



## ADMINISTRATION POLICY SOCIAL MEDIA

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**EFFECTIVE:** November 2011

**REVISED:**

**RELATED POLICIES:** [Communications, General](#); [Copyright Law](#); [Marketing](#); [Media Relations](#); [Technology Use](#); [Conflict of Interest and Workplace Relationships](#); [Excluded Employees](#); [Political Activity](#); [Human Rights](#); [Release of Information](#);

### POLICY

Northern Lights College recognizes the importance of utilizing “social media” as part of the communication efforts of the College. To that end, the College, as advised by the Marketing and Communications Department, selects and utilizes appropriate modes of “social media” for the purposes of marketing the College, distributing information to the public about NLC, and providing a forum where students, alumni, staff and faculty can interact about topics related to coursework or program areas.

### PROCEDURE

As part of its mandate to oversee the marketing and branding of Northern Lights College, the Marketing and Communications Department oversees the use of social media at NLC. Marketing and Communications also coordinates postings to the official College social media sites that are accessible through the College website.

In addition to the official College social media sites, individual College departments (program areas and/or services) may develop social media site(s) on behalf of their specific area of expertise and the College. While not maintained by the Marketing and Communications department, departmental social media sites are considered a College resource, and are expected to meet institutional guidelines for social media sites as outlined in this policy.

The following guidelines provide parameters to enhance and protect NLC’s reputation in the social media sphere, and to guide the activities of those who work for NLC and contribute to official NLC social networks on behalf of the College. They do not apply to the use of social media for teaching or research.

### SETTING UP A NLC SOCIAL MEDIA SITE:

1. Staff members (the site sponsor) who wish to set up a social media must first submit a Departmental Social Media Site Strategy/Request form (attached). The request is to be approved by the excluded manager responsible for that department. Manager approval is required to indicate that the manager is aware of the request, and agrees it is beneficial to the department and the College. Marketing and Communications will review the request, answer any questions, and offer suggestions, if appropriate, before deciding on final approval.
2. As part of the Strategy/Request form, the site sponsor will provide the Marketing and Communications Department with login information and password(s) for the departmental social media site. For Facebook pages, the site sponsor will add the Communications Director as an administrator on the site. This information will only be used in the following circumstances:
  - The login information/administrator rights could be used to post a message across all

College social media platforms during a crisis situation (for example, in a lockdown scenario).

- In the event College policies are breached, NLC reserves the right to use the password information/administrator rights to remove a posting or video, suspend a site, or change the site's password.

3. NLC departmental social media sites will have different objectives and different audiences, which means different approaches. However, NLC aims to have a consistent look and feel across all social media platforms through the use of specific *NLC* elements on each site. Therefore, each College social media site should include the following:

- At least one citation of the College's full name, Northern Lights College, with NLC used for all other College name references. Both Northern Lights College and NLC are registered trademarks.
- A statement that this is an official Northern Lights College site.
- A description of the College department administering the site.
- A general description about Northern Lights College, outlining key institutional messages and including branding elements (this will be provided by Marketing and Communications Department as part of the approval of the Social Media Strategy/Request form).
- A link back to the NLC website from the departmental social media site, to increase audience reach and search engine optimization.
- An approved NLC logo (this will be provided by Marketing and Communications Department as part of the approval of the Social Media Strategy/Request form).

#### **USING A NLC SOCIAL MEDIA SITE:**

Using social media to access online users can help Northern Lights College connect with its communities in many positive ways. Social media provides exciting opportunities, but must be employed responsibly. To protect the College and all members of the College community, College staff members are urged to be cautious in using social media.

Remember that content posted on the Internet can be accessed by anyone, and information (data and photos) may continue to stay on the Internet even after it is erased or deleted from a social media site.

Administrators for official NLC social network sites should be aware of the following:

1. All information posted must be true and accurate. College information distributed via social media sites must match the information distributed through official College print materials and website. If mistaken information is posted, acknowledge it and correct the information as quickly as possible and let people know it has been corrected.
2. College social media sites represent a post-secondary educational institution.
  - Readers will notice spelling and grammar mistakes; errors would reflect poorly on the College's image/reputation. Therefore, please check spelling and grammar before posting to a College social media site.
  - To avoid the possibility of the College being associated with a group or individual that may support or represent philosophies and/or viewpoints that may not be aligned with NLC's values and vision, or its status as publicly-funded institution, departmental social media sites should not link, follow or otherwise connect to social media sites based

outside of the College.

3. All postings are subject to NLC policies on human rights and standards of conduct. Postings should be done in a professional manner, with respect for the opinions and ideas of others. Within these general parameters, do not:

- Post statements that could be interpreted as defamatory.
- Post information, photos, or other items that could reflect negatively on NLC or the person doing the posting.
- Commit the College or an individual staff member to a specific course of action prior to checking the appropriate College policy.
- Criticize other institutions.

4. Material that is copyrighted or trademarked cannot be used without the explicit permission of the copyright/ trademark holder. This includes: music, images, text, and logos from magazines, newspapers, websites, etc. Contact the College's Copyright Coordinator or Marketing and Communications for clarification.

5. By agreeing to the terms of use, online communities have permission to republish content worldwide and share information with advertisers, third parties, and law enforcement, among others. Following the appropriate Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation is imperative on NLC social media sites. Therefore it is important to:

- Ensure that individuals who appear in photos posted to an NLC social media site have signed a College model release form, and that form has been forwarded to the Marketing and Communications department.
- Have written permission prior to using or disclosing another person's personal information.
- Not post confidential or proprietary information about NLC or any member of the College community.
- Not comment on legal or political matters.

6. Staff responsible for updating and posting to a College social media site will use their real name(s) and position title(s) at NLC.

7. Be aware of the potential for conflict of interest. All posts on NLC social media sites should support the objectives outlined in the department's approved social media strategy, be relevant to the focus of the department and the College, and should not be used for commercial solicitations or personal gain.

8. Media inquiries directed to a departmental social media site about NLC should be referred to the Marketing and Communications Department. If the media features departmental site content or the site coordinator receives interview requests, the Marketing and Communications Department is to be notified to ensure consistency in the publication of information.

## SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY/REQUEST FORM

**Department:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Submitted By:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Manager's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Manager's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Social media platform** – Please indicate which social media platform the department would like to use, and the name of the social media site.

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\_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose** – Why is the department establishing a social media presence? What does the department hope to achieve (raise awareness, engage your audience, share information)?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Target audience** – Who does the department hope to engage as readers/followers/fans (existing/future students, alumni, donors, media)?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Content** – What type of content does the department anticipate posting to the site (news stories, event notices, discussion questions, etc.)?

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**Maintenance** – Who will set up, administer and maintain the site? Who is the backup person if the site administrator is away? (Names and email addresses.)

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Facebook pages require at least two members from the department and the College's, Communications Director listed as administrators. Please provide the login name and password for the department's social media site.

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