**Oakland University Social Media Guidelines**

*Revised July 2016*

**General:**

* The university's social media strategy supports Oakland University's mission and goals. Sharing stories and information via social media is a university-wide effort and should be built in as a layer of each department's communication strategy.
* University units, faculty, staff and students should be aware of social media and how social technologies can help create and nurture relationships, share information, advance knowledge, raise awareness, build support, participate in important conversations and collaborate on new ideas.
* Social media managers must stay up-to-date on trends and best practices. Consult with University Communications & Marketing social media team or your account manager as needed.
* By incorporating social media as part of an overall communication strategy, we can even more effectively tell stories about OU people, places, and programs while supporting the university’s mission.
* These guidelines are to ensure appropriate and effective use of social media and will evolve as social media continues to evolve.

**OU-affiliated accounts:**

Overview/General:

* University Communications & Marketing manages the list of OU-affiliated and approved social media properties.
* Each school and the college should have strong, unified social media properties to represent their academic area. To maximize reach and influence, not every department should have its own social media properties. Rather, contribute to the communication plan for the parent school/college and/or main OU accounts.
* All OU-affiliated accounts must provide original and specific content pertaining to their area and demonstrate a value add for the student to connect with those accounts.
* Give administrator access to several people within your department, using a shared NetID for login when possible. Doing so ensures the continuation of a platform should the primary administrator change in the future.
* All OU social media sites should be monitored daily to respond to audience inquiry.

Content strategy:

* Before debuting a social media initiative, develop a social media strategy that fits within the department and University mission and objectives. Review and adjust annually. A social media strategy involves an assessment of:
  + Communication goals and objectives
  + Audience needs and interests
  + Maintenance and content creation resources (HR, software, hardware)
  + Budget for campaigns, promotions and initiatives (such as contests, giveaways, print promotional materials)
  + Whether a given social media technology is the appropriate channel to meet the above three essential areas of assessment.
* Based on this evaluation, if the department decides to implement a social media platform, the strategy created should address five key areas:
  + **Listening**: Find and monitor the conversations already taking place in social media platforms about your department, organization, and subject matter.
  + **Influencing**: Identify and follow key influencers in the department or organization’s target audience.
  + **Engaging**: Develop creative ways to provide value to your audiences through exclusive content, advice, multimedia and more on the department or organization social media platform. ***Create a 12-month outline of content ideas.***
  + **Converting**: Persuade the audience to act on behalf of the university and the department to convert your messages to reposts.
  + **Measuring**: Ensure the department social media effort is on the road to success by returning regularly to communicate with your audience and measure audience reaction against your pre-defined goals and objectives.

Meet requirements:

* Register the department social media accounts with UCM by completing the form found at oakland.edu/ucm/social. Include:
  + Admin contact information
  + Social media strategy document
  + Content calendar document
  + Account URL(s)
* Meet minimum requirements:
  + UCM-approved name and handle
  + UCM-created social media profile icon and cover photo
  + Provide contact information and a correct website URL that points to the OU website
  + Original content posted at least once a week
  + Responses to questions within 24 hours
* When an account is registered and meets minimum requirements, it will be listed on the Social Media Directory page and followed by the Social Media Team within UCM.

Collaborate and cross promote: Contact your UCM Account Manager at least 2 weeks in advance of major initiatives and promotions so there is ample time to plan a social media campaign with the main OU accounts. (6 weeks if design or photography might be required)

* Post-specific guidelines:
  + Protect the confidential and personal information of students, faculty or staff members.
  + Be aware of and follow FERPA.
  + Assume conversations about OU are internal and private. Please ask prior to sharing any conversations via social media properties.
  + Follow all copyright laws.
  + All content should fulfill a strategic goal or objective for the university or department. If it's going to look bad on the 5 o'clock news, don't post it.
  + Use strong photos whenever possible, and think front-page-news worthy images. When necessary, graphically designed images may be used, but text should be minimal (20% of the image or less).

**Contributing as an individual influencer:**

* Be transparent to the audience when posting on behalf of the university with your personal account. Identify yourself by title/position when contributing comments and statements on a university-managed social media property or in reference to a university issue.
* Faculty and staff can contribute directly to OU’s main social media accounts by sharing expertise, links to research and community involvement, classroom/lab activities, and more. Email social@oakland.edu for more information.

**Platform-specific guidelines:**

Each social platform has a unique demographic and purpose for its users. Evaluate messaging needs and to identify the most effective approach. Consider the demographics and best practices outlined below when crafting a social media strategy and content calendar.

Facebook - ***The bragging, big-picture platform***

Newer Facebook algorithms severely limit the exposure that organic (unpaid) each post will reach. Even if you have 100 "likes," each post will likely only reach a handful of those people. That's a lot of resources for little payoff. If the audience is broad enough, consider incorporating your messages into a larger OU-affiliated account (like your parent school/college or the main OU account). Speak to your UCM account manager for more information.

* Demographic: Students, faculty/staff, alumni of all ages, parents/prospective students
* Post frequency: Once daily
* Post strategy: Most important or most interesting news of the day. The best of the best. Add additional value to a post with an *external link* or *tags to related FB pages*. Every Facebook post should have one of the following.
  + *Video* - Videos uploaded directly to Facebook will garner the most impressions than any other media type. Videos should be designed for no audio since they auto play without any audio. Length is not limited, but should be no longer than 1-4 minutes.
  + *Strong photography* - Use a single, hi-res image that captures the moment or a photo album of selective images (edit down so people/compositions are not repeated more than needed). Unless you expect people to click through the album (such as event recaps), opt for a single image (such as images to accompany a story).
  + *Designed graphics* with more than 20% text are not performing well on FB (and forbidden from FB ads). Avoid their usage on this platform.
* Engagement strategy: Review daily for comments, posts to page, and messages and respond as necessary. Monitor all OU-related pages for collaboration opportunities.

Twitter - ***The what’s happening/what you need to know platform***

Twitter is well suited for subject matter experts to develop their networks and demonstrate expertise. Individual faculty and staff are encouraged to create "personal" accounts using their own name and bio vs. a departmental persona.

* Demographic: Students, alumni, community/media, faculty/staff
* Post frequency: Two to five original posts daily
* Post strategy: Links to OU and related news from external sources, human interest stories, event previews, event coverage, and important information for students. For the best visibility, each post should include one of the following:
  + *Video* - Videos uploaded directly to Twitter can be up to 140 seconds long (shot/edited live or edited and uploaded after the fact). Videos will also embed into the feed if using a YouTube link.
  + *Photography* - Include up to 4 images in a tweet to help “stop the thumb.”
  + *Designed graphics* - Graphics should have strong, compelling imagery with minimal text. The call to action and pressing details go in the written post. Additional details should reside on the destination page. Designed graphics should include the stacked Oakland University logo if it is not otherwise clear that it is an OU image.
  + Add additional value to a post with *external links, relevant and specific hashtags* or *tags to related Twitter accounts (you can also tag accounts in photos to avoid using up characters)*.
* Engagement strategy: Monitor mentions, #ThisIsOU, lists and keyword searches and retweet/quote tweet and reply to posts. Add influencers and OU accounts to Twitter lists to build influencer network.

Instagram - ***The look how impressive and beautiful we are platform***

* Demographic: Current and prospective students, younger alumni, community
* Post frequency: Three posts per week
* Post strategy: Tell stories through a single high-quality photo and descriptive caption. Focus on key areas that are naturally visually appealing.
* Engagement strategy:
  + Share user-generated content found through hashtags or sent directly to the social media team (with permission).
  + Commenting on posts using #ThisIsOU, #oaklandu, #oaklanduniversity or that @oaklandu or your account has been tagged in.

Snapchat - ***The easy-going, what you need to know to survive OU platform***

Oakland University will have one official Snapchat account that will collaborate with all areas of the University. Do not create a Snapchat account on behalf of any department or organization affiliated with Oakland University. Contact your UCM account manager for more information on how to be on the oaklandu story.

* Demographic: Current students, very recent alumni, prospective students
* Post frequency: At least two stories per week, no more than one per day
* Post strategy: Stories should be informational, entertaining, relatable, and relevant to the majority of current OU students. Stories should always provide an easy call to action.
* Engagement strategy: Contests and scavenger hunts tie into current events at Oakland, or are just for fun/to generate OU pride, and encourage students to interact with the OU account for a chance to be featured or to win prizes. Student takeovers show an authentic look at OU life and make content more relatable.

YouTube

Departments should utilize the OaklandUniv channel for marketing videos, and be sure UCM is involved at the beginning stages of all video projects to be sure it meets brand guidelines.

* Demographic: All constituents
* Post frequency: As needed
* Post strategy: All university-approved marketing videos get uploaded to the official channel as a clearinghouse for all video content that somebody may search for. This includes all advertising creative and most informational videos created for student services. Video series may have their own playlists. Some playlists may be unlisted if the sole intention is to be online, but not necessarily searchable.
* Engagement strategy: Monitor comments on videos.

LinkedIn - ***A professional networking site for connecting students and alumni***

The university maintains a Higher Ed page geared toward any user who has OU as their place of education in their LinkedIn profile. Departments should consider sharing content through this page or creating a group, not a profile. Departments can also request that UCM create a sub-group under the main Oakland University group.

* Demographic: Current students and alumni
* Post frequency: Twice weekly
* Post strategy: Post links to OU News stories that generate a sense of school pride. These would be alumni and student features, brag points about OU, external recognition, major updates/improvements to the campus, stats/fast facts.
* Engagement strategy: Monitor comments on posts and tag alumni, faculty/staff or organizations in posts.

Flickr

* Demographic: Direct traffic from a web page or email
* Post frequency: As needed
* Post strategy: Photo albums that do not otherwise fit on OU’s social media platforms or if a departmental/unit Facebook album is not an option.
* Engagement strategy: n/a

**Contact:**

Contact your University Communications and Marketing representative: oakland.edu/amdirectory or contact the Social Media Team directly at social@oakland.edu.