

Social Media Policy & Guidelines

Presented by:

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Table of Contents

Overview and Scope	3
Policies and Guidelines for Social Media	3
General Guidelines	3
Responsibility	4
Transparency	4
Protection of Private Information	4
Personal Accounts	5
Who to Contact	6
Addendum 1: Related Materials & Bases for this Policy	7
Related resources	7
Bases for this Policy	7

Overview and Scope

Blogs, social networks and other marketing communications tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, Blogger, Pinterest and YouTube present new and different ways of communicating with your friends, colleagues and the public at large. As a member of the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine's community, you are encouraged to use these tools to share your knowledge, expertise and creativity, as well as connect with others with common interests. This document contains policies and guidelines for responsible use of these new and emerging tools that will help you use them effectively and within university guidelines, as well as protect the clients, research and clinical programs, and the community and educational offerings of the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine.

The *Social Media Policy & Guidelines* outlines best practices and rules for use of internet-based social media tools by students, faculty and staff at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine. Guidelines for both personal and institutional presences are covered in the *Policies and Guidelines* section.

Policies and Guidelines for Social Media

General Guidelines

Social networks and other online media are a very popular mode of engagement and two-way communication. Social networks provide great tools that aid communication, outbound marketing, education and collaboration with others. Given the nature of social networking, two-way and real-time communications, these new forums introduce the potential for significant risks associated with inappropriate use. Following guidelines and training, as well as using sound common sense and professionalism, can minimize this risk.

The Cummings School relies on its students, faculty and staff to ensure the trust and support of the communities it serves. While the Cummings School encourages the use of social networking to enhance open communications with several key audiences, we expect these communications will reflect the highest standards of our institution and support the privacy and trust of our students, clients, and research partners.

The Cummings School's social media policy is aligned with the social media policies of Tufts University (<http://webcomm.tufts.edu/?pid=25>), which advises social media users/developers to abide by all Tufts University policies governing employees, student privacy and confidentiality.

If there were one rule of thumb governing the use of social media among the Cummings School community, it is this: **think twice, post once**. Although many sites allow an individual to "delete" posts after they are submitted, significant damage to one's own reputation as well as to the school's can be done—and, since text, pictures, videos and other user-submitted content can spread rapidly through the internet, one should never assume that content can be permanently retracted. Simply put, if you would not want your parents, clients, classmates or neighbors reading it on the front page of a newspaper, don't post it.

Adhering to these guidelines will help to ensure that you uphold the reputation of the University, the Cummings School, your colleagues, and yourself.

Responsibility

- Follow all applicable University policies. This includes, but is not limited to policies regarding maintaining client confidentiality, professionalism, conduct, ethics, sexual harassment, responsible use standards, social networking site guidelines, copyright, and intellectual property.
- There is no such thing as a truly "private" social media site: search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date, comments can be forwarded or copied and archival systems save information even if you delete a post.
- Be respectful and professional to fellow employees, students, competitors and clients. Do not post derogatory comments about any of these groups—or anyone else.
- Do not post school-related information that may compromise our organizational practices, client privacy, respect for animals, or security. Take care not to violate intellectual property, copyrighted or trademarked information.
- Remember that once you publish something through social media, you lose a degree of control over your message. Before you post something, be certain that you are prepared to share it with a potential audience of millions.
- You are responsible for what you post both on your own site and on the sites of others. Individual bloggers have been held liable for commentary deemed to be proprietary, copyrighted, defamatory, libelous or obscene (as defined by the courts).
- Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible. If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly; doing so will earn you respect in the online community.
- Use good judgment and strive for accuracy in your communications; errors and omissions reflect poorly on both you and the Cummings School and may result in liability for either/both parties.

Transparency

- Use your University affiliation appropriately. Where your connection to the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine is apparent, make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the school. If you are communicating institutional information through an official channel of the school (the official Facebook page, facebook.com/tuftsvet, for example), do so only as approved by the Dean, Marketing Director or Associate Director of Public Relations.
- If you communicate publicly on the internet about Cummings School-related matters, disclose your connection and role.

Protection of Private Information

Posting, releasing, or otherwise disclosing photos, identifiable case descriptions, images, or records on social media of the educational, clinical, or research activities of the Cummings School is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Photos or descriptions of client-owned animals seen at the Foster Hospital for Small Animals, Hospital for Large Animals, Tufts VETS, Tufts Ambulatory Service or Tufts at Tech Community Veterinary Clinic without the consent of the animal's owner(s), faculty attending veterinarian, and either the Marketing Director or Associate Director of Public Relations;

- Photos or descriptions of research activities, without the permission of the funding source, Associate Dean for Research, and the Marketing Director or Associate Director of Public Relations;
- Photos or descriptions of animals at the Tufts Wildlife Clinic, without the written consent of the clinic director and Marketing Director or the Associate Director of Public Relations;
- Photos or description of activities within the McGrath Anatomy Lab. Any photos and/or videos taken in class (with advanced permission of faculty) may only be used for personal use to help advance studies.
- On-campus or Tufts-sanctioned event photos without written consent of those depicted;
- Information that would compromise the security or operation of the Cummings School;
- Photos or descriptions of client-donated or other animals in the pathology section or Anatomy Laboratory;
- Disseminating or describing copyrighted intellectual property or trademarked information;
- Descriptions or accounts of student examinations or other academic evaluation tools;
- Description of personal information about students, colleagues, clients, or research partners without their consent.

Material violating these guidelines will be removed by Tufts University. Please notify the Marketing Director (8-4307) right away should you find material that violates these rules.

Personal Accounts

- For any personal online activity, use a personal e-mail address (not your tufts.edu e-mail address) as your primary means of identification. Just as you would not use Tufts University stationery for a letter to the editor with your personal views, do not use your University e-mail address for personal views. Similarly, please review the Information Stewardship Policy as it pertains to use of Tufts computer and network resources for non-Tufts use.
- Discussions regarding client-owned animals, client-donated cadaver or necropsy subjects, research studies and other protected and proprietary information are prohibited, even if all identifying information is excluded.
- Under no circumstances should photos of client-owned animals or the clients themselves, client-donated cadaver or necropsy subjects, patients, research subjects, volunteers or cadavers, including photos depicting any body parts of these individuals, be displayed unless specific written permission to do so has been obtained and submitted in advance to the Marketing Director or Associate Director of Public Relations.
- If you identify yourself as a member of the Tufts community via your personal social media presence(s), please clarify that you are sharing your views as an individual, not as a formal representative of Tufts. In addition, never conceal your identity for the purpose of promoting Tufts through social media.
- It is strictly forbidden to use the Cummings School and/or Tufts name to promote or endorse any product, cause, political party, or candidate.
- Avoid conflicts of interest and maintain a distinction between your personal identity and the identity you represent on behalf of the university.

Whom to Contact

For questions related to the Social Media Policy and Guidelines please contact:

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Addendum:

Related resources

Tufts Social Media Guidelines

<http://webcomm.tufts.edu/socialmedia>

Visual Identity System

<http://publications.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/TuftsVisualIdentity-final.pdf>

Policy on Institutional Name Use and Insignias

<http://legal.tufts.edu/?pid=12>

Cummings School Name Use Policy

http://universityrelations.tufts.edu/downloads/Cummings_name_use.pdf

University Editorial Style Guide

<https://wikis.uit.tufts.edu/confluence/display/EditorialandContentStyleGuide/Tufts+University+Web+Editorial+Style+Guide>

Tufts Information Stewardship Policy

<http://it.tufts.edu/ispol>

Conflict of Interest Policy

<http://viceprovost.tufts.edu/?pid=3>

Copyright, Fair Use and Open Access Policy

http://sites.tufts.edu/scholarlycommunication/?page_id=176

Bases for this Policy

Information contained within this document is based on best practices among universities, industry and especially other institutions of medical and veterinary education. While more than 40 of these resources were consulted to create this document, the following policies were most helpful.

- Tufts CTSI Social Media Policy and Procedures, 12/13/11
- Tufts University Social Media Best Practices and Guidelines
- Massachusetts General Hospital Social Media Policy
- Mayo Clinic Social Media Guidelines for Employees
- Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Social Media Policy
- Social Media Policies from Baylor College of Medicine
- University of Colorado at Denver Web 2.0 and Social Media Best Practice Guidelines
- University of Minnesota Medical School Social & Online Participation Guidelines
- United States Marine Corps Online Social Media Guidance for Unofficial Internet Posts
- United States Air Force Public Affairs Agency Blog Assessment Tool