at the core of every successful social media account, so as a social media manager it's vitally important that you possess basic image editing and design abilities. We offer a few resources and cheat sheets to assist with this.



There are various profile pictures, cover photos and background graphics you must design for your social media accounts. Please note it can be challenging to keep track of all of their dimensions. Here is a cheat sheet that can help:

- [Guide to social media image sizes](#)

[Photoshop](#) is a great online tool to create and edit images and graphics. Other affordable options like [Canva](#) and [PicMonkey](#) are also available.

## SHORTEN AND TRACK YOUR LINKS

We advise you to use a tool to shorten URLs, like [Bit.ly](#) as needed when posting links on social media platforms for three main reasons:

- Shorter links are more manageable and user-friendly.
- Promotion is made easier as more links and content can be accommodated in less space.
- Click-through analytics allow you to track the number of times a link is clicked on and you can use this data as the basis for content decisions.

## HASHTAGS

Hashtags are one of the most efficient means of categorizing content on social media. By linking it with similar posts that use it, a hashtag makes your posts discoverable by others while simultaneously helping you discover relevant material from others.



Are you searching for the right hashtags to use in your post in order to reach the appropriate target audience? Take a look through our list of Springfield College hashtags.

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Springfield College has established a social media policy to distinguish employees' personal social media voices from professional ones at the College. Springfield College fully affirms their employees' rights to voice their own opinions or express themselves on personal social media accounts without restriction from this policy; rather it provides standards for distinguishing one from the other legally protected forms of speech on social media platforms.

Please familiarize yourself with [Springfield College's Social Media Policy](#) before posting to any social media outlets.