

Social Media Policy

Sam Houston State University (SHSU) is committed to the facilitation and support of an unregulated variety of perspectives, expressions and speech, relying upon open competition among them as the surest safeguard of truth. This whole spirit requires investigation, criticism, and presentation of ideas in an atmosphere of freedom and mutual confidence. This commitment to academic freedom and freedom of expression applies to social media platforms employed in the operation of the university.

1. **Purpose.** The SHSU social media policy serves and protects the interests of the university community by promoting dialogue and communication among its members and constituents via social media platforms.
2. **Social Media Policy Committee.** The SHSU Social Media Policy Committee defines policy, procedures and programs designed to facilitate understanding, use, and application of social media within the university community. This standing committee is comprised of engaged faculty, staff and students and reports to the Vice President for University Advancement.
3. **Guidelines.** SHSU social media sites and individuals posting on these sites are subject to all applicable state and federal laws, agency regulations, university policies and platform terms of service, including but not limited to FERPA, HIPPA, NCAA Regulations and Non-Discrimination Policies. Social media sites governed under this policy include but are not limited to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Personal sites on these platforms are not subject to this policy; however, behaviors on personal sites could be subject to employee rules and regulations listed in paragraph 5(b) and the Student Code of Conduct and Discipline.

Personal Disclaimer. To maintain a clear delineation between university-operated sites and the personal websites or social media pages of SHSU employees who identify themselves as being affiliated with the university, use of the following disclaimer is recommended for personal sites:

“The views expressed on my personal site are mine alone and do not reflect those of Sam Houston State University, the Texas State University System, the Board of Regents or the State of Texas.”

Privacy. Only public information may be posted on SHSU social media sites. Personally identifiable information, sensitive personal information and any other information protected by law should be excluded from social media communications. Please refer to the Texas Department of Information Resources Social Media Guidelines and The Family Rights and Privacy Act listed in paragraph 5(a).

Intellectual Property - Copyright. Social media content may include material subject to copyright protections. University social media sites are expected to adhere to all applicable laws and protections associated with copyright. For more information regarding individual rights and

ownership of content refer to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act.

Trademarks: University Logos and Images. The university's trademarks including words, logos, and images are intended to present a consistent and cohesive image of SHSU, and may not be altered in any way. Nor can the university's trademarks, logos, and images be used in the name of a business, in promoting services, or on a product in a way that could state or imply an endorsement by the university.

Only social media sites that are part of the official SHSU network can use the university's trademarked or copyrighted material. SHSU social media sites are encouraged to use available logos and images to reinforce university branding. Please refer to *Sam Houston State's Brand Guidelines* for more information.

4. **Moderation and Monitoring.** University social media sites should be regularly monitored by site account managers and/or appropriate site administrators to ensure that content and activity is in compliance with laws and policies.

Removal of Posts. Posts that violate applicable laws, regulations, policies and terms of service will be subject to removal by the site account manager, appropriate site administrator and/or appointed university social media administrator, Assistant Director - Marketing. Site account managers or administrators shall report post removals to the university social media administrator immediately upon removal. Contested complaints regarding the removal of postings will be investigated and, where appropriate, referred to the Social Media Concerns Committee for evaluation and adjudication.

5. **References.**

a. **Federal and State Policies & Guidelines**

- U.S. Constitution, amendment I
- The Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998 (DMCA):
<http://www.copyright.gov/legislation/dmca.pdf>
<http://www.copyright.gov/>
- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>
- The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA)
<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/index.html>
- The Texas Department of Information Resources Social Media Guidelines
<http://www2.dir.state.tx.us/management/socialMedia/Pages/guidelines.aspx>
- NCAA Regulations: <http://www.ncaa.org/>

b. **University Policies & Guidelines**

- Faculty Handbook http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/Faculty_Handbook/
- Sam Houston State University Policies: <http://www.shsu.edu/intranet/policies/>
- SHSU Brand Guidelines *T:\2012 SHSU Branding Materials*
- Student Guidelines <http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/>
- Texas State University System “Rules & Regulations”
<http://www.tsus.edu/publications-forms/policies-procedures.html>

c. **Platform Policies**

SHSU official social media sites are subject to the terms of service of the applicable social media platform. These terms of service are constantly changing so it is strongly recommended to periodically review the terms in order to stay up to date.