

MSU ALUMNI CLUB

Social Media Guidelines and Best Practices



MSU Alumni
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

Spartans who create or contribute to the club's social networks. Club social accounts are a great way to connect with fellow alumni and share Spartan news. It is the intention of the MSU Alumni Office (MSUAO) to provide guidelines and best practices that are designed to frame acceptable social media usage by page administrators and users.

Remember posts on any club page are visible to all. The public will perceive the club as representing MSU — to them, the club is an extension of the university. Clubs may encounter unanticipated circumstances when sharing information about the university or itself. Public response to the club and what is chosen to share online will vary. To be a positive steward of MSU and MSUAO, it will be helpful for the club to understand social media and what it means to engage online, as well as what risks to anticipate and how to triage problems. Awareness and deliberate professionalism will enable clubs to participate online in a respectful, relevant way that protects the reputation of MSU, MSUAO and the Alumni Club.

Lastly, we encourage all clubs to make sure that at least two board members have login credentials and administrative access to the club's social media accounts. This will ensure no disruptions in the club's accounts when there is a change in board positions.

TIPS FOR PARTICIPATING, MONITORING AND MODERATING

Participating as an Administrator of a Club Page

- Look before you leap. Learn as much as you can before diving in. Read the user guide/documentation and the terms of use for any social media tool you plan to use. Become familiar with the standards for conduct and practice related to the tool. If you want to successfully join a social network/community, you should understand its standards and practices.
- Add value to the conversation. If you make the conversation only about you, the community will have little interest. Share what is unique to you and what you find interesting from others. Be helpful and be present.
- Play nice. Do not spam, type using all caps, be hateful or use bad language. Share the spotlight.
- Support official endorsements. It is appropriate to reiterate support for or share information about official Michigan State University or club endorsements (e.g., an official institutional blood drive, fundraiser, cause, etc.).
- Avoid unofficial endorsements. Do not use the MSU, MSUAO or club logo or marks or your affiliation with the institution to endorse or promote products, opinions or causes (e.g., vendors, service providers, products, political candidates, causes, etc.). Keep in mind that the public will perceive you as speaking for the institution.
- Respect diversity. The Spartan community values and respects differences, recognizing that communities are rich because of diversity and inclusion.
- Respect privacy. Confidential or proprietary information should never be disclosed. If you are not sure whether something should be shared, check with MSUAO or your Engagement Director.

Monitoring as an Administrator of a Club Page

As an Alumni Club social media administrator you may manage a blog, Facebook page/group or another site that allows participants to post comments or original posts. When a post is commercial, obscene, threatening or otherwise violates the terms of use for the site, as site administrator it is your job to remove the offending posts.

However, avoid the temptation to remove posts that are merely critical, angry or represent a different opinion. Remember, a social media site is a means for holding a conversation. Suppressing other points of view may be a quick way to lose readers' trust.

Moderating as an Administrator of a Club Page

Moderating a page or group involves a three-phase process:

Phase 1: Listen and identify. Know where online conversations may take place. Listen for MSU or club related statements requests for assistance, opinions or frustrations from the community. Take a closer look when attention is required.

Phase 2: Evaluate. Consider the following questions:

- Are you the right person to moderate comments or questions?
- Have you identified something positive related to an individual experience?
- Have you identified something negative related to an individual's experience with the Spartan community?
- Have you identified an aggressive or volatile individual?
- Has a support request been identified?
- Have you found something about MSU, MSUA or the Alumni Club that is factually inaccurate?

Phase 3: Engage, refer or ignore. Based on your evaluation, determine if you are the right person to moderate what was identified and take one of the following actions:

- You are the right person to moderate comments or questions — engage in a positive way.
- You are not the right person to moderate the instance — document the instance, pass along to the Alumni Club Board.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES PERTAINING TO ADMINISTRATORS

We encourage you to take the guidelines and best practices set forth below and use them as your own — inserting your Alumni Club name when applicable. Remember, this guide is meant for use of the club and not everything may make sense for each group. The guide can be kept exactly as is or used as a foundation to create guidelines and best practices for the specific nature of a club. We welcome you to remove or add guidelines that fit the needs of your club and its members.

Social Guidelines Pertaining to Administrators of [INSERT ALUMNI CLUB]

Individuals who identify themselves as a club leaders of the [Insert Alumni Club] and who are posting messages on behalf of the [Insert Alumni Club] are encouraged to observe the guidelines set forth in this document. In addition, the following, guidelines should be practiced:

- Clearly identify who you are.
- Make it clear that the views expressed are your own.
- Consider using a standard disclaimer: The opinions expressed here are the views of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of [Insert Alumni Club].
- Do not disclose financial or confidential student, faculty, staff, athletic, research or institutional information.

Social Guidelines Pertaining to Administrators of [INSERT ALUMNI CLUB] Cont.

- Do not share personal information or conversations of associates or partners unless you have their written permission to do so.
- No selling or ads of any kind.
- Be aware of the privacy settings and user options associated with the social media tools you use and the audiences who will have access to content you publish.
- Remember that you are responsible for what you post on the [Insert Alumni Club]
- Personal use of social media should generally be on your own social media account (i.e., not owned or managed by MSU).

COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

[Insert Alumni Club]’s page is maintained to provide information about the Alumni Club and University, as well as club and university stories, news and highlights. [Insert Alumni Club] pages welcome comments and posts but encourages civil discourse. To promote civil discourse, certain categories of speech may be removed.

A comment may be removed if it:

- Incites violence.
- Contains fighting words, true threats or demonstrates an imminent intent to harm or assault.
- Constitutes or encourages illegal activity.
- Constitutes harassment.
- Contains profanities or obscene language.
- Promotes a business or commercial transaction.
- Promotes a candidate campaigning for election.
- Violates the intellectual property rights — such as copyright or trademark infringement — of any other party.
- Compromises the safety or security of MSU community members or the public.

[Insert Alumni Club] may remove “spam” or other off-topic comments that are generated or appear to have been generated by “social bots” (i.e., content posted by automated software or “bots”).

[Insert Alumni Club] is not responsible for, and neither endorses nor opposes, comments posted on the club’s page by visitors. Commenters are personally responsible for their own comments, username and any information they post on this page.

SOCIAL MEDIA GROUP RULES

- No hate speech or bullying. [Insert Alumni club]’s objective is to make a safe and inclusive environment for everyone participating in the club group.
- Degrading comments of any kind will not be tolerated.
- No self-promotion, including links to business, social media, website and promo codes.
- No selling or ads, [Insert Alumni club] group is meant for shared Spartan connections and sharing club and MSU relevant news.
- Keep club group relevant.

INCLUSIVITY

In adherence to MSU’s core values, as well as the values of [Insert Alumni club], below are a list of best practices we promote and maintain to ensure an inclusive environment on our social channels:

- Use inclusive pronouns (they/them/theirs/folks).
- Do not make assumptions about gender, race, experience or ability.
- Avoid gender or race-specific emojis.
- Use title case for hashtags — it makes them more legible for screen readers.
- Provide captions for images and videos.
- Be thoughtful about representation.

RESOURCES

For more information about MSU’s guidelines and best practices, please refer to the links below:

- MSU Social Media Guidelines - <https://comms.msu.edu/social-media/resources/social-media-guidelines.html>
- MSU Community Guidelines - <https://comms.msu.edu/social-media/resources/msu-community-guidelines.html>