PROCEDURE TITLE: Social Media

RELATED POLICY: NC400 Social Media

A. Background and Definitions

Social Media refers to websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. Social Media brings different forms of electronic communication (such as web sites) through which people create online communities to share information, ideas and personal messages and other content (such as videos)

Account Lead: An employee of the College that oversees the secondary social media account within their area, and is responsible for posting and engaging with their followers.

Conversion Rate: Refers to a common metric tracked in social media that is the percentage of people who completed an intended action (ie. Filling out a form, following a social account)

Impressions: Refers to a way in which marketers and advertisers keep track of every time ad is “fetched” and counted.

Primary Account: The primary page on each social media outlet that represents the College overall (versus individual departments, programs, or Teaching Enterprises)

Secondary Account: An account that is managed by a department, program, or teaching enterprise, and is College affiliated.

User-Generated Content: Content such as text posts, blogs, videos, photos, quotes, etc. that is created by consumers. Marketers typically tap into their audience in an online setting to collect this type of content to support a campaign or initiative.

Niagara College Social Media platforms/accounts: Social Media platforms supporting at Niagara College include YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat and LinkedIn.

Trolling: Making a deliberately offensive or provocative online post with the aim of upsetting someone or eliciting an angry response from them.

Fresh Desk: Marketing cloud based project management system

B. Procedure Purpose

The purpose of the Social Media procedure is to assist you in the steps recommended as you build a Niagara College social media account with goals to communicate with other Niagara College administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni and College stakeholders.
Please carefully review the requirements for creating a College-affiliated account, and how to effectively engage online.

C. Procedure Statements

1) Once a Niagara College account lead has manager approval for a social media platform, said contact will submit a Marketing Request via Blackboard to have their social media platform request approved by the Marketing Department.

   Once approved, the account lead will develop their social media platform in accordance with the Social Media Policy and submit to the Digital Media Officer for approval and any further guidance needed. Requester must provide login info for: Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat; and make the Digital Media Officer an Admin of a Facebook page.

2) The account lead will regularly post and support primary account social media posts.

3) Upon leaving the position, the account lead will once again confirm with their manager as well as the Digital Media Officer, that the handle will remain active by another employee.

1. Creating an Account or Managing an Existing Account:

a) Prior to launching a secondary account, the employee at-hand must consult with their manager. Once manager approval has been given, the employee will arrange with Digital Media Officer through a submission of a Fresh Desk ticket. Once all details have been obtained, the Digital Media Officer will present the account information to the Marketing Manager, who will determine final approval for creating a new account.

   Be prepared to present your reasons for wanting an account, the account’s objectives, and also to present a sample content calendar. Ensure a duplicate account doesn’t already exist for your department. The Digital Media Officer will be able to confirm if a duplicate account exists.

b) Once approved, all login information (including usernames and passwords) and identified account leads must be submitted to the Digital Media Officer through the applicable Fresh Desk ticket. If additional employees will have access to the account(s), but will not act a lead, their information must also be recorded by the Digital Media Officer through the applicable Fresh Desk ticket.

c) Secondary accounts must clearly display that they are affiliated with Niagara College. Page titles or usernames must contain “Niagara College” or “NC” for search-engine
purposes. All accounts must also include the link to their portion of the NC website, or a link to the main Niagara College website. This is done through the platform settings.

d) The College logo or your departmental logo must appear on all College-affiliated accounts (as a profile and/or cover photo), and adhere to our branding and styling guidelines. In the case of new accounts, the department/program at hand will work with the Marketing Department to create their profile picture and/or cover photo.

e) Registration of an account for a particular department should be done with a generic departmental e-mail address to avoid linking accounts to specific employees. Any changes to the usernames, e-mails or passwords for that account must be relayed to the Digital Media Officer (for example athleticc@niagaracollege.ca). New email addresses can be supported through the IT Department.

2. Using Your New Account or Managing Your Existing Account:

All employees must adhere to the following guidelines to ensure accuracy, safety and respect online.

Honesty & Transparency

a) Be honest about who you are. Never conceal your identity – always use your real name, title and position when posting online.

b) Know what you represent. If you are the account lead for a secondary account, clearly state your area’s roles and goals.

c) Separate personal from professional. If using a personal social media platform, remember to clarify that the views expressed are yours alone and not reflect the overall views of NC. If you are posting through a departmental page, remember who you represent and carefully consider the tone of your posts.

d) When in doubt, ask. If you have to question whether certain material may be acceptable to post or not, consult with your manager or Marketing prior to posting; if you are unsure as to whether or not your page adheres to our branding guidelines, contact the Marketing Department or Digital Media Officer.

Professionalism & Respect

a) Be respectful and mindful of all views. Post respectfully and do not spam or post offensive comments; be mindful of the terminology you use, and do not react hastily to trolling comments. If you are upset over a post or subject, wait to respond or consult your
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manager or Marketing. Content posted on your platform that is racial, ethnic, sexual, religious or disrespectful in any fashion is not permitted.

b) Be professional. Avoid posting something that you wouldn’t say in a public setting – treat the online world the same as you would a real-life situation.

Copyrights & Intellectual Property:

a) Be mindful of your material. Always respect privacy legislations and copyright laws. Never post material or photos unless you have received written approval from the owner of the material. If you do receive approval from a source, ensure credit is given.

b) Understand the policies of each social outlet. Each social media outlet has its own guidelines and terms – ensure you review these and abide by their policies or guidelines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td><a href="https://support.twitter.com/categories/284#">https://support.twitter.com/categories/284#</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/yt/policyandsafety/policy.html">https://www.youtube.com/yt/policyandsafety/policy.html</a></td>
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<td>Facebook</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards">https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
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<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td><a href="https://www.linkedin.com/legal/privacy-policy">https://www.linkedin.com/legal/privacy-policy</a></td>
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Confidential Information: Confidentiality is paramount. Adhere to all of NC’s privacy guidelines when posting online. Never share information such as budgetary information, corporate strategies, legal issues, enrollment trends, confidential college information, personal information about fellow employees or students. Failure to adhere to all of NC’s privacy guidelines could result in disciplinary action.

Brand Consistency

a) Be bold. Be blue. The NC branding guidelines are to be reviewed and understood before creating an account. The College logo must appear on all College-affiliated accounts and include “Niagara College” or “NC” in their page titles. If you are unsure of a name of need assistance, the Digital Media Officer can provide guidance.

b) Determine your social voice. Make sure that the tone you use is consistent with the image of NC and your particular department. As a postsecondary institution, we must be mindful of the terminology we use when posting online.
c) **Hashtags are helpful.** When posting, incorporate College hashtags to generate post exposure and connect with your followers. Hashtags are used for Twitter and Instagram. The primary NC hashtags are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hashtag</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#myNCstory (General)</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#NiagaraCollege (General)</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#BlueIsBest (General)</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#KnightsLife (Athletics)</td>
<td>Athletics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#GetInvolvedNC (CSEL/Community Events)</td>
<td>CSEL/Community Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#NCInternational (International Department)</td>
<td>International Department</td>
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d) **Language / Grammar:** Niagara College has multilingual followers. Please refrain from using slang, as our followers include international students who will not be able to understand. Keep the language and tone at a simple level.

### Posting Content

a) **Establish who your followers are:** Clearly define who your followers are, what they’re interested in and why they have chosen to follow you. You can establish your target market with key demographics such as age, educational background and socioeconomic factors.

b) **Draft a content calendar:** Develop a content calendar or use a posting tool such as Hootsuite, Sprout Social, Buffer or Facebook Publisher to schedule posts. Depending on the level of ownership (free versus paid) you can review follower data such as peak interaction periods, location and primary areas of interest. All of this information will help you gauge your audience, and successfully schedule relevant posts.

c) **Post information people want to read:** The information you share should be relevant and relatable to the page you represent. Sourcing valuable content is key to driving engaging relationships with your followers.

d) **Post accurate information:** Ensure your posts are accurate, come from reliable sources and include the correct handles or hashtags. If you have posted something incorrectly, attempt to rectify the situation as quickly as possible by either deleting the post, or editing. If there was a severe error in the post, inform your manager as soon as possible.

e) **Review before you send:** Ensure your post is clear of typos and grammatical errors.

f) **Link your posts to partners:** If you are posting an article or sharing an event, tag affiliated partners and make sure to use the correct hashtags related to the event.

g) **Managing negative posts:** Sometimes you may receive a negative post or feedback on your account. Unless this post violates our online posting standard, never delete or hide the post from your page. Leaving a clear path of communication shows transparency and trust. Consider the post from the writer’s point of view, and be courteous and respectful when responding. If the post is a complaint that requires escalation, make sure the information is relayed to the Digital Media Officer. If the person has posted a problem
that you have a solution or answer for, supply them with such or ask them to private-message you (PM).

**Monitoring & Maintenance**

a) **Have one account lead.** As great as it may be to share the workload, having one person regularly monitor posts will avoid confusion and regulate the consistency of your page’s tone. If there are multiple account leads, having a content calendar will allow you to streamline posts and avoid spamming your followers.

b) **Post regularly.** There should never be weeks where your page goes untouched or questions from followers are left unanswered. **As a rule of thumb, if you can’t post at least once every-other day, you likely shouldn’t have an account.**

c) **Update and delete accounts as required.** If you are managing a secondary account, ensure that all information related to the change of an account lead or updated usernames and passwords are sent to the Digital Media Officer. If an account will no longer be used or is inactive for more than a month, you will be asked to remove your account. If the account owner does not respond, the Digital Media Officer will take action with the social media outlet and will force it to be shut down.

d) **Threatening Posts.** - If you are managing a secondary account and come across threatening posts that may compromise the safety of our students, faculty, and staff please contact Campus Safety immediately. Please ensure you document the post (picture, screen shot, etc.) for future use and delete the post after consulting with Campus Safety.

**College Resources & Time**

a) **Be conscious and respectful of College time.** Be mindful of the amount of time you spend on social sites and adhere to all rules as outlined in our [Computer and Network Use](#) practices. College computers are to be used for college-related work only, and all other personal usage of social sites should be accessed in accordance with Niagara College’s Computer & Network Use policy. It is acceptable to use social media at work if your time is directly related to your departmental goals.
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Emergency & Crisis Situations

a) **Always repost primary account notifications.** In case of an emergency (i.e. a snow day, server interruptions, construction, etc.) or a public relations crisis, refer to the College’s primary accounts and share their content. **Do not create your own post.** Information on these accounts will be accurate, which can then be shared on all secondary accounts.

Accessibility

a) **AODA applies in the digital world.** The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) is a legislation that ensures independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for all.