

## Endicott College Social Networking Policy



### Success in social media depends on several factors:

- Understanding that social channels are conversations, not bullhorns
- Being civil, honest, ethical and responsive
- Remembering that nothing is private on the Web

(from DePaul)

Social media provides community members (including students, potential students, parents, alumni, and Beverly/Boston residents) with a closer, more personal look at Endicott and its departments, organizations, clubs, and events. Use social media as an opportunity to build community, listen, and share stories about what life at Endicott is like. Social media is our chance to interact on a one-to-one level using a medium that's trusted more implicitly than a marketing piece or website. Building that trust and sense of family provides us with an invaluable link to our stakeholders.

For the purposes of this policy, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wikis, social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, Instagram, Tumblr, Vimeo, Vine and YouTube. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the internet. All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that Endicott College employees must otherwise follow.

Similar to the Endicott College main website, the primary purpose of official social marketing tools is to communicate news and events and build community, which serve the secondary purposes of increasing admissions applicants, engaging alumni, assisting in fundraising efforts, and increasing affinity for the College as a whole. These guidelines are not meant to discourage use of innovative methods to improve academic quality and operational efficiencies.

### **Who does this policy apply to?**

This policy applies directly to members of the Endicott community who post to social networking pages **on behalf of the College or as representatives of the College.**

If you are a faculty member who uses social media as a teaching tool, these guidelines may be helpful to you as well, and we urge you to keep privacy concerns and content propriety in mind as you use these tools.

## **Personal Use of Social Media While Employed at Endicott**

This policy does not aim to inhibit the usage of social media on a personal level by our faculty and staff. However, if a reasonable connection to Endicott may be drawn from content and biographical information, you must use a disclaimer saying that **while you work for Endicott College, anything you publish is your personal opinion, and not necessarily the opinions of the College**. The intent of this is not to restrict employee expression but rather to protect the College from legal and public prosecution.

## **Before Opening a New Social Media Account**

Prior to starting a new social media page on behalf of your organization, department, or event, consider the following:

- Who will manage and update the account? This includes monitoring and posting new content.
- Where will new content come from? What will it consist of? How will it engage users?
- Who is your audience and what is the message? Is this same message being communicated elsewhere already?
- Do you have all applicable permissions from your supervisor?

If a new account is appropriate, please contact the College and let us know what your intentions are for the account. The College's Digital Marketing Coordinator will help you create your accounts, answer any questions, and add you to our social media directory. Contact Erin Dougherty at [edougher@endicott.edu](mailto:edougher@endicott.edu) or 978-223-2218. It is important to share your presence with Endicott so that the social media communities can stay connected online.

## **Account Naming Guidelines**

For any social media outlets related to the school, the accounts should be titled with the first two words "Endicott College" to ensure consistency of brand and high rankings in search engines (example: Endicott College Environmental Club). Avoid using acronyms, though exceptions for Twitter and other accounts susceptible to character limits should be made. Consider using 'EC' or 'Endicott' in these instances.

Always include a statement that acknowledges your affiliation with Endicott in the section describing your page.

## **Icon and Photo Usage**

For icons and avatars, use **only** the specific images provided in the College branding guide. Choose a recognizable profile picture that will make it easy for users to identify your page and differentiate it from others on campus. Use the same profile picture across your unit's social media accounts.

Photos posted on any social media outlet should be done so with the utmost of care and in accordance to the official Endicott photography policy found on this page. Posting photos online is not private, and photos should be treated as such. Avoid posting recognizable photos of children without the express written consent of their guardians.

### **Management and monitoring**

Multiple site administrators are recommended; at least two administrators are necessary so that there is always a backup and alternative means of accessing the site. For student organizations, there should be a smooth leadership transition from semester to semester. There must always be a faculty member with access if students are involved in page management.

Page managers should check their account daily, or be signed up to receive email updates when comments are made to ensure prompt addressing of any questions or issues. Quickly address any inappropriate messages or misuse. Such inappropriate content includes spam, advertising, offensive statements, inaccurate information, foul language, or personal attacks.

Be judicious in decisions to delete comments made on your page - unless it is undeniably inflammatory or crude, consider leaving it up. Nothing brings criticism more speedily than community members who feel censored, especially if the comment was valid. Do not delete comments simply because they are negative - instead address these directly and publicly. This will help build trust and transparency. As a general guideline, if you have any question as to whether something should be removed, please contact Erin Dougherty at [edougher@endicott.edu](mailto:edougher@endicott.edu).

Consider posting these rules somewhere on your page (the 'about' section is usually a good place), which will give you a charter to back up any deletion decisions:

*"This is your community and we encourage you to leave comments, photos, videos, and links here. Postings and Comments that include sensitive data, confidential information, profanity, personal attacks, hate speech or other inappropriate material will be removed from this page. This page is not to be used for solicitation of sales and/or the promotion of any off-campus goods and/or services. You are fully responsible for the content that you share. Postings or comments made by individuals on this page do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of Endicott College or any of the college's divisions. Thank you!"*

## **Professionalism and Tone**

All accounts should remain current with respect to all information. Any person or group utilizing the Endicott College name should be aware that they are affecting the image and reputation of the school, and should make every attempt to be guided by the guidelines in this document.

The public in general, and Endicott College's employees and students, reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Don't say anything contradictory or in conflict with the Endicott College website. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory - such as politics and religion. Use your best judgment or discuss questions with your supervisor or the Digital Media Coordinator prior to posting.

If you make an error, be up front 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, deal with it quickly.

Use correct grammar and write in complete sentences when possible. Never write with all the letters capitalized. Avoid jargon and institutional language. Abbreviations are sometimes necessary to meet word limits, but don't overdo it. Do not use unprofessional abbreviations, such as "u/you," "2/to" or "r/are."

Before retweeting, sharing, or posting a link, check that link or account (and watch the video or read the article, if applicable) before posting to ensure it is appropriate content to be sharing under the Endicott name.

At all times be transparent; use your real name or post under a department/organization name. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty - or dishonesty. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and also be cautious about disclosing confidential details.

Content should be kept short and sweet, with an ideal post of 1-2 sentences and a link or photo. Always check links to ensure they are shortened and change any pre-loaded text if needed to avoid cluttered posts. Write in a manner that represents your whole unit - use "we," "our" and other inclusive words. Readers and followers want to know what is happening with you or your group; be sure to keep them updated at least once a week. But, also be aware that you can post too much. The College's best practice is quality is better than quantity. Keep the outlet in mind - for example, posting several times a day may be acceptable on Twitter, but less so on Facebook.

## Creating Content to Post

Content should at all times be relevant to the audience of your page, however, it should not only be news and announcements. Put a personal spin on your communications by asking for feedback, posing questions, posting photos or offering congratulations on personal achievements. Content may be tangentially relevant to your audience, such as the Environmental Club posting a nature video or the Nursing School posting a comic about the profession. However, always keep in mind that we are speaking on behalf of the College and all content should be appropriate for all audiences.

Some ways to help produce content:

- Reuse content developed for other outlets. Newsletter tidbits can be divided up into separate posts on Facebook, for example. Videos and photos taken for other purposes can be shared online.
- Develop content calendars – sketch out a month or two of updates in one sitting, perhaps in a staff meeting, which will reduce how often you’ll need to brainstorm new topics. Remain flexible if anything comes up and planned updates need to be moved.
- Schedule updates using tools like Hootsuite so they will go out at predetermined times. This can work for up to several months in advance, so you can keep your page updated even if you’re unable to put active time into upkeep (however, management of any comments received will still need to be addressed in a timely manner).
- Think outside the usual news/events posts for content:
  - Staff updates (photo from a recent vacation or office birthday celebration? Congrats on a recent achievement? Think casual, fun, getting-to-know-us type posts)
  - Regular features – think of something you can offer that’s relevant to your office. Something like a book recommendation of the week, photo of the week, trivia question of the week, job-hunting tip of the week, etc. This gives you an excuse to post something, say, every Wednesday.
  - Share links – relevant news or advice articles, videos, etc
  - Inspiration – share your favorite quotes
  - Ask Questions – poll questions are great for drumming up discussion. These can be professional or something as simple as ‘what did you all do for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July?’ Just be sure to word it carefully to avoid any off-color responses (and be prepared to delete them if needed) - this is not usually a problem but should be kept in mind.

All account managers are encouraged to share high-level announcements or other broad-based content with the Digital Marketing Coordinator for posting on the primary College accounts.

Inactive social media accounts reflect negatively on the university. The Digital Marketing Coordinator may request inactive accounts be taken down. If you are finding it difficult to create content for your social media account, please consult with the Digital Marketing Coordinator to discuss ideas and other options. Similarly, misused accounts may be flagged by the College and are subject to management changes or discontinuation.

### **Promoting your Account and Fostering Growth**

The best way to grow your new account is to keep it active! New followers will need to see what you provide when they visit your page before they hit the 'follow' button, so don't wait for your audience to grow before you start posting content.

Don't ask for new followers or likes (once may be acceptable, though don't make it a habit or you will risk alienating your followers). However, you can ask administrators of other accounts on campus to promote your account to their new followers ("Help us welcome the Lacrosse Team to Twitter! Follow them at @Endicottlax"). Collaborate with other accounts on campus when applicable to support other Endicott departments/groups and encourage a sense of community.

Establish custom URLs as applicable for ease of promotion. Add your account (with links, when possible) to all documents, web pages, email signatures, and other communications to help spread the word.

Above all, remember that the most effective and reliable social media growth is organic and steady - be patient and update regularly.

### **Follow Site Rules and Copyright Laws**

It is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and **always** attribute such work to the original author/source. It is good general practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it.

You are responsible for reading and following the Terms of Use on any outside social media site.

### **Campus Policy Violation**

*Freedom of expression, the right to agree and disagree, the spirit of inquiry, and free exchange of thought are essential in an open society. As part of society, each institution of higher education must help maintain these rights for all who are a part of its concern. Endicott presumes that all students and staff members who exercise their rights in these areas will do so with full responsibility. This responsibility extends to other individuals who may either agree or disagree and extends to the institution itself, its well*

*being, its physical property, its reputation.* (Excerpt from the Endicott College Campus Communications – Student Handbook 2012-13)

All usage of social media on behalf of Endicott College must abide by all applicable rules and regulations of the school including, but not limited to, the “[Endicott College Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy](#),” the “[Faculty/Staff Web Policy](#),” “[The Technology Ethics and Policy Statement](#),” and the “[Privacy Policy and Agreement](#).” Any violations of these or any other applicable policies shall be handled according to the applicable process in the applicable policy.

Ensure that all content and 'about' section text adheres to any relevant [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#) (FERPA), [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act](#) (HIPAA), and [National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics](#) (NAIA) regulations.

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