# NNMC Social Media Professional Best Practices

1. **General**

Social media offers great ways for Northern New Mexico College (NNMC) to engage online with local, national, and global communities. Northern recognizes the importance and benefits of communicating through social media and encourages the use of social media technology to enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange in support of its mission, programs, and initiatives.

Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn and X have become popular and influential communication channels for our communities, and we encourage Northern New Mexico College entities, faculty, staff, and students to learn how social technologies can help them share information, participate in important conversations, and collaborate on new ideas.

**The purposes of Northern’s social media pages include to:**

* Promote the development of social, professional, and learning communities
* Support recruiting, retention, and alumni relations
* Foster conversation and friendship within our communities
* Enhance the reputation of the college
* Build institutional loyalty and pride
* Stimulate community involvement by sharing news and events
* Draw friends of the college more closely into our community

**Publishing and engaging with people on social media carry a similar obligation as communicating via traditional media.** The following best practice guidelines complement our Social Media policy (2570) and will help Northern’s community use social media professionally.

Official Northern social media accounts must be managed responsibly because they impact the reputation of the College, its faculty, staff, students, and alumni. College systems administrators may perform activities necessary to ensure the integrity, functionality, and security of Northern’s electronic resources and image.

These recommendations apply to Northern employees who identify themselves as College employees or use official Northern social media accounts.

Official NNMC Social Media Accounts include Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and X. Refer to Northern’s [Communications & Marketing office (NCAM)](https://nnmc.edu/faculty-and-staff/Communications-and-Marketing.html) on nnmc.edu for our active social media directory, including:

* NNMC Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NorthernNewMexicoCollege>
* NNMC X: <https://x.com/NorthernNNMC>
* NNMC LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/school/northern-new-mexico-college>
* NNMC Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/northernnnmc/>
* NNMC YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@northernnewmexicocollege5843>

NCAM also maintains a list of active Official College/department social media accounts.

# Questions to think about when considering creating a Social Media site:

* Determine your audience(s). Current students? Prospective students? Alumni? Professional colleagues? Research associates?
* Determine which social media platform is the best place to reach them.
* Consider whether your department or group has the resources to maintain an active social media presence. If not, perhaps a simple Northern webpage be sufficient.

# Creating your Account and Identity

**To set up an official Northern account on any social media platform, you will need to do the following:**

* **Apply for a social media account.** The application isavailable on the Communications & Marketing webpage. The process requires you to select an account administrator from your unit responsible for managing page content.
* **Meet with NCAM to create your official Northern account.**
* **Select a title.** Official accounts must have “Northern New Mexico College,” “NORTHERN,” or “NNMC” as part of your page title.
* **Choose a page category (Facebook).** The “College and University” page and “Education” sub-category best suit most college accounts. If your target audience is very specific, a Group page may be the best choice. **Please do not use a personal profile**.
* **Collaborate with NCAM to create branding** that complies with Northern’s brand standards (the Brand Guide is on the NCAM webpage) and is suitable for your program, unit, or department.
* **Provide basic information:** All official NNMC social media properties should provide contact information and email addresses so visitors may report problems, etc.
* **Develop a plan for posting content and marketing your new social media account.** All entities should have a social media strategy and plan that has been approved by their unit leader prior to the debut of any social media site. Those with a social media presence should periodically review and update the plan to ensure it is still relevant.

# Creating the Right Content for Your Audience

* **Focus on your department/program/project’s initiatives and news for your audience.** What kind of information would they find interesting? Create content that your fans will want to share with their friends.
* **If you are considering posting content from outside sources that impacts another department,** please consult with [Communications](mailto:communications@nnmc.edu). There is a lot of spam and inaccurate content on social media and the internet.
* Different audiences want different kinds of content. Students want to know what is going on across campus, tips to improve their grades, and stories about enjoying campus life; alumni want to hear stories and news about their alma mater that will boost their pride and encourage them to connect, serve, and donate.
* If you don’t have time or resources to create content your audience will find engaging, perhaps a page on Northern’s website would be a better option.

# Professional Social Media Etiquette

* Be positive in your interactions with your followers.
* Remember when posting on official Northern social media accounts your content reflects on the College. Watch out for spam, and refrain from posting content that best belongs on your personal pages.
* Use sound judgment when creating your posts/images/tweets/etc. Once posted, your content can go anywhere.
* **Properly share/repost others’ intellectual property** within the same social media channel as the original, to maintain its authorship, ownership, and original intent. It is unprofessional and inappropriate to copy/paste content that you have not created.

# Be Engaging and Helpful

* Remember that you are building a social community. Give your audience a chance to connect with Northern’s brand, identity and pride.
* Meet your audiences where they are, interest-wise. What academic or cultural events are going on that you can leverage to keep your audience?
* Be Authentic. Listen and respond. Participate and share.

# Questionable Content

At times someone in your audience will post content or comments on your page that you may find questionable. Developing a plan to respond to these situations before they arise will enable you to make informed, strategic responses rather than rash ones.

Establish clear expectations for community members, NNMC social media account administrators, and page managers. At a minimum, refer to our Social Media Policy (2570) and Respectful Campus Policy (2240), and review the introduction to this Best Practices Guidelines document regarding the purposes of Northern Social Media.

If you see something on any Northern page that needs addressing, please get in touch with sandyk@nnmc.edu.

# Moderating posts

* **As NNMC is a public institution and government entity, we do not delete negative comments just because they are negative**.
* Best practice is to act quickly to address the criticism and, if possible, contact the person involved to see how you can help resolve the issue.
* Comments or posts should only be deleted or removed if in violation of applicable College policies and standards of professional conduct, local, state, and national laws, or terms and conditions imposed by the applicable social media platform being used.
* Unless the post violates these policies, you should attempt to resolve the issue without censoring your page. In many cases, well-utilized pages tend to develop loyal users who will support or respond to criticism on your behalf. In other cases, negative posts allow you to respond publicly, thus turning a negative situation into a positive one.

*Example of a negative post worthy of a public response:*

Maria: “I just read a Northern Broadcast today and cannot believe that your department reduced your service hours! Aren’t you here to HELP students instead of making their lives more difficult?!”

Department Response: “Hi Maria! Thank you for your feedback. We appreciate that you care enough about our services to comment about the change in hours at our department. Budget cuts have indeed reduced our traditional service hours. However, we are now available to help you anywhere at any time via Facebook or email...”

*Example of a negative post worthy of a private response:*

Tomas: “I just got my financial aid award letter and found out that I won’t be able to afford Northern this semester! Thanks for being so expensive, NNMC!”

Department Response: “Hi Tomas. We’re sorry to hear about your situation. Please contact the Financial Aid Office to see if there is anything we can do to help.”

*What types of posts should be outright deleted?*

All official Northern social media accounts reserve the right to delete content that is offensive, abusive (including, but not limited to, racist, sexist, homophobic, or anti-Semitic statements) or ad hominem attacks on individuals. Please contact [sandyk@nnmc.edu](mailto:sandyk@nnmc.edu) if you need help addressing questionable content.

Suppose you delete a post by a user. In that case, you may consider sending them a private message detailing why the posting was removed and how they can appropriately address concerns (aka have an educational moment with them).

If you have additional questions about setting up social media accounts for your department or addressing any other social media concerns, please contact NCAM at [communications@nnmc.edu](mailto:cromero@nnmc.edu).

[*Northern Policies*](https://nnmc.edu/faculty-and-staff/Policies-and-Procedures.html) *and Other Resources*

* [Freedom of Expression and Dissent (2200)](https://nnmc.edu/_document_repository/policies/2000s/2220%20Freedom%20of%20Expression%20and%20Dissent.pdf)
* [Respectful Campus Policy (2240)](https://nnmc.edu/_document_repository/policies/2000s/2240%20REspectful%20Campus.pdf)
* [Acceptable Computer Use (2500)](https://nnmc.edu/_document_repository/policies/2000s/2500%20Acceptable%20Computer%20Use.pdf)
* [Social media (2570)](https://nnmc.edu/_document_repository/policies/2000s/2570%20Social%20Media%20Policy.pdf)
* [NNMC Official Social Media Directory](https://nnmc.edu/about/Social-Media-Directory.html)
* [Copyright and Fair Use Resources](https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/copyrightinfo/fairuse.html)
* [NNMC Library Guide to Copyright](https://nnmc.libguides.com/copyright)
* [FERPA and Students’ Privacy](http://nnmc.edu/current-students-mynnmc/registrar/FERPA.html)
* [Sexual Harassment/Title IX](https://nnmc.edu/about/Title%20IX.html)
* [Workplace Harassment/Staff Handbook](https://nnmc.edu/_document_repository/policies/human-resources/2006_Staff_Handbook.pdf)
* [Student Handbook](https://nnmc.edu/current-students-mynnmc/Student%20Handbook.html)

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