Florida State University Policy 3-20

Title of Policy:	**Social Media Policy**
Responsive Executive:	**Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost and Vice President for Finance & Administration**
Approving Official:	**Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost and Vice President for Finance & Administration**
Effective Date:	**August 14, 2026**
Revisions History:	**New, 9/02/2018 as part of Policy 4-OP-H-14; revised and made this stand-alone policy, August 14, 2026**

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background and Purpose

The University recognizes, embraces, and supports the rights of academic freedom and individual expression. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for employee use of social media that respect academic freedom and individual expression and uphold the University's mission, values, and reputation while minimizing disruption to University operations.

This policy shall not be construed or applied in a manner that improperly interferes with employee rights under Chapter 447, Florida Statutes, or to interfere with academic freedom as defined in the University Constitution, Policy 3-1, Article 5 of the FSU BOT-UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 5 of the FSU BOT-GAU Collective Bargaining Agreement, or with rights provided by the United States Constitution.

See the "Social Media Guidance" on the Faculty Development & Advancement website at https://fda.fsu.edu for guidance and best practices related to employee social media usage. In addition, ITS Technology policies are available at https://policies.vpfa.fsu.edu/policies-and-procedures/technology

B. Definitions

1. Employee: Any individual employed by the University in a full-time or part-time capacity, including but not limited to Faculty, Executive Service, Administrative and Professional, University Support Personnel System, Graduate Assistant, or Other Personal Services positions.

2. Faculty: All tenured, tenure earning, specialized, adjunct, clinical, visiting, teaching, research, librarians, instructional specialists, instructors, or other classes of full-time and part-time faculty members employed by the University.
3. Individual Professional Account: An employee's social media account intended to serve as an extension of the employee's research, teaching, creative activity, scholarship, service, professional networking, or showcasing of expertise. A social media account profile that identifies in the biographical information the accountholder as an employee of the University is presumptively an individual professional account.
4. Official University Account: An account created or managed on behalf of the University or its departments, divisions, or programs for the dissemination of official University messaging.
5. Personal Account: An employee's social media account maintained by the employee and intended for personal, non-official, or non-institutional use.
6. Social Media: Online platforms that enable user interaction, content sharing, or networking, including but not limited to X/Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube, Threads, podcasts, and academic forums such as ResearchGate or Academia.edu.

II. POLICY

A. Official University Account of Department, Program or Office

1. Academic units and administrative offices may utilize digital services to establish official University social media accounts in order to communicate information to interested parties when such accounts are created, approved, and managed in accordance with University communication standards.
2. Official social media sites or accounts that represent a specific department, program, or office must restrict messages to those appropriate and relevant to the domain or discipline area of the department, program, or office, and must be accurate, professional, and aligned with University messaging.
3. Access credentials for official accounts should be maintained by more than one authorized employee and promptly transferred upon changes in personnel.
4. Official University accounts shall be consistent with the University's Branding Policy 2-8 and shall not be used or sponsored by private entities without written approval from University Communications.

B. Individual Professional Account

1. Employees enjoy the right to share scholarly or professional work and express opinions consistent with the principles of academic freedom.
2. Employees utilizing an individual professional account should focus on messaging relevant to the discipline or professional area of the employee's research, teaching, creative activity, scholarship, service, and/or expertise. For example, an employee

should utilize an individual professional account to announce an upcoming presentation they are giving at a conference, their cutting-edge research findings, a future exhibit of their work, or an award they have received.

3. Employees must respect confidentiality laws (FERPA, HIPAA, etc.), University policies, trade secrets, copyright, research, and intellectual property rights when sharing information online.
4. Employees shall maintain professional standards and treat students, colleagues, and others with respect, and should be aware that online conduct can affect professional relationships and employment obligations.
5. Employees must not present personal statements or opinions as those of the University.
6. Employees should avoid content (e.g., statements, photographs, video, or audio) that could reasonably be perceived as malicious, obscene, defamatory, abusive, unlawful, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, unprofessional, negatively impacting the employee's ability to fairly and objectively perform their duties, or detrimental to the University's mission or values. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts that may harm someone's reputation or that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of a legally protected characteristic.
7. Social media activity conducted while working or made using University resources must align with institutional policies on technology and appropriate use.

C. Personal Account

1. Personal expression should clearly and unequivocally distinguish between personal views and official positions.
2. Even in the absence of an employee's express inclusion of their University affiliation in their social media account, an employee should be mindful that such affiliation may be known or discovered and that their posts may reflect upon and/or affect the University, including potentially impacting their ability to perform the essential functions of their professional responsibilities. If there is a reasonable chance that the employee's activity could be construed as being from the University, the employee should include a disclaimer or clarifying statement such as: "*The views expressed are my own and do not represent the views of my employer*."
3. A social media post that is shared/reshared by an employee or is a comment/reply to the post of another could be considered by the University to be the same as a direct post of that employee for purposes of this policy.
4. It is a best practice for an employee posting on a personal account to use their personal equipment and on their own time. However, such action does not necessarily prevent such posts from reflecting upon and/or affecting the University.

D. Enforcement and Compliance

1. Allegations of social media usage by an employee in violation of this policy and/or that could reasonably be construed as causing substantial disruption to the University, which could include disrupting classes, safety or another's rights; negatively impacting the learning experience of a particular student, group of students, or the overall educational environment; undermining trust in the University; or negatively affecting the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of their professional responsibilities, will be reviewed by the Office of Human Resources, in consultation with the Office of Faculty Development & Advancement and the Office of the General Counsel, as needed, through its normal processes and existing procedures related to inquiries or investigations into potential violations of University policy (i.e., including notice of allegations and an opportunity to respond).
2. The review will take into account the facts, circumstances, and context of an employee's social media activity, including the recency of a post (e.g., number of years, pre-employment vs. during FSU employment), the capacity in which such post was made (e.g., as a private citizen vs. as an employee), the intent of the employee when making the post (e.g., intentional vs. inadvertent), and other relevant factors.
3. If, after the review, any resulting disciplinary action is determined to be warranted, such discipline will be consistent with University Regulations, policies and procedures, and any applicable collective bargaining agreement. Any available appeal processes will also apply.

III. LEGAL SUPPORT, JUSTIFICATION AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

Article IX, Section 7, Florida Constitution; BOG Regulation 1.001, Delegation to President from Board of Trustees, Delegation from President to Provost; Article VI, Section C, Florida State University Constitution; First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and applicable case law; and University Policy 3-1.

This policy shall be reviewed every three years by the Office of the Provost, the Office of the Vice President for Finance & Administration, and the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement to ensure it remains current with evolving social media practices and legal requirements.