

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

GUIDELINES:

Post with purpose. Brainstorm who your audience is and target your message. Every time you post something, bring the thought full circle. Do not post a link / story without any context. Always give some sort of introduction, however brief, of **why** you are sharing this with your audience. At the same time, keep in mind that social media channels are always external facing, so even when you have posts that are geared to an internal audience, the subject should have relatively broad appeal. If the message is on topic and on brand, it will be relevant.

Choose your outlet wisely. Different social media sites work better for different audiences. To connect with undergraduate students, opt for Instagram. If you are reaching out to alumni or parents, then Facebook or LinkedIn will be stronger. Remember, you don't have to post all of the content to all of the outlets. If your audience doesn't use one of these sites, do not feel that you need to open an account there. Just post strong content to the sites that work.

Make it fun. On social media we can break from more formal writing conventions. People come to social sites to be social. They don't want to be talked at but talked to. Stay within the tone and style of the brand. For guidance on voice and style, see the brand toolkit.

Join the club. Lots of social trends have developed that are globally popular like Throwback Thursday (#TBT). Join in. Show followers that we're there and in-the-know. Do a bit of research and see what relevant and existing topics you can add to.

Make people feel good. When people mention, follow, and engage with Savannah State directly on social media, reciprocate! Show users we're paying attention. A simple thanks for a like or mention or a return of a follow makes users feel good about engaging. They'll be more likely to do it again. We can't reciprocate every little thing. Use your best judgment to stay engaged with followers.

Keep track. Most social media sites have analytics tools that you can use to see which posts are performing well. Take advantage of these tools to see what people like on Savannah State's social media channels. Hone in on what's working, what isn't, and why. If something isn't working, change it.

Let people know. Take every opportunity to encourage your stakeholders to engage on social media. People can't use our hashtags or be part of our social media campaigns if they don't know they exist. Publicize our social media channels through our other media channels (website, radio station, print materials, etc.). And share the social media stream page with people who don't have social media accounts so they can engage as well.

<http://www.savannahstate.edu/social-media/>

Share strategically. Savannah State University has a lot of associated social media accounts that aren't all managed by one person. It's important that Savannah State's social media managers

keep each other in the loop. Share interesting ideas, insights, and information. If you know about something (event, game, accomplishment) but it really belongs in a “fellow” SSU’s feed, call or email to let that person know. They may have it slated to go at a specific time. Posting content that is only loosely related to your audience causes confusion for the end users and can disrupt another department’s editorial calendar.

Be sure to follow all of the SSU social media accounts that you don’t manage and share/retweet compelling content that your counterparts are posting. If you see something relevant to your audience, you can “like”, comment or share. **Please share (repost) rather than rewrite the post.** This directs users back to the original content and makes all the analytics numbers stronger for everyone. It also keeps the message consistent.

(NOTE: Be careful that you are sharing / liking as the proper persona. It is easy to re-post as the same page that posted it initially, rather than the account you intended. If you need more information on this aspect, ask Marketing & Communications)

Link it up. Our social media, websites, and other marketing materials should reinforce each other. When you feature content on social media make sure you point followers back to that original content with links.

CONTENT:

Savannah State University – Overall institutional news, kudos, press releases

Savannah State Admissions – Content directly related to potential students, recruitment, scholarship opportunities

Savannah State Athletics – Sports-related topics, games, scores

Other known accounts are listed in the directory. Accounts that have not posted for a year will be removed from this page:

<http://www.savannahstate.edu/social-media/directory.shtml>

NETWORK GUIDE:

Twitter: Short and snappy is the name of the game. With only 280 characters at your disposal, being concise and clever is an art. Although its usership is less than Facebook, its extremely public nature allows people to see posts without being an active user. Hashtags were popularized by Twitter and are a great tool for this site. Aim for 2-4 posts per day, if the information is relevant, but be sure you are not just repeating yourself.

Facebook: The social media giant offers a great space to give a little more than you would on other social accounts. There is no word limit, but moderation is still key. Most people have a Facebook account—even grandma. Facebook is a good space to reach users who may not have ventured into other social platforms yet (i.e., parents and alumni). There’s still great debate about using hashtags on Facebook but we don’t recommend it. If you must, keep it to just 1 per post. Shoot for a least three Facebook posts a week, but no more than 10 – and posts with photos get several times the number of “likes” than text-only posts.

Instagram: It's all about creativity. On Instagram, the user feels like a professional photographer. It's very popular with younger generations. Instagram is a great place to engage with students, both current and prospective. Show off this beautiful campus and our events. Hashtags are commonly used on Instagram. Use them freely but don't over do it—stick to around 2-3 per post. Links won't work in Instagram posts so just focus on posting great content that will make users eager explore learning more about SSU on their own.

IMAGES:

Use **bold, rich images** that illustrate the story. When connecting to a link in a post, please verify the image is consistent with the story before posting. If you have to find an image, please be sure you have **permission** to use it. Give credit, if it's not in public domain.

EDITORIAL CALENDAR:

Take an hour with your staff and brainstorm some of the frequent questions your department gets. What do people always want to know? And what are they missing because they didn't know to ask? Put yourself in the audience's shoes. Ask yourself, "Is this what I would need to know?" Use these ideas to create a calendar for your posts.

Ex: Monday is focused on scholarships and grants. Tuesdays is about study tips. Wednesdays is campus life. This does not have to become a hard and fast rule but it will make it easier to figure out how and when to post your information. And you can still do those occasional "immediate" posts when something is happening in real time.

Space out your posts. Don't flood your timeline. An excellent, free tool is HootSuite, which allows you to pre-write and schedule posts on several social media outlets. It also allows you to track multiple feeds on one screen and even create feeds to track hashtag use. You can use it from directly at <http://hootsuite.com> and does not require any IT installation.

QUESTIONS:

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912-358-3059

HASHTAGS:

The attached guide gives some of the hashtag campaigns that are planned. **If you have an event or campaign that needs a hashtag, please ask the office of Marketing & Communications to help set one up.** Standard ones include #seriouslyimpressive, #SavannahState and #HailSSU (athletics).

Black Heritage Festival
#SavBHF

Southern Regional Press Institute
#SSUSRPI

Campus Visit Day(s)
#VisitSSU

Dress for Success Wednesday
#SSUDress

Honors Convocation
#SSUHonors

Commencement-Related Activities
#SavState19 (December)
#SavState20 (May)

Homecoming
#SSUHomecoming

Founders Day
#SSUFounders

Rock n Roll Marathon
#SSURnR

While hashtags can be great in terms of discovering and organizing information, don't overuse them. It's rare to use more than one or two in any given update. When people see too many hashtags, it looks like spam.

Invite people to use these hashtags on any of their social media outlets.

Ex: Share your stories with #SavState19

Ex: Follow the event live using #SSUHomecoming