

Social media guidelines

Wartburg College encourages its community members to engage, build networks, stay connected, share information, and help promote the college's goals and mission online. Today, that often happens through social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

The Marketing & Communication Office offers the following guiding principles to help our community engage in positive and meaningful ways that will reflect well on them and the college.

The following information is intended for use by academic departments and college and student organizations (including athletics, music ensembles, and co-curricular activities like Knight Vision). For faculty and staff, these guidelines pertain to your professional accounts only. **It does not address publishing or regulating personal content on privately maintained social media platforms.**

Getting started

If you are new to social media or just want to add to your online presence, here are a few things to consider as you get started.

1. Who are you trying to reach with this account?
2. Is this the best way to communicate with that audience?
3. What action do you want to prompt?
4. Who will maintain the account?
5. Does an account for your program/organization already exist?

Also remember that Wartburg's primary social media presence (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn) can help promote your academic department, event, or organization. If you have information you would like posted through one of these channels, please contact your account executive in Marketing & Communication to discuss this option.

If you've considered the above questions and engagement opportunities and feel you are still on the right track, then here is a quick checklist to help you get started.

1. **Contact the Marketing & Communication Office to make us aware of your intentions.** We may know of an existing page for your department or campus organization. Student organizations should contact the director of campus programming.
2. Wartburg College social media pages are a voice for the community. **Academic units and official campus organizations must provide the names of social media account administrators as well as a phone number and email address to the Marketing & Communication Office. Account login information — including username and password — also must be provided. The director of**

- campus programming will keep necessary information for all student organizations.** This information will be kept confidential and used only for high-level maintenance (e.g. actual emergencies, if it appears the page has been hacked, or if the page has gone dormant and someone would like to reinvigorate it or it needs to be deleted). We also will add your page to our Social Media Directory so others can easily find you online and help spread your message.
3. **Name your page.** Straightforward is better than clever or cute in most situations. If people are searching for your organization, what words will they be looking for? We highly recommend using “Wartburg College” in the name of your page.
 4. **Select a profile picture and cover photo.** Many organizations choose a logo for their profile photo, though that isn’t necessarily the best choice. Please see our [logo policy](#) before moving forward with this possibility and contact the Marketing & Communication Office if you have any questions. **The official college and athletic logos are reserved for the college’s and athletic department’s accounts.**
 5. **Engage friends or followers with content.** Have at least a few posts ready to get you started. Though there are no hard and fast rules about how often to post, it is important to maintain the page and engage regularly to ensure the message is reaching its target audience.

Best practices

Now that you have a page, here are a few things to remember when you post something as an official representative of the college.

1. **Listen.** Spend time listening to your audience. What issues are on the minds of people you want to reach? What content do they want to see? What will add value to the information they already are gathering elsewhere?
2. **Engage.** Social media is all about interaction. To be successful you must comment, like, share, and generally engage your audience. Be conversational.
3. **Be accurate.** Make sure you have all the facts before you post. If you do make an error, correct it quickly and visibly.
4. **Maintain confidentiality.** Don’t post confidential, sensitive, or proprietary information about Wartburg College or its students, employees, and alumni.
5. **Be aware of liability.** You are legally liable for what you post on your site and the sites of others. Wartburg College prohibits the posting (or sharing) of content deemed to be proprietary, copyrighted, defamatory, libelous, or obscene.
6. **Be respectful.** Comments should not defame, attack, or otherwise disrespect. You are more likely to achieve your goals or influence others effectively if you are constructive and respectful. Think before you post. There’s no such thing as a “private” social media site. Search engines can turn up posts years later. Content and comments can be screen captured, forwarded, or copied.
7. **Privacy policies change often.** It is your responsibility to be informed of and regularly review the privacy policies of the social media channels you use.
8. **Use the data.** Most social media outlets offer free analytics that will tell you who is using your page and when. Use that information to evaluate how effective you are at achieving your objectives and to adjust accordingly.

9. **Ask for help.** If you encounter a question you cannot answer, or if you see incorrect information about Wartburg online, contact Marketing & Communication for assistance.