

Randolph Community College Social Media Guidelines, Accessibility & User Agreement

Section 1: Social Media Guidelines

Current and prospective students, alumni, staff, faculty, and friends utilize Randolph Community College's (RCC) Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn social media pages to stay connected. Having a presence in these areas helps RCC raise its visibility and connect with our external audiences. In order to operate within social media effectively, the Office of College Marketing (OCM) has developed a set of guidelines and an attached contract to support interactions on behalf of RCC.

Individuals who manage social media as representatives of RCC (including faculty, staff, and designated students) are responsible for following all normal expectations for professional behavior. Social media postings, including comments and responses, can be stored by and shared with millions around the world.

For more information on Internet and computer usage at RCC, view the Acceptable Use Policy (*Randolph Community College Policy Manual - Section IX Information Systems and Technology*). In particular, please review the text in the first section of that page, which begins, in part: **"Use of RCC technology resources shall be consistent with local, state, and federal law and in accordance with all College policies and procedures."**

It is important to note that applications developed for any mobile devices (e.g. smartphones and tablets) that use the College's name, logo, or other institutionally identifiable information should meet the standards set forth in the Acceptable Use Policy and these guidelines, as well.

Before You Begin

An effective social media presence requires careful planning. When creating an RCC social media account, consider the following guidelines:

Understand the time commitment.

First and foremost, consider whether you have the staff, time, and resources necessary to maintain an effective social media presence, produce fresh content regularly, and monitor responses. It takes a great deal of time to effectively maintain a social media page. To keep a robust social media presence and engage with your followers, we recommend that you post two to three times per week (or more!) on your social media channels. Best practices include having at least two platform managers who are well versed in the communication goals of the channel. These managers can be faculty, staff, or student workers.

Establish goals and objectives.

What do you want to accomplish by having a presence on social media? What are your goals? How will social media help achieve them? How will you track your successes and progress?

Identify your audience.

Who is your audience and what issues are important to them? What content will they respond to? The better you understand your audience, the more likely you are to provide meaningful and appropriate content.

Select an appropriate name.

It should be clear to your audience that the account represents a specific department, office, or organization at RCC. For example, the Twitter handle for Randolph Community College is, appropriately, @RandolphCC.

Create a plan for account continuity.

A social media account for a department or organization should outlast any individual student, staff, or faculty member who runs it, so it's important to make a plan to ensure the account details are passed on to a new manager when a student graduates or an employee leaves or retires. Make sure that the account username and password are recorded in a secure location (such as with a password manager) and not just remembered by one person, to prevent the knowledge being lost when they leave.

Let us know about your account.

The Office of College Marketing should be informed about all RCC-related social media accounts. This is to ensure that someone in our office can reference all accounts that are owned by the college. Furthermore, letting us know about your account can help with recovering it if a plan was not previously made for account continuity. This can also prove helpful if your account is hacked and the owner isn't available to change the password. When possible, the OCM should be added as an additional administrator on the account. If adding additional admins is not possible, please provide the OCM with the login credentials. To inform the OCM of your account, contact ocm@randolph.edu.

Generating Content

Determine what type of content you will produce and how often you will update it.

Represent your department, class or organization.

Post content that is in line with your initiatives and with the College's overall mission. Write in a manner that represents your whole unit. Use we, our, and other inclusive language. *Note: Liking and reposting are often considered endorsements, so check with others on your team before taking those actions. Remember, your account represents everyone in your group.

Have a conversation.

It's the interaction — comments, shares, retweets — that makes social media valuable. Provide content that encourages feedback. Ask questions and reply to posts in a timely matter. Promote and interact with UGC (user-generated content) when possible.

Include photos and videos.

Visual content, especially video, increases the level of engagement with your audience and the likelihood that another user will share the content on their page.

Make it accessible.

All of your social media posts should be fully accessible to the entire RCC community. This means including captions for all videos, using #CamelCase (see Section 2), attaching alt text to every photo, and avoiding posting both QR codes and flattened text (think: text-heavy posters or flyers). Please read through our full guidelines in Section 2 for accessibility on social media.

Connect users with resources.

When appropriate, drive traffic to the College and provide resources to your audience by linking to content on the RCC website.

Customize posts for the social media outlet you are using.

It is fine to post about the same topic on multiple outlets, but you should tailor the content for the audience. Mix it up! Alter the posts to avoid repetition. **Do not link status updates to post automatically from one social media account to another** (it can mess up the formatting). On Twitter, you may choose to advertise an event with a very brief description and link, whereas on Facebook you may want to provide detailed information about the event along with a photo.

Example:

- **Twitter:** Our Radiography and Nursing students recently took part in an interdisciplinary simulation activity.
<https://t.co/sf7gmJR4UN>
#RCCProud #Radiography #Nursing #Collaboration
- **Facebook:** Our Radiography and Nursing students recently took part in an interdisciplinary simulation activity. The Nursing students practiced transporting a stroke patient to the X-ray department for additional testing, working with Radiography students to move the patient safely. Then each group learned more about the types of imaging that would be done and how those would be used to continue to treat the patient.
<https://www.randolph.edu/academics/college-majors/radiography/index.aspx>
#RCCProud #Radiography #Nursing #Collaboration
[Event photo]

Give kudos.

Social media works when you are generous! There is nothing wrong with self-promotion, but things really take off when you give others praise or a moment in the spotlight. Retweet and share as often as possible, provided the content relates back to your goals. For example, if someone says how much they love your program, quote tweet it with a thank you.

Be accurate.

Double-check **everything** for accuracy before you post, from spelling to the information you're communicating. If someone posts a question or a complaint online, don't ignore it, even if it's only to say that you're getting more information and will reply shortly. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible in an effort to build community.

Correct errors.

If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly. Posts often include timestamps and users will be able to see how quickly you respond.

Collaborate.

We encourage you to interact and collaborate with other RCC social media groups. Familiarize yourself with RCC-associated social media accounts — utilize your connections and ask who other people follow for campus news, events and information; search “Randolph Community College” + the name of a department, office, organization, etc. on social media platforms and explore what comes up; and/or email Megan Crotty for suggestions on who to reach out to.

Promote your account and your content.

Use traditional means to promote your new account(s): email listservs, newsletters, and websites. Also make sure you notify the Office of College Marketing when you establish a new channel on any platform and always tag @RandolphCC in your posts and stories; we will give you more visibility when you share engaging content. When you tag @RandolphCC, it guarantees we will see it so we can re-share your posts on the main account. *Note: you especially must tag @RandolphCommunityCollege in Instagram stories if you want them to be shared. Instagram does not allow non-tagged profiles to share stories to their own accounts.

The RCC Instagram also has a “Friday Finds” series, in which we share posts from college-associated accounts to the @RandolphCommunityCollege Instagram story on Friday morning in order for them to reach a wider audience. We limit this sharing to only Friday morning so posts don't get missed or repeated during the week. To make the most of this series when promoting your events, make sure to plan ahead and post about your events the preceding week before Friday. For example, if you have an event on a Wednesday, you might want to post about it the previous Thursday or earlier to 1) give people time to factor it into their schedules and 2) allow enough time for us to feature it on the @RandolphCommunityCollege Instagram story the following Friday. You can always post to your account again the day before or the day of the event, to remind your followers that it is happening.

Maintain confidentiality.

Per college policy, don't post confidential or proprietary information about RCC, its students, alumni, or employees. Use good judgment and follow college policies and federal requirements.

Handling Negative or Critical Posts

Responding to negative posts.

If you receive negative feedback or critical posts, address the user's concerns in a positive manner. Responding respectfully will indicate your willingness to rectify any problems and demonstrate that RCC values others' opinions — even if they are contrary.

Sometimes no action is the best action.

On occasion, people direct their frustration with the world toward you and your social media account. If you're dealing with such a person, it may be better to take a passive role rather than fanning the fire. Invest your time and efforts instead where you can have a positive result.

Removing comments.

Depending on the severity of a negative comment and the platform, you may choose to delete the comment or simply hide it. Deleting a comment will completely remove it from your account. On Facebook, hiding a comment will hide it from your timeline and fans, but the comment will be visible to the person who posted it and their friends. *Note: posts containing personal attacks, nudity, discriminatory language or images, spam, or illegal material should be deleted promptly.

Not sure how to respond?

Please contact ocm@randolph.edu for assistance.

Need help?

Remember that a successful social media account takes time to maintain and requires regular and timely updates. Inactive and/or duplicate social media accounts reflect negatively on the College and on your department, office, or organization. We may request that inactive and/or duplicate accounts be taken down.

If you have questions about maintaining your social media account, digital accessibility, how to increase engagement, or any other questions about social media, please contact ocm@randolph.edu for assistance.

Section 2: Social Media Accessibility

It is important to make sure Randolph Community College (RCC)-related content is fully accessible to the entire RCC community. Making your social content accessible not only aligns with RCC's DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) values and goals, it is legally necessary under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. It's just the right thing to do!

For more information, the website Accessible Social is an excellent resource. If you have additional questions about accessible content, please reach out to ocm@randolph.edu.

Videos

Videos with speaking or lyrics should always include captions for accessibility.

If you are making Instagram or Facebook Reels, or YouTube Shorts, there are automatic captioning functions available. This is very useful, but you will have to edit the captions to make sure they are accurate before posting.

Writing Posts

Use correct punctuation and capitalization throughout your text, so screen readers know when to pause, start, or stop. This also allows those with learning disabilities such as dyslexia to parse content easier.

Save emojis for the end of your post, so they don't interrupt words or sentences.

CamelCase

CamelCase is the practice of writing phrases without spaces or punctuation. The format indicates the separation of words with a single capitalized letter, and the first word starting with either case. Always use CamelCase in your hashtags and usernames for readability. This means starting each new word in a hashtag or username with a capital letter, e.g. @RandolphCC or #EnglishDepartmentPicnic

A few platforms don't allow CamelCase in usernames — just do it whenever possible.

Alt Text

Include "alt text" for every photo you upload as a main post on all social platforms. This is primarily for blind and visually impaired followers, as they may use screen readers to access content.

Alt text is just a plain-language description of the image you are uploading. Be as objective, accurate and brief as possible while still being thorough (you don't need to include every tiny detail, just enough for someone to fully understand what you're describing).

An example of alt text: "Three students walk through the plaza on a sunny spring day."

Guidelines for writing alt text

Proper names/nouns are okay to include if they provide important context, i.e. the name of a building on campus (“A student sits at a picnic table outside of the Learning Resources Center.”) or the name of a well-known figure (“Richard Petty hands out shirts to students in front of the Richard Petty Education Center.”).

You do not need to include races, genders, etc. in alt text unless it is thematically relevant (i.e. the post depicts a faculty member giving a talk about their gender or racial identity).

Generally, stick to gender neutral pronouns and “person/people” instead of “man” or “woman,” especially if you don’t personally know whoever is in the image.

You do not need to include “photo of” or “image of” at the beginning of your alt text. The screen reader knows it is a photo, video, etc.

An exception to this guideline is if the post includes a graphic or collage, because the inclusion of that information would be useful to make sure a screen reader has the full context (e.g. “A collage of five photos of alumni hugging from 2022”).

Other useful information to include for context could be the color of the photo (i.e. it’s black and white or sepia toned) or the angle of it (i.e. it’s an aerial drone shot, a very wide shot, etc.).

Putting abbreviations in your alt text is usually not recommended, but RCC loves a good abbreviation, so it will often be necessary.

If it is an initialism (pronounced as individual letters, like FBI), type periods between the letters so a screen reader will pronounce it correctly (e.g. “A student locks their bike up outside the L.R.C.”), although best practices dictate writing out the name of the building.

If it is a true acronym (pronounced as a word, like NASA or UNICEF), you can spell it out without punctuation.

Do not include links, jokes, opinions, flowery language, emojis, hashtags, random keywords, photographer credits, etc. in your alt text. Basically, do not include any nonessential information.

Guidelines for images

Try not to upload text-heavy flyers or posters as main feed posts. Instead, create simple graphics with a related image (i.e. RCC students smiling and having fun from a similar event) that has only the title of the event and the date, time, and location on it. Include all necessary information (including title, date, time, location, sponsor department names if necessary, etc.) in the caption.

If you need specialized graphics for your social media post, please contact the Office of College marketing for assistance (ocm@randolph.edu) or fill out a Print/Marketing Request form online (<https://www.randolph.edu/internal/pmrequest.aspx>).

If you only have a text-heavy flyer or poster available to post, just make sure to include all necessary information in the caption **or** alt text.

Entering this information in both the caption **and** alt text **is not necessary**. You do not need to repeat the same information — and in this situation, prioritize the caption, which both screen readers and visually abled followers will go to first.

Do not include QR codes in your graphics for social media! They work great for physical posters and digital signage around campus, but not for social media content. Most people look at social media on their phones and therefore will not be able to scan the codes with said phones. If you're designing a poster with a QR code, just make another, slightly altered version without the code and post that on your social media, with a link in your bio or story for Instagram, and a link in the body of the post for all other platforms.

Looking for photos to use on social media instead of flyers? The Office of College Marketing has many images you can use. Please reach out to us with your image needs and we will try to accomodate (ocm@randolph.edu).

Platform-specific instructions

Instagram

When uploading a photo, scroll down and tap “advanced settings,” then “write alt text.”

Facebook

When uploading a photo on desktop, click the “edit” button in the top left corner of the image, then “alternative text.”

When uploading on mobile, tap the three dots in the top right corner of the image, then “edit alt text.”

Twitter

When uploading a photo on desktop, click “add description” directly below the image.

When uploading on mobile, tap “+ALT” in the bottom right corner of the image.

LinkedIn

When uploading a photo on desktop, click “Alt. text” directly below the image.

When uploading on mobile, tap “ALT” directly below the image.

Section 2: Social Media User Agreement

I have read the Randolph Community College Social Media Guidelines and Accessibility document and agree to follow the guidelines and accessibility practices and make every attempt to keep the social media account I am tasked with maintaining in good standing:

(First and Last Name)

(Date)

(Signature)