

SNU Policy: Electronic and Social Media
SNU Policy ID: General Information A-12
Policy Reviewed by: Director of Human Resources
Approval Authority: Vice President for Business and Finance
Approval Date: April 17, 2019
Next Review Date: April 17, 2024

A. Purpose

The rapid growth of electronic and social media is changing the way people communicate, network, conduct business, and relate to others. While electronic and social media offers many benefits, it also poses many risks. Most forums for electronic and social media are ultimately not anonymous, nor do they readily forget. Just about everything written on the Web can be traced back to its author one way or another and very easily. Information is backed up often and repeatedly, and posts in one forum are usually replicated in others through trackbacks and reposts or references. Therefore, to protect Southern Nazarene University (“the University”) and its students, employees, business partners, customers and vendors, this policy sets forth guidelines employees must follow when using electronic and social media.

B. Electronic and Social Media Covered by this Policy

Electronic and social media takes many forms and is continuously evolving. For purposes of this policy, electronic and social media includes but is not limited to Internet forums, blogs, online profiles, wikis, chat rooms, LinkedIn, Facebook, SnapChat, Tumblr, YouTube, Twitter, Yelp, Flickr, Second Life, Yahoo groups, Instagram, Google+, Whats App, Skype, Pinterest, Reddit, Swarm, Shots, Periscope, Medium, Wordpress, ZoomInfo, email, instant messaging, text messaging, and all other forms of technology supported communication and networking that may be developed.

C. Authorized Use of Electronic and Social Media

During scheduled work time, use of electronic and social media should be limited to work-related email, text messaging, and instant messaging. Incidental personal use is expected but should not interfere with the performance of job duties. Regardless of where employees are or when they are using electronic and social media, employees who use electronic and social media must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. **Abide By University Policies.** All use of electronic and social media must conform to the principles and values expressed in the policies of the University. For example, this includes policies governing unlawful harassment and discrimination; standards of acceptable conduct; protection and non-disclosure of confidential proprietary information of the University; protection and non-disclosure of confidential information regarding its students, employees, business partners, customers and vendors of the University; acceptable use of the University’s equipment; avoiding conflicts of interest;

and avoiding words or actions that could be damaging to the University, its students, employees, its reputation, business partners, customers or vendors.

- 2. Write in the First Person.** Because only select officers or directors of the University are authorized to speak on behalf of the University, employees must not make statements, publish written materials, or otherwise purport to speak on behalf of or represent the University. Employees must clearly identify themselves. If the context makes an employee's relationship with the University apparent or generally known, the employee should state that he or she is speaking or writing on their own behalf and not for the University and should avoid words such as "we", "us" or "ours," which may indicate that they are speaking for the University or fellow employees.
- 3. Avoid the Appearance of a Connection with the University.** Employees should use their own personal e-mail address for all personal matters. Where an employee's connection to the University is apparent, the employee should include the following disclaimer: "The views expressed are my own and do not reflect or represent the views, strategies, or positions of the University or any of my colleagues at the University." Such a disclaimer, however, will not shield an employee from disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, if he or she posts information or engages in actions that violate either University policy or governing law.
- 4. Be Respectful of Others and Exercise Sound Judgment.** Use of electronic and social media should always be respectful of others and show sound judgment and discretion. For example, avoid using ethnic slurs, personal insults, and obscenity. Show consideration for the privacy of others. Dialogue diplomatically without being offensive or inflammatory. Do not post or communicate matters that may be construed as defamatory or threatening, or that may infringe on intellectual property rights, or contain illegal content.
- 5. Protect the Brand and Reputation of all University entities.** Be careful to ensure that electronic and social media communications are consistent with and will positively impact the brand identity, integrity, and reputation of all University entities. If contacted by the media or press about postings that relate to the University, its students, employees, business partners, customers or vendors, employees must not respond unless authorization is granted by the President of the University.
- 6. Protect Confidential Business, Customer and Financial Information.** Employees are expected to protect the privacy of the University, its students, employees, business partners, customers or vendors. To that end, employees may not publicly discuss or post any matters that pertain to the University, its students, employees, business partners, customers, vendors or suppliers outside of the University-approved communications. Employees are prohibited from disclosing information about co-workers and any other proprietary and nonpublic information to which employees have access through their employment with the University, such as financial information, personal employment information, strategic business plans, customer information and other confidential or proprietary information.

- 7. Ensure Electronic and Social Media Usage Does Not Interfere with Work or Business.** Employees should not allow use of electronic and social media to interfere with the interests of the University, its students, employees, business partners, customers or vendors. Use of electronic and social media must not result in or create the appearance of a conflict of interest. Nor should it cast the University, its students, employees, business partners, customers or vendors in a negative or false light or otherwise interfere with the business or business relationships of the University.
- 8 Authorized University-Related Postings.** Employees who have been authorized to communicate on behalf of the University and who use electronic and social media must ensure that the information posted is accurate and lawful. Errors may not only reflect poorly on the University but could result in legal liability as well. In addition, employees may not post any copyrighted information where written reprint authorization has not been obtained in advance.
- 9. Employees Must Remove or Revise Electronic and Social Media Posts Upon Request.** The University does not desire to interfere with the ability of its employees to use electronic and social media freely during personal, non-work time and trusts employees will carefully comply with this policy. Employees are reminded, however, that they should have no expectation of privacy with regard to use of electronic and social media through devices owned by the University or through the University's network or systems. Thus, the University may require that an Employee remove or revise a post if it deems the post inappropriate or that removing it will help ensure compliance with applicable policies, laws or the business or reputation of the University. If the post considered objectionable by the University is on a site hosted by the University, the University reserves the right to remove it without notice.

D. Monitoring Electronic and Social Media Usage

The University reserves and exercises the right to monitor the use of its business devices and the use of electronic and social media for compliance with this and other University policies. Monitoring includes but is not limited to posts, comments, and discussions about the University, its students, employees, business partners, customers, vendors or even competitors.

E. Reporting Violations

Employees who observe use of electronic and social media that raises a concern in light of this policy should promptly report it to their supervisor, manager, or any other member of management.

F. Discipline for Violations

The University will investigate and respond promptly to reports of policy violations. Violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. The University may also respond to policy violations and illegal activity by taking legal action against employees or others to protect its rights and interest.

G. Indemnity for Claims or Losses Resulting from Employee Posts

Employees agree to indemnify the University against any damages, losses, liabilities, judgments, costs, or expenses (including reasonable attorneys' fees and costs) arising out of a claim by a third party relating to any material not authorized by the University that an Employee has posted. Employees also agree to allow the University to deduct any damages, losses, liabilities, or costs from the Employee's wages.