



Mary Baldwin College Social Media Policies For Employees and Institutional Representatives

Introduction

Social media are powerful communication tools that have a significant impact on organizational, professional, and personal reputations. Therefore Mary Baldwin College has crafted the following policy for employees and institutional representatives to help clarify how best to enhance and protect personal and professional reputations when participating in social media.

Social media are defined as forms of electronic communication (e.g. websites or apps used for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities and share information, ideas, personal messages, video, images, and other content. Examples include, but are not limited to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, YikYak, Vine, and Pinterest.

Because social media can blur the lines between personal and institutional perspectives and opinions, employees should follow the same behavioral standards online as they would in real life, both in professional and institutional roles. In other words, the same laws, professional expectations, and guidelines for interacting with students, parents, alumni, donors, media, the public, and university constituents apply online as in traditional print publications and face-to-face settings. Individuals may be liable for anything they post to social media sites whether posting anonymously, personally, or as a representative of Mary Baldwin, and whether using their legal names, partial names, or pseudonyms.

This policy applies to all Mary Baldwin employees and institutional representatives, including students, alumni, and other individuals who act as institutional representatives in either paid or volunteer capacity.

Section 1: Institutional Social Media Pages and Accounts

The following policies are designed for departments, divisions, or individual employees who post on behalf of an official unit of the college or who represent the school in a

social media platform.

- **Involve CoMPA:** Departments or institutional units considering the creation of a social media page or account must first notify the Office of Communication, Marketing, and Public Affairs (CoMPA) to facilitate the process and to ensure consistency and quality in the presentation of the Mary Baldwin brand.
- **Share access to your social media account with CoMPA:** Departments or institutional units that have or would like to start a social media page or account must give administrative privileges to CoMPA or provide the account username and password to CoMPA. While usual practice is for CoMPA to manage only the all-institutional accounts (for instance, the Mary Baldwin College Facebook page) and not to participate actively in the management of divisional accounts (for instance, the VWIL Facebook page) CoMPA must have administrative privileges to all social media accounts created for the college in order to gain access to the accounts when necessary.
- **Designate an individual employee who is responsible for keeping your social media page current:** All institutional social media pages must have an appointed employee who is identified as being responsible for keeping the content current. If this role is filled by a student intern or student assistant, there must be a staff member responsible for overseeing the intern and managing the account in the student's absence.
- **Have a plan:** Departments should develop a social media plan based on their strategic goals, with consideration given to content, key messages, and target audience. The plan should include tactics to ensure that social media sites are kept current as well as specific goals for engagement and how results will be assessed. An editorial calendar may be useful. CoMPA can assist and advise with social media planning.
- **Link back to the college:** Depending on the social media platform and the specific goals established for the account, a portion of the posts should link back to the Mary Baldwin College web site.
- **Be relevant:** Post content that conveys your key messages, is of interest to your audience, and that relates in some way to the institution and to the individual unit.
- **Be politically and commercially neutral:** do not use institutional or divisional social media accounts to support political opinions, candidates, or parties; to express preference for a particular religion or faith; or to promote commercial causes not affiliated with Mary Baldwin College (for instance, you may promote sales of MBC branded merchandise sold by MBC but may not promote a local nail salon).
- **Protect the institutional voice:** Posts on social media sites should protect the college's institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. No individual Mary Baldwin College unit should construe its social media site as representing the college as a whole. Consider this when naming pages or accounts, selecting a profile picture or icon, and selecting content to post. Names, profile images and posts should all be clearly linked to the particular department or unit rather than to the institution as a whole.

Section 2: General Policies for all Social Media Sites (including institutional, divisional, and personal sites)

- **Protect confidential and proprietary information:** Adhere to all applicable university privacy and confidentiality policies. Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Mary Baldwin College, students, employees, alumni, or business partners. Employees must follow all applicable federal and state requirements such as FERPA and HIPAA, as well as NCAA regulations. Employees who share confidential information do so at the risk of disciplinary action, termination, and legal action.
- **Respect copyright and fair use:** When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the college. For guidance, consult with CoMPA.
- **Do not use Mary Baldwin College logos for endorsements:** Do not use the MBC logo, seal, or other brand marks (for instance, the Boldly Baldwin wordmark) to promote a product, cause, religious belief, political opinion, or political party or candidate.
- **Respect college time and property:** College computers and time on the job are reserved for college-related business as approved by supervisors and in accordance with the Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy <http://www.mbc.edu/oit/acceptable-use-policy/>.
- **Terms of service:** Obey the Terms of Service of any social media platform employed.

Section 3: Best Practices

This section applies particularly to those posting on behalf of an official university unit, though the guidelines may be helpful for anyone posting on social media in any capacity.

- **Think twice before posting:** Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect both on the poster and the college. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created, and comments can be forwarded or copied. If you wouldn't say it at a conference or to a member of the media, don't post it online. If you are unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, ask your supervisor for input or contact CoMPA.
- **Strive for accuracy:** Get the facts straight before posting them on social media. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors. This is especially important if posting on behalf of the college in any capacity.
- **Be respectful:** Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the poster and/or the college and its institutional voice.
- **Remember your audience:** Be aware that a presence in the social media world is or

easily can be made available to the public at large. This includes prospective students, current students, current and future employers and colleagues, and peers. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not alienate, harm, or provoke any of these groups.

- **On personal sites, identify your views as your own:** If you identify yourself as a Mary Baldwin College faculty or staff member online, it should be clear that the views you express are not necessarily those of the institution.
- **Protect your photography:** Social media users can easily appropriate photographs posted on social media sites. Consider adding a watermark and/or posting images at 72 dpi and approximately 800x600 resolution to protect your intellectual property. Images at that size are sufficient for viewing on the web, but not suitable for printing.

Policy established August 24, 2015