GUIDELINES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USE
BY RECOGNIZED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS
AT THE COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

As a leader or member of a recognized student organization at the College of Charleston, you represent the voice of your peers and are charged with the accurate dissemination of news and information related to your group. Regardless of your opinion, people will see you, your thoughts and your actions as a reflection of the organization you are a members of, regardless of whether or not they are your individual ideas or that of the organization.

Below are some guidelines for using social media as a part of your student organization as well as your personal accounts.

Student organizations represent themselves in online components including, but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, My Space, LinkedIn, etc. Students should maintain a professional demeanor online and are subject to the same guidelines as print and broadcast media.

Guidelines for use as a member of a recognized student organization:
- Understand that your profile and presence on social networks represents yourself and your organization.

- All uses of social media must follow the same guidelines as the College of Charleston's Code of Conduct as well as any code of ethics associated with your organization.

- Those responsible for monitoring accounts created for the organization's use should respond to questions and comments at least once a day.

- Use good judgment about content and privacy laws. Do not post content that is threatening, obscene, in violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, or is otherwise harmful of illegal.

- By posting content to any social media site, you agree that you own or otherwise control all of the rights to that content, that your content is protected/fair use and that you will not knowingly provide misleading or false information.

- Be accurate! Check your sources, facts, etc. before posting content.

- Include citations when using or posting online material that includes direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos or videos. If the content is not original to you or your organization, include the original material or link to the original material, if applicable.

- Be aware of liability. Individuals are responsible for what is posted on their personal site as well as those of their student organization. Individual bloggers have been held liable for commentary deemed to be copyright infringement, defamatory, proprietary, libelous or obscene as defined by the courts.

- If you believe someone has violated any privacy laws, has posted content that may be harmful or has violated the Student Code of Conduct, contact the Assistant Director of Student Life immediately. Include a link or screen shot of the content in question.

- Confidential information should remain confidential, including postings on social media. Think of social media as a media outlet.

- Violations of social media guidelines may be subject to disciplinary action. This includes, but is not limited to, loss of recognition for the organization in question and reporting the violation to the Honor Board if needed.

General Guidelines for use of Social Media
- Remember: when you create a Facebook or Twitter account, you are agreeing to their Terms and Conditions. Be cognizant of these when posting content, personal or professional.

- Use your personal Twitter accounts for personal information. Use of personal Twitter accounts for official organization business should be limited to promotions of events and breaking news.

- If the content of your message would not be acceptable for face-to-face conversation, over the phone or in another medium, it is more than likely not suitable for social networking sites. Ask yourself: would you want the comment or content published in the newspaper or posted on a billboard in the future?

- Remember your audience: Be aware that a presence in the social media world can easily be made public, including current and future students, staff, faculty, alumni, and the general CofC community. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not alienate, harm or provoke any of these groups.

- Do not upload anything you may regret later. This includes photos, content, comments or tags. Increasingly, employers are conducting Web searches as a hiring practice before extending offers. Be sure not to post something that might haunt you in the job search.

- Think before you post. There is no such thing as "private" social media sites. Search engines can turn up posts and pictures years after publication date.

- If you post content to a personal website or social media site and it includes work-related comments, be sure to be transparent.

- Regardless of how careful you are in trying to keep them separate, your professional and personal lives overlap, especially in an online presence.

Just some notes…
- If Facebook were a country, it would be the world's fourth largest.

- There are more than 200 million blogs on the Internet.

- YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world, with more than 100 million videos.

- 1 in 6 higher education students are enrolled in online curriculum

- 80 percent of Twitter usage is on mobile devices. People are updating each other anytime, anywhere.

- source: *Socialnomics: How Social Media Transforms the Way We Live and Do Business* by Erik Qualman