

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### **Section:** Public Relations

**Policy:** All official social media accounts utilized by University Housing will be managed by the senior public relations coordinator and/or public relations specialist.

**Purpose:** To clarify the role of staff in monitoring and utilizing social media tools to enhance community development and overall communications with other University Housing staff, students and other stakeholders. While official communication is the primary responsibility of appointed housing communicators, we recognize that other staff may also further institutional goals by using social media. UGA employees working in communications or marketing functions are representing the university and should strive to follow standards and best practices when using social media.

**Scope:** This policy applies to any staff member or representative of an official University Housing affiliated group or organization maintaining a social media site.

**Background:** Social media are defined as media designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using easily accessible publishing techniques. These sites and platforms are fundamentally changing the way some of our stakeholders interact with each other and with the department itself. While communicating with our stakeholders it is important to consider that social media are powerful communication tools that have a significant impact on organizational and professional reputations.

It is the goal of University Housing to provide guidelines for social media practice for staff maintaining social media sites, while referring to the University of Georgia's policy for any conduct violations and subsequent disciplinary actions. UGA's social media policy is available here: <http://brand.uga.edu/social-media/guidelines>

### **Procedure:**

- I. All social media accounts designated as official accounts of University Housing will be managed by the senior public relations coordinator and/or public relations specialist.
- II. Staff members or representatives of an official University Housing group or organization may maintain a social media presence in order to enhance communication and promote community development. The exception is Facebook, where University Housing maintains one centralized page.
- III. Before opening a new social media account, staff members or representatives of an official University Housing group or organization proposing the account should do the following:
  - A. Secure the approval of the assistant director.
  - B. Notify the department: Official affiliates of University Housing (residence halls, living communities and/or organizations) who wish to engage in social media should contact the University Housing senior PR coordinator, who will ensure the proposed new account does not overlap or conflict with previously established ones and set up the account with a general-use UGA email.

- C. Notify the senior public relations coordinator of any changes to passwords or handles. Do not change the email address associated with the account.
  - D. Identify a responsible community manager: Determine who will be the primary person or people responsible for updating and monitoring the channel. Ensure that the coordinator has the time to check in on the channel at least once a day. This does not need to take up a significant amount of time, but successful social media sites are updated frequently, enable easy engagement with viewers and adjust in response to timely events and problems. Assign and train a backup for this person. It is important to control the administration of organizational social media accounts; that is, keeping the number of administrative publishers to a minimum and having rules in place for managing login credentials. Don't share social media passwords with those outside of the communications team.
  - E. Have a plan: Consider the message, audience and goals, as well as a strategy for keeping information on social media sites up-to-date. The PR specialist can assist and advise staff members and student leaders with social media planning.
- IV. Staff members or representatives of an official University Housing group or organization maintaining the account should do the following:
- A. Link back to the department: To strengthen University Housing's image and identity in social media, University Housing's name and/or logo should be easily identifiable on pages that represent an official connection (community, office, organization or department) with University Housing. Whenever possible, link back to University Housing's website and/or other social media pages.
    - 1. An example Twitter profile bio: Follow us to get all of the updates regarding @UGAHousing's undergraduate staff employment opportunities.
  - B. Follow the identity policy guidelines in using logos and in written descriptions of University Housing.
  - C. Protect the institutional voice: Posts on social media sites should protect the department's institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. Consider this when selecting profile pictures or icons and when selecting content to post. University Housing's voice is friendly, informative and spirited.
  - D. Read and understand UGA's social media guidelines and the policies associated with it at <http://brand.uga.edu/social-media/guidelines>
  - E. Read and understand the information presented by the institution regarding copyright and fair use at <https://ctl.uga.edu/faculty/teaching-resources/copyright-and-fair-use/>
  - F. Use the following access statement to accommodate individuals with disabilities:  
*University Housing seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services,*

*and activities for people with disabilities. Please call (community office number) or email (community office email) for specific accommodations.*

- V. Staff members or representatives of University Housing are encouraged to follow the best practices for social media use stated below.
- A. Maintain confidentiality. Do not post proprietary information about University Housing, including information about residents, former residents or employees. Use ethical judgment and follow university policies and federal requirements, such as the university's Privacy Policy: [https://eits.uga.edu/access\\_and\\_security/infosec/pols\\_regs/policies/privacy/](https://eits.uga.edu/access_and_security/infosec/pols_regs/policies/privacy/) the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act – FERPA: <https://reg.uga.edu/general-information/ferpa/> and the University System of Georgia Ethics Policy: [https://www.usg.edu/organizational\\_effectiveness/ethics\\_compliance/ethics\\_policy](https://www.usg.edu/organizational_effectiveness/ethics_compliance/ethics_policy)
  - B. Use the publicity test. In the realm of social media, privacy (of posted content) does not exist. When posting, it is best to consider what could happen if a post were to appear on a national news network.
  - C. Be a valued member. Share information from trusted sources outside of University Housing. Social media pages are a great place to promote and support university partners (e.g., Undergraduate Admissions, Dining Services, Transportation and Parking Services). This will increase the value of social media accounts and ensure the organization is a valued member of the community and are not just tooting its own horn.
  - D. Engage in conversation. A social media site without comments isn't very social. Be prepared to accept, respond to and delete comments. Respond to negative comments professionally and by providing any additional information that may help resolve the issue in a positive manner. Sometimes, not responding is appropriate and could be the best choice with social media. Student staff members must consult up before responding/not responding to negative comments. Professional staff members should use the university's flow chart for social media responses to guide their actions: <https://brand.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/uga-social-moderation-guide.png>
  - E. Solicit the input of the senior public relations coordinator before responding to negative posts.
  - F. Be timely. Account managers should devote time and resources to check on accounts at least a few minutes each day and post fresh content several times a week. Accounts are only as interesting as their last post—if that post is several weeks old, visitors will consider it irrelevant.
  - G. Know where to turn for help. If account managers encounter a question they cannot answer, or if they see incorrect information about University Housing, they should consult up or contact the senior public relations coordinator for University Housing.

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