“Social media” refers to a wide variety of interactive media using text, pictures, video, and audio. Traditional mass media are produced in static form, and read or studied by recipients. Social media turns recipients into participants, enabling them to comment on, and contribute to, content almost instantaneously.

Examples of social media: blogs, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube. You can use social media at the UB Graduate School of Education via the schools’ new, primary social media site (https://www.facebook.com/UBGraduateSchoolofEducation), or you can create your own site. Sites can include:

- Program sites or pages (for a particular academic discipline, service program, or student organization).
- Class sites or pages (for a particular class section).
- Affinity site (for a particular group of faculty, staff, or students).

You may wish to consider a program, class, or affinity presence if:

- You anticipate posting frequent information (e.g. every few days).
- You plan to provide ongoing conversation and dialoguing opportunities.
- You have a large number of potential “followers.”

The University at Buffalo Graduate School of Education Social Media Directory (insert website here) is a comprehensive list of pages, across platforms that are officially affiliated with the Graduate School of Education. This is including, but not limited to, departmental pages, research centers, and student groups. Pages included in the GSE Social Media Directory should adhere to these best practices. In addition, we hope you can include the following statement in your “About” section, or other clearly visible section of your landing page.

“[Insert Social Media affinity name} is affiliated with the Graduate School of Education at the University at Buffalo. The Graduate School of Education creates and applies knowledge informed by research on human development, educational policy, pedagogy, and information science. For more information about the Graduate School of Education at the University at Buffalo, visit http://gse.buffalo.edu.”

We hope to use this language across all platforms to unify the diverse entities that comprise GSE. If you have questions about the use of this language on your page, please ask the Social Media Team. (See the last page of this document for contact information).

Please note that we hope to use the Graduate School of Education Facebook page as a primary driver of content to GSE’s diverse range of audiences. These tips and pieces of information should be carefully considered before creating additional pages that carry the GSE logo and brand. Creating your own program, class, or affinity presence carries special responsibilities. Doing so means:

- Being prepared to monitor the page daily, including weekends, holidays, and breaks.

1 Adopted from http://mgt.buffalo.edu/internal/visualidentity/socialmedia
• Posting new content and keeping it fresh every few days.
• Responding to inquiries within 24 hours. The Internet doesn’t stop when you leave the office or classroom and neither should your commitment to monitor and respond via social networks. A social media page with little activity reflects poorly on your department, GSE, and on the university as a whole.
• Responding to comments or moderate dialogue at least once every 24 hours.
• Recruiting a “backup manager” and a well-defined “succession plan” when you leave the school or are unable to perform your social media duties.

UB Graduate School of Education presences on social media sites are considered to be an extension of the website, and most guidelines that apply to the website (such as brand and identity guidelines) will also apply to your social media site.

Student Clubs/Organizations: The advisor(s) of any student club/organization must have administrative access to their club’s social media account(s) with authority to review, monitor and, if necessary, change content.

To ensure continuity of the Graduate School of Education’s online identity, if you are exploring the creation of your own office or administrative department presence on a social media site, please contact Graduate School of Education Social Media Team. They can help you:

• Discuss the social media process and requirements.
• Determine if you should develop your own social media account or utilize one of the school’s primary sites; identify your site goals and content strategy; determine your anticipated audience; and designate one or more backup site managers.
• Address profile naming conventions and graphics needs.
• Get your account the needed visibility on the GSE website.

Note: Blogs should be professional in nature with content of that reflects the mission and topics relevant to the Graduate School of Education.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT TIPS

When you use social media on behalf of the UB Graduate School of Education, or in your role as a member of the UB community, keep these tips in mind.

Be Interesting

Some suggestions:

• Write about what you know
• When providing content that will be posted to a main GSE social media page, make sure to include the following: an image (or link to an image), website to drive the audience to, and a brief summary of the connection of the information to GSE.
• Be informal. Remember that social media communication has some of the characteristics of speech and some of the characteristics of writing.
• Respond quickly. The ability to publish your thoughts quickly is a great benefit of social media. Aim to publish posts or comment about breaking news or current happenings without delay. (However, at the same time, if you’re in doubt about a post or something

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2 Adopted from http://socialmedia.policytool.net/
“just doesn’t feel right,” wait a while before posting it or ask someone else to look at it before posting).

- Seek dialogue. Engage your audience by posting questions, factoids, human interest material, surveys, informative tips, puzzles, and other content designed to create dialogue.
- Answer questions, encourage feedback. Say “thank you” when someone posts a positive comment.
- Connect with other pages/accounts. Find, share, and comment on content from other sources to help build awareness and a community around your social media efforts.

Devote the Right Amount of Time to Social Media
- If you’re a member of the UB Graduate School of Education staff, be sure you have your supervisor’s approval before you take on any ongoing social media responsibilities as part of your work duties.
- Check your social media page or site at least once each day, and respond or comment as appropriate.
- Arrange to maintain coverage over weekends, holidays, and breaks. Remember that questions, positive and negative comments, and requests don’t take breaks. Utilizing a social media tool such as HootSuite can help you schedule future posts.
- Plan to post new content every few days. Dynamic ever-changing social media keeps your audience intact. Static, neglected media reflects poorly on the school.
- Be sure that you have time to manage your social media page or site, and that you don’t neglect other responsibilities while doing so.

Disclose Your Role
When posting or commenting online:
- Use your real name.
- Use your university email address when using university computers.
- Include your title or role.
- Provide contact information.

Be Honest
Nothing gains you attention in social media more than honesty or dishonesty. This:
- Be accurate and complete in anything you publish.
- Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading.
- If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out.
- Be cautious about disclosing personal details.
- If you make an error, be upfront about your mistake and correct it quickly.
- If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so.
- If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material, or a defamatory or inappropriate comment), be sure to notify the Graduate School of Education Social Media Team members immediately.

Respect Your Audience
The public in general, and UB Graduate School of Education faculty, staff, and students, reflect a diverse set of customs, values, and points of view. Thus:
- Be yourself, but maintain a tone of respect in all posts and comments.
• Remain consistent with content on the Graduate School of Education website.
• Take responsibility for your views and opinions, and make it clear to your audience that you are speaking for yourself, not for the entire school.
• Respond respectfully to anyone who posts comments you disagree with. Have a “thick skin,” and be prepared for negative responses or comments.
• Always avoid personally offensive comments, ethnic slurs, potentially defamatory statements, insults, arguments, and obscenity. Be careful about objectionable or inflammatory topics, such as politics and religion.
• If you maintain staff/supervisor or faculty/student relationships online, these should function in the same manner as offline relationships.

Respect Copyright and Trademark Laws
Today’s copyright laws were created with “old” media in mind. Copyright law as it relates to online media is still emerging. So follow these general rules of thumb:
• Never quote more than short excerpts of someone else’s work, and always attribute these quotes to the original author/source.
• When paraphrasing or discussing material drawn from another source, always attribute the material to the original author/source.
• When possible, link to others’ work, rather than reproduce it.
• Avoid reproducing any corporate logo or trademark.

Stay Safe
• Avoid disclosing personally identifiable details, such as home addresses, birth dates, or financial information.
• Report any actual or suspected hacking, impersonation, or online fraud for referral to law enforcement authorities.
• Maintain privacy settings appropriate to your program, class, or affinity group.

Adhere to spelling and grammar rules
Use a spell checker and manually proofread anything you post before it goes online. When in doubt about usage, consult the Associated Press Stylebook.

Don’t Commercialize
• Don’t promote or criticize any business organization.
• Don’t endorse or criticize a product.
• Don’t seek money or payments for any purpose.

Don’t Engage in Controversy or Crisis Communication
Refer controversial inquiries or posts to the Graduate School of Education Social Media Team.

Don’t Make Comments to the News Media
Reporters, editors, commentators, and bloggers follow social media closely. If you’re contacted by a member of the news media, refer the inquiry to Graduate School of Education Office of the Dean. This includes any request for comment from a blog or website. You will be advised whether to respond directly, or whether the school should issue a response or statement.

Don’t Engage in Political Activity
The University at Buffalo is a public organization, and is generally prohibited from engaging in political or partisan discourse. When posting content in connection with the university and/or using university hardware, software, or networks, avoid:

- Partisan positions
- Political endorsements
- Promotion of legislation

**Don’t Tell Secrets**

It's perfectly acceptable to talk about your work or university activities, and have a dialog with others, but it's not acceptable to publish confidential information. Confidential information includes items such as private student, staff or faculty information, grades, or records.

Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see. Google has a long memory.

**In Conclusion**

Choosing to use social media to represent your club, program, or department should be a strategic decision that is rooted in your club, office, or department’s strategic and business goals. The GSE Social Media committee is happy to assist you in planning out your goals for using social media, and is here to help you develop content that keeps your audience interested and engaged.

**Social Media Team**

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