

Social Media Guidelines

Reason for guidelines	2
Definitions	2
Responsibilities	3
Principles Overview	4
Procedures	7
Related Virginia Tech Policies	8
Contacts	9
Representing Virginia Tech	9
Virginia Tech branding and style requirements	10
Starting a new account	11
Social media platforms	12
Tips on content creation	14
Using submitted content	14
Using Hashtags	15
Comment/conversation moderation	15
Removing posts that have become controversial	16
Communications during campus emergencies	16
Measuring success (analytics/metrics)	17

Reason for guidelines

Virginia Tech authorizes the creation and use of university social media accounts, provided their use is professional, protects the reputation and brand of the university, and complies with Virginia Tech policies and applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

The university recognizes the value of social media platforms for a range of goals and must balance its support of social media with the preservation of Virginia Tech's brand identity, integrity, and reputation.

Entities affected by these guidelines

All units of the university including, but not limited to, colleges, schools, institutes, departments, student organizations and clubs, and governing organizations.

Who should read these guidelines

All faculty, staff members, and students who manage social media as a university-affiliated administrator or as an individual for personal use.

- See also: Related Virginia Tech policies, p. 7
- See also: Business and personal use of social media, p. 4

Guidelines available online

- Website: branding.unirel.vt.edu/brand/social-media-guidelines

Definitions

These definitions apply to terms as they are used in these guidelines.

Account Administrator	A Virginia Tech faculty member, staff member, or student who administers or authors content for any <i>university social media account</i> .
Communications Professional at the Unit Level	A university staff member within a unit charged with communications oversight at the unit level.
Social Media	A website or application external to Virginia Tech that permits sharing of information between people. This includes internet-based social networking applications, blogs, forums/chat rooms, collaborative information and publishing systems (Wikis), video- and photo-sharing websites (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.), and other websites with user-generated content.
House Rules	Community commenting guidelines by which the account administrator can moderate conversations that reside on the account. See p. 5
Unit	A college, school, institute, department, student organization or club, research center, office, service or transaction center, or any other operating Virginia Tech-affiliated group.
University Social Media Account	Any account administered by an official university unit on any social network used in support of the functions or needs of that unit.

	<p>Typically, these accounts include the name of Virginia Tech and the name of the unit (i.e. Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences).</p> <p>Note: Accounts administered by any other groups or individuals are considered non-sponsored accounts, and the university is not responsible for the content shared on these accounts.</p>
User	A person who places postings, commentary, or other content on a university social media account or space.
Influencer	An individual or institution that has a large social media following and a strong affinity for Virginia Tech. A social ally.

Responsibilities

The major responsibilities each party has in connection with these guidelines.

Account Administrator	<p>Account administrators are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consult the <i>Best Practices Guidelines</i> below and/or consult with your unit’s communications professional for guidance on compliance with these guidelines, as well as with the university’s brand guide before launching a social media account. (Please note: The branding guidelines will be updated in summer 2017). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Website: branding.unirel.vt.edu/brand ○ Social Media Guidelines: branding.unirel.vt.edu/brand/social-media-guidelines ● Correct or modify university social media accounts under the administrator’s control, as directed by University Relations. ● Terminate any university social media accounts that cannot be made compliant with these guidelines. ● Deactivate obsolete accounts. ● Publish and enforce set “house rules” for code of conduct by followers of the account.
Communications Professional at the Unit Level	<p>Communications professionals are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work collaboratively with University Relations to review and approve new university social media accounts. ● Provide guidance and support for new account administrators in respective units. ● Document the university social media accounts in respective units.
Individual	Individuals are expected to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refrain from using or posting to university social media accounts in violation of these guidelines. ● Surrender access to university social media accounts, as appropriate, when university employee or student status changes.
University Relations	<p>University relations is expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Oversee Virginia Tech’s institutional presence on social networking platforms. ● Determine whether to allow university social media accounts on new platforms as they become available. Authorize these accounts as appropriate. ● Review social media accounts that represent the university for compliance with these guidelines. ● Instruct account administrators to correct, modify, or terminate university social media accounts that are not in compliance with these guidelines.

Principles Overview

Virginia Tech Principles of Community

Everything we do at Virginia Tech should be first and foremost guided by the [Virginia Tech Principles of Community](#). Our interactions on social media are no exception. Inclusivity and respect at Virginia Tech are *everyone’s* responsibility.

- Website: inclusive.vt.edu/vtpoc0

Acceptable use of information systems at Virginia Tech

Access to computer systems and networks owned or operated by Virginia Tech imposes certain responsibilities and obligations and is granted subject to university policies, and local, state, and federal laws.

Social media account administrators are expected to be familiar with Virginia Tech’s policy on appropriate use of computer systems and networks owned or operated by the university.

- Website: vt.edu/about/acceptable-use

The university recognizes the value of social media platforms for a range of goals, including, but not limited to, reaching new audiences and building relationships with stakeholders. This document supplements existing acceptable use policies as outlined in the Virginia Tech faculty and staff handbooks and includes:

- Acceptable Use of Information Systems at Virginia Tech: vt.edu/about/acceptable-use

- Virginia Tech Identity Standards and Style Guide: branding.unirel.vt.edu/brand
- Business Conduct Standards: caf.vt.edu/businesspractices/conductstand
- Non-discrimination statement: vt.edu/about/equal-opportunity
- Freedom of Information Act: policies.vt.edu/FOIAa.php

University social media accounts

A university social media account is any registered account administered by an official university unit on any social network used in support of the function or needs of that unit. Typically, these accounts include the name of Virginia Tech and the name of the unit.

Use of social media accounts must be conducted in a manner that is professional, protects the reputation and brand of Virginia Tech, and is in compliance with university policies.

- Business Conduct Standards: caf.vt.edu/businesspractices/conductstand

Prohibited conduct includes use of social media in a way that constitutes libel, false advertising, copyright or trademark infringement, harassment, professional misconduct, or a violation of privacy or other rights protected under the law.

The university is not responsible for content shared or generated by non-university social media accounts administered by groups or individuals not sponsored by the university.

Registering an official university social media account

Existing and new university social media accounts are requested to be registered with the university. The purpose of this is to keep an updated directory for visitors to the university's websites and to allow for periodic quality control checks to occur. Registration information includes:

- Full account name
- Two best contacts (Virginia Tech employees) with email addresses
- Registration survey: bit.ly/2i6MoRc

Business and personal use of social media

Virginia Tech employees may be authorized to use social media at work to promote the Virginia Tech brand and encourage active engagement with the university community. These individuals must maintain Virginia Tech's brand identity, integrity, and reputation, while minimizing potential legal risks.

These guidelines do not seek to limit personal use of social media by faculty, staff, or students. Virginia Tech employees and students may mention their university affiliation in the bio or about sections of personal social media accounts, but are prohibited from using university brand elements on those accounts in ways that violate branding guidelines and the Virginia Tech Principles of Community.

Note that, even if you are using social media personally, you may still be seen as a representative of your college, unit, or the overall university. Therefore, you are expected to act responsibly as such.

- Brand Guide: branding.unirel.vt.edu/brand
- Principles of Community: inclusive.vt.edu/vtpoc0
- See also: Representing Virginia Tech branding.unirel.vt.edu/brand/social-media-guidelines.html#best-practices

Users must adhere to the terms and conditions specific to each social network platform and follow policies for the use of personally owned devices in the workplace at Virginia Tech.

- Mobile Communications Devices Policy: policies.vt.edu/3960.pdf

Account Administrators	<p>Account administrators are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Post on Virginia Tech-affiliated social media platforms only using the account name of his or her department or unit. ● Maintain the privacy of administrators of Virginia Tech social media and also preserve consistency of the units' institutional voice.
Individuals	<p>Individuals with access to a university social media account are expected to NOT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use social media for personal purposes that might reasonably create the impression the content is authorized or controlled by Virginia Tech, unless using a social media application's sharing feature to share content from an official university source. ● Post content that is discriminatory, threatening, or unlawful. Users are responsible for their conduct when using social media for personal or business purposes

Social media house rules

Virginia Tech encourages social media users to interact with the university and each other but is not responsible for comments or posts made by followers of or visitors to Virginia Tech accounts. Comments posted by these individuals may not reflect the official views or policies of the university. In accordance with this, university social media accounts should include a version of community guidelines in the accounts' about sections.

Note: Before removing non-English comments, use translation tools to verify if the comment indeed violates the other standards as listed.

Example of house rules

From Virginia Tech's Facebook page

Virginia Tech welcomes your comments on our Facebook page and encourages interaction among Hokies around the world. We ask that you use the Virginia Tech Principles of Community (inclusive.vt.edu/vtproc0) as guidance in your posts and remain true to the spirit of Ut Prosim (That I May Serve).

We review all comments made. Comments will be removed if they are off-topic, offensive, insult or attack, contain illegal suggestions, use foul language, or contain unauthorized commercial solicitation. We reserve the right to terminate access to the page by repeat offenders.

Please email us at socialmedia-g@vt.edu with any concerns about the content on this site. Comments made to this page are the opinions of the authors, not of the university.

Procedures

Launching or assuming responsibility for university social media accounts

<p>Account Administrator</p>	<p>Account administrators are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contact their unit’s communications professional to establish a university social media account. If your unit does not have a communications professional, contact University Advancement. ● Familiarize themselves with this document and the university Brand Guide when launching new university social media accounts or assuming responsibility for existing ones. ● Correct or modify university social media accounts under their control, as directed by University Advancement and/or the unit’s communications professional. ● Terminate any university social media accounts that cannot be made compliant with these guidelines.
<p>Communications Professional at the Unit Level</p>	<p>Unit communications professionals are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Oversee creation of new social media accounts in their units to ensure compliance with best practices. ● Maintain a list of social media accounts in their units and encourage registration to the university register. ● Train account administrators in their units about their roles and responsibilities under these guidelines. ● Familiarize themselves with these guidelines and the university brand guide. ● Be accountable for ensuring that content posted to their accounts meets university guidelines. ● Be responsible for ensuring central University Relations is informed in matters of issues or crisis management.

Required actions upon change in an individual's university status

Individual	<p>When the status of an individual with access to a university social media account changes (i.e. role change within unit, transfer to another unit, or separation from the university), the individual is expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Surrender that access. The account administrator will transfer that access, as appropriate to another staff member.
Account Administrator	<p>Account administrators are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review individuals' access to all social media platforms, social media tools and revoke where appropriate. ● Review and modify passwords for all accounts to prevent unauthorized access when appropriate. ● Review social media policy, strategy, and brand guidelines with University Advancement and the communications professional at the unit level.
Communications Professional at the Unit Level	<p>Unit communications professionals are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review social media guidelines, strategy, and brand guidelines with new account administrators. ● Update the list of university social media accounts in their units and encourage registration in the university social media register.

Related Virginia Tech Policies

Policy	Website
Acceptable Use of Information Systems at Virginia Tech	vt.edu/about/acceptable-use
Administrative Data Management and Access Policies	policies.vt.edu/7100.pdf
Business Conduct Standards	caf.vt.edu/businesspractices/conductstand
Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Statement	vt.edu/about/equal-opportunity
Freedom of Information Act	policies.vt.edu/FOIAa.php
Mobile Communications Devices	policies.vt.edu/3960.pdf
Student Privacy/FERPA	registrar.vt.edu/contact/FERPA
Virginia Tech Faculty Handbook	provost.vt.edu/faculty_affairs/faculty_handbook
Virginia Tech Identity Standards and Style Guide	branding.unirel.vt.edu/brand
Virginia Tech Policies	policies.vt.edu/index.php
Virginia Tech Sales, Solicitation, and Advertising on Campus	policies.vt.edu/5215.pdf
Virginia Tech Staff Handbook	hr.vt.edu/resources/current-employees/policies-handbooks
Virginia Tech Student Handbook	hokiehandbook.vt.edu

Contacts

Subject	Contact	Telephone	Email/Web Address
Guidelines clarification and interpretation	University Relations	540-231-0946	socialmedia-g@vt.edu
Establishing a new university social media account	University Relations	540-231-0946	socialmedia-g@vt.edu
	College/Unit Communications Professional	Unit-specific	Unit-specific
Social media community guidelines	University Relations	540-231-0946	socialmedia-g@vt.edu
Resources/training opportunities	University Relations	540-231-0946	socialmedia-g@vt.edu

Social Media Best Practices

The people of Virginia Tech and Hokie Nation make exciting and meaningful connections every day — through research, public service, alumni connections, daily interactions on campus, and more.

Social networks help us to advance these connections while furthering relationships, cultivating Hokie pride, and acting as good stewards of the Virginia Tech brand. Social media offers Virginia Tech and its units and programs opportunities to engage specific audiences, including prospective and current students, parents, alumni, faculty and staff, donors, media, and opinion leaders. Our overarching goal is to raise awareness of Virginia Tech.

These best practices can be applied whether you're a staff member managing a department Facebook account, a faculty member operating your own professional Twitter account, or a student group running a university-affiliated Instagram account.

Representing Virginia Tech

By having a social media account that indicates you work at or attend Virginia Tech, or if you run an account for your unit, you may be perceived as being a spokesperson for Virginia Tech. It is essential that you do not speak for Virginia Tech, the institution, but that you represent your unit. In that role, you should consider yourself a spokesperson. To mitigate any potential issues, be mindful of the following:

- Stick to your area of professional expertise.
- Confirm information before posting/sharing to ensure it is correct. When in doubt, don't post.
- Use good judgment when responding to comments. Review the *decision tree* at the end of this document for reference.
- Questions/comments that are related to a news story or press release should be referred to @vtnews on Twitter and/or the Media Relations Director in University Relations.
 - Website: vtnews.vt.edu/contact
 - Twitter: twitter.com/vtnews

- Keep personal accounts separate from your role at Virginia Tech when possible. If there is overlap, ensure your personal views are not viewed as official Commonwealth of Virginia communications.
 - You may include a disclaimer in your About section (from Policy: 1.75 – Use of Electronic Communications And Social Media), such as: “The views expressed on this (website, blog, social media site) are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer or of the Commonwealth of Virginia.”

Virginia Tech branding and style requirements

To avoid confusion on what constitutes an official Virginia Tech social media account, affiliated accounts must adhere to the Virginia Tech Brand Guide to ensure consistency across platforms.

Official logos

Official Virginia Tech logos are available to download to help you create profile photos and cover photos as the platform allows. Official university primary and secondary colors are available in the Brand Guide for reference when creating page identity images.

- Logo download website (PID required):
secure.hosting.vt.edu/www.downloads.branding.unirel.vt.edu
- Brand Guide (PDF, page 10):
branding.unirel.vt.edu/content/dam/branding_unirel_vt_edu/2015-brand-guide.pdf

Profile requirements

Page/usernames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full, official name of your unit. ● Typically begins with “Virginia Tech” (i.e. Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences); but may not contain “Virginia Tech” if it holds a donor’s name — in that case, ensure Virginia Tech is in the about information, as described below. ● If space is limited in the platform, “VT” is an acceptable alternative to “Virginia Tech” (i.e. @VT_Football)
Contact information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Official website link. ● As space allows, include other contact information such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Address ○ Telephone number(s) ○ Email address(es) ○ Other websites
“About” information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As space allows, fill out as completely as possible the about section of your profile. ● This includes mission, descriptions, founding

	<p>information, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include “Virginia Tech” here if your unit’s official name does not contain it (i.e. the name comes from a donor).
Profile picture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Must represent your unit in a clear manner. ● Do not use prohibited secondary logos (see Brand Guide, page 12). ● Must be readable at small, thumbnail size and be high enough resolution for larger expanded sizes. ● If unsure about appropriateness, contact University Relations for help (socialmedia-g@vt.edu)
Other photos, cover photo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If available, choose a photo that works well in the horizontal area at the top of many social media platform pages. ● It should represent your unit and/or directly complement your profile picture. ● Swap this photo regularly to refresh the look of your page.

Starting a new account

Before starting a new social media account, consider a few key questions:

Who is the audience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determine who you’re trying to reach and where that audience is, social media platform-wise (for descriptions on the different platforms, see the <i>Social media communications plan</i> section below). ● Determine how your messages will be targeted (i.e. promoted posts to a specific audience, different platforms for different audiences, etc.)
Why are you starting this account?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Define the purpose for the new account. ● Determine what the goal is and how to measure success.
Do you have the resources?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determine whether you have the resources to manage a university-affiliated social media presence, which requires frequent and consistent attention. If you don’t have the time to devote you may be quickly overwhelmed.
What makes your account unique?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determine what your account offers that others don't, particularly in your unit.
Are you duplicating messages?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Define messaging framework for your target

	<p>audience and determine if it overlaps with another Virginia Tech account.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determine if partnering with another account can strengthen your message.
How can account administrators be contacted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider creating a generic email address to minimize the effort required for transitioning to a new account admin if admins (such as students) change frequently.
What are your peer institutions doing on social media?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Follow and analyze content on social media from your peers as a starting point for you in planning reaching those audiences.

Note: If you wish to do this for a time-bound event (like a conference), ask yourself if you have time to build up an audience. If not, do not create a new account and instead utilize an established account with an event-specific hashtag.

Troubleshooting & Account Verification

When starting a new account, you may run into your preferred username being used by another account. Each social media platform has their own way of reporting unofficial accounts, so the best route is to start with the Help sections. For example, Twitter has a procedure if you encounter unauthorized accounts using your unit’s official name: support.twitter.com/articles/18367

To mitigate copyright issues, you can also apply to get your account verified. This also varies by platform and can usually be found in the Help section.

- Facebook verification: facebook.com/help/100168986860974
- Twitter verification: support.twitter.com/articles/20174631

Social media platforms

Your communications plan for your social media accounts will depend on the platform and the intended audiences. University-wide, Virginia Tech has more than 130 social media accounts. The following are accounts that Virginia Tech currently uses on the central university level:

Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Audience skews male, age 18-29, college graduates, and typically live in urban environments. ● Micro-blogging platform that utilizes messages with 140 characters or less. ● Uses hashtags to tap into conversations and/or aggregate groups of posts easily. ● Easy to “talk” to individuals and groups via replies, retweets, and quote retweets. ● Useful for live updates from events, conferences, etc. ● Useful for driving audiences to a call-to-action and creating awareness.
----------------	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Posts that include photos have higher rates of engagement than those without. ● Began the live video trend but is used less commonly today outside of news coverage. ● User-friendly analytics and demographics; downloadable to a spreadsheet.
Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Audience skews female, age 18-49*; all other demographics are relatively equal. ● Platform that allows individuals to follow or become “fans” of business and institution pages in addition to personally connecting with other individuals. ● Posts that include native photos and videos (not linked to from an outside source, like YouTube) have higher rates of engagement than those without. ● Should drive audiences to a call-to-action. ● Emerging trend of live videos on the platform. ● User-friendly analytics with some demographic information available; downloadable to a spreadsheet.
Snapchat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Audience skews age 18-24. ● Photo- and video-sharing platform that utilizes decorative filters. ● Images and videos are only available for a limited amount of time after viewing. ● Utilizes stories to craft a visual narrative. ● Emerging platform for reaching prospective and current students and young alumni. ● Metrics are limited; cannot accurately determine number of followers. ● Metrics are limited and are not downloadable to a spreadsheet. ● Posts must be made from a mobile device or tablet.
Pinterest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Audience skews female, age 30-49, higher income, and suburban/rural ● Users “pin” items found online to customized boards, much like a virtual bulletin board for ideas, crafts, fashion, recipes, etc. ● Users will “repin” items found on Pinterest to their own boards. ● Needs good visuals for success because the algorithm

	relies on images to create posts.
LinkedIn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Audience is nearly even split with male and female users, age 30-64, college graduates, higher income, and urban. ● Used for networking with others in your field of business and recruiting potential employees. ● Personal profile is an online resume. ● Company pages can be used to aggregate and connect alumni and students with each other and with the institution. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can get demographic information to inform strategic alumni and development decisions. ● Area to feature news, links, and updates.
Google+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Audience is typically male, age 25-44, higher income, and international. ● Hasn't reached the number of active users as other social media platforms, but has emerged as a niche platform. ● More popular in certain international markets. ● Useful for connecting and sharing with non-profits, NGOs, and international companies.
Slack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chat forum ● Used to send group messages and direct messages ● Adopted by businesses as a way to streamline collaboration and take conversations out of email

Information updated June 2017

**Highest number of users per age group on Facebook is 18-29, but ages 30-49 have higher rates of engagement with posts.*

Tips on content creation

The ever-evolving landscape of social media means that you'll have to stay abreast of emerging technology and platform developments. Take time to assess new content features and if they can help you achieve your goals. Some sites offer information on image sizes for each platform:

- Constant Contact: blogs.constantcontact.com/social-media-image-sizes
- Marketing Tech: marketingtechblog.com/social-media-image-dimensions

Using submitted content

To help maintain good relationships with students and alumni and to give you more content for your posts, you can solicit submissions for photos and other content from your followers. If you receive submissions that you intend to post from your account, ensure you have permission from the user as

well as the photographer (if a different person) before sharing. Collect the following information and give proper attribution:

- Name
- Hometown (if student)
- Major
- Graduation year

Tools for Instagram, such as the Repost app, will add an attribution box to the image. You should still tag the submitter's username in the comment box with the other pertinent information.

Using Hashtags

When using or creating other hashtags, do your research before you tweet. This includes going to Twitter and Instagram and performing a search for the intended hashtag. Take note of the posts associated with the hashtag and use your best judgment about using that hashtag with your own promotions.

Virginia Tech uses certain hashtags for tweets and other social media posts. They are:

- #VirginiaTech
- #UtProsim
- #Hokies
- #HokieLove
- #HokieGrad (for commencement)
- #HokieFacts
- #WhyVT
- #VT4L
- #VTFirstDays
- #HokiePets
- #HokieBaby
- #HokieNation
- #HokiesAbroad
- #TravelingHokies

Comment/conversation moderation

If you are unsure about how to best resolve a situation regarding comment/conversation moderation, contact Susan Gill, Director of New Media, at susan83@vt.edu or 540-231-0946.

- Commenting decision tree: branding.unirel.vt.edu/brand/social-media-guidelines/how-to-moderate

Social media administrators should respond to commenters who express concerns and attempt to address them directly or refer them to a person or department who can.

The structure of your response will vary based on the nature of the social networking platform but it should always be friendly and representative of Virginia Tech's culture and values.

Not every critique needs a response; some people are just venting frustrations, or they are "trolls" — those who engage in off-topic or inflammatory posts in an attempt to provoke others.

Comments that are inappropriate, offensive, insult or attack, contain illegal suggestions, or use foul language should be removed as allowed by that particular social media platform, as should those that are intentionally repetitive (spam). Keep a log of any comments removed, and most importantly, be consistent with the treatment of all commenters.

Removing posts that have become controversial

Occasionally, you may find that something you've posted to your page has taken a life of its own in the comments section. If your audience is staying on-topic and remaining civil as per your community commenting guidelines, it is advisable to let the commenters keep each other in check. If needed, remind commenters about your commenting guidelines.

However, if the conversation seems to be sliding toward only one point of view in a manner that is contrary to the spirit of your post, you may need to make a moderator decision. **Please contact Susan Gill, 540-231-0946, to discuss the best course of action.**

Communications during campus emergencies

In an emergency or another incident, university-affiliated accounts should not post information or comment with a response that has not been approved for dissemination from approved sources or spokespeople. If you wish to disseminate the information, you should share posts from the official channels listed below. Contact Susan Gill, Director of New Media, susan83@vt.edu or 540-231-0946 for more information

Social media is an increasingly vital part of how we as a society communicate, and that's especially true in times of heightened awareness. Rumors quickly spread in the absence of reliable, verified information.

The University Status website contains information on operating statuses at Virginia Tech campuses. Please refer to this page for general and contact information: vt.edu/status

Official messages during emergencies and other incidents will come from the following social media accounts:

- Virginia Tech
 - Twitter: twitter.com/virginia_tech
 - Facebook: facebook.com/virginiatech
- VT Alerts
 - Twitter: twitter.com/vtalerts
- Virginia Tech Police
 - Twitter: twitter.com/vatechpolice
 - Facebook: facebook.com/VirginiaTechPolice
- Virginia Tech Office of Emergency Management
 - Twitter: twitter.com/behokieready
 - Facebook: facebook.com/BeHokieReady

In an emergency or another incident, university-affiliated accounts should not post information that has not been approved for dissemination from approved sources or spokespeople. If you wish to disseminate the information, you should share posts from the official channels listed above.

College communicators who receive questions during emergencies or other incidents should refer them to the Senior Associate Vice President for University Relations, Assistant Vice President of University Relations, or Media Relations Director, as appropriate.

Threats received via social media

If you become aware of a potential threat via your role as a social media administrator, report it immediately. If the nature of the threat is an emergency, call 911. You can also refer a situation of concern to the university Threat Assessment Team at ThreatAssessment@vt.edu or to Virginia Tech Police at 540-231-6411. Additionally, include socialmedia-g@vt.edu on an email, or notify Susan Gill at 540-231-0946 after you have notified emergency personnel.

- Website: threatassessment.vt.edu

Include as much information as possible; including the username of the individual involved, a screenshot of the message, who or what is involved, when the message was received, and other pertinent information.

Measuring success (analytics/metrics)

It is important to be able to set goals and measure success against those goals for social media. This will inform overall communications strategy and help you assess whether certain platforms work better for your intended audiences than others.

Learning tools

Many social media companies have blogs with how-tos. To educate yourself on how and what to measure, look to the experts. Here are some suggestions on where to start:

- Razor Social: razorsocial.com/social-media-analytics-tools
- Social Media Examiner: socialmediaexaminer.com/5-tools-to-measure-social-media-roi
- HootSuite Blog: blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-metrics
- Buffer: blog.bufferapp.com/definitive-guide-social-media-metrics-stats
- Simply Measured Blog: bit.ly/2hDXNe7

Definitions

Dashboard	A place to consolidate and quickly analyze data; spreadsheets are commonly used, and there are a variety of browser-based and downloadable software options, typically for a fee.
Engagement	A metric used to describe the amount of interaction — likes, shares, comments — a piece of content receives.
Engagement Rate	A metric used to describe the amount of engagement as compared to the number of users who saw the content.
Follower	Refers to a person who subscribes to your account in order to receive your updates.
Impressions	A metric used to show the number of times content associated with your page is displayed.
Reach	A metric used to show the number of people who saw your content. Includes people who have chosen to follow your account and those who have not.

Measurement steps

Baseline data for existing accounts

If you are setting up a measurement plan for the first time, or if you have inherited an existing social media account, you should determine a baseline for your account(s) to have a basis for measurement.

1. Collect data as far back as possible, but a minimum of a year is ideal
2. Add the data to a dashboard for easy analysis (Excel is one example of a place to collect data)
3. Make note of Follower growth rate and average Reach/Impressions and Engagement Rate

Set goals

Determine what your goals are for the next year, quarter, etc. Do you want to:

- Increase the number of followers by a certain percentage?
- Drive more traffic to your website using social media?
- Increase donations to your program or unit?
- Have conversations with your followers?

To best accomplish these and other goals, create calls-to-action. For example:

- Increase followers = “Share with your friends” or “Like and follow”
- Drive more traffic = “Click here” with web URL
- Increase donations = “Donate now” button or web URL link with appeal
- Have conversations = ask questions and respond to answers

Create and execute a plan

Plan out the promotions you want to do around specific events and throughout the year. Be sure to include the calls-to-action you’ve determined and craft messaging to reflect those actions. Paying for promoted posts may help with your reach if you don’t have a great number of followers.

Measure effectiveness

After the promotions run, collect the statistics and add them to your dashboard. Determine whether you met or exceeded your determined goal. If you did not do either, adjust your goals, expectations, or messaging for the next promotion.

Where to find your data

Platform	Location
Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Log into Facebook and navigate to your page.● Visit the Insights tab to see your data.● Data can be exported for further analysis.
Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Log into your Twitter account.● Navigate to analytics.twitter.com● Analytics are turned off by default on most accounts and must be activated to begin collecting.● View your overview on the Home tab.● Data can be exported for further analysis in the Tweets tab.
Instagram	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● On your mobile device, sign into your account.● Ensure that your profile is set up as a “business” account. (See facebook.com/business/e/getting-started-with-instagram-for-business for instructions.)● You can view basic information about posts up to 2 years.● No data export feature currently exists on the platform.● To get deeper information, consider a 3rd-party application, such as Iconosquare, Sprout Social, and others.
Pinterest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Log into your Pinterest account.● Navigate to analytics.pinterest.com● Full analytics tracking may need to be set up on your website.● You can also track traffic from Pinterest to your website using Google Analytics.