What is social media?

Social media is a general term used to reference sites and activity on sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or any other virtual hub where users interact. Other popular social media sites include Instagram, Tumblr, TikTok, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Wikipedia, WhatsApp, Reddit, Flickr, WordPress, Foursquare and the list grows daily.

Here at the Office of Technology and Communications Services, we aim to "offer opportunities for learning, discovery and engagement". With this in mind, we encourage our employees to embrace social media sites as easy-access venues for streamlining processes and enriching communications and engagement.

While we are excited about these resources, we want to make sure that you - our social media users - are aware of your rights and boundaries.

This social media Policy includes legal information you NEED to know, along with supplementary tips to aid your success. This is a living document which will be updated from time to time as the social media landscape continues to shift. Please contact the Office of Technology and Communications Services or a designee at communications@suagcenter.com with any feedback.

Social media has given the Southern University Ag Center (SU Ag Center), the Southern University System (SUS) and its various campuses, colleges, and departments the opportunity to use technology to network with several current and future clientele, i.e., students, faculty and staff, parents, alumni, clients, stakeholders, donors and supporters. The field of social media continues to grow, and because of this, it is imperative that we understand how to correctly and appropriately use social media to create strong relationships, share information, advance knowledge, raise awareness, build support, participate in important conversations, and collaborate on new ideas.

The SU Ag Center supports the use of social media by its research and extension units in the course of their work to connect with faculty, staff, clients, colleagues, and more, sharing the sense of community present on campus with a much broader array of people. However, keep in mind that social media should only serve to supplement and not replace the official channels of communicating with your audiences. This document is designed to provide guidance, advice, and tips on how to do so safely, effectively, and within the SU Ag Center guidelines.

This policy establishes the criteria and procedure for creating the SU Ag Center's presence or participation on social media sites on behalf of the SU Ag Center. It also offers "best practices" for the successful management of these endeavors.

SU Ag Center's presence or participation on social media sites is defined as: 1) Media sites established by the Center on University-owned domains *(Policy Statement on Website Hosting and URL Addressing, 2004)*; 2) Accounts on external sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., on behalf of the University; and 3)

Personal accounts on external sites that are approved for use or participation by University employees as part of their job duties.

This policy applies to faculty and staff, including student employees, who engage in social media for work-related purposes or who are asked by supervisors to use or participate in social media as part of his or her job responsibilities.

Things to Consider Before Engaging in social media
Creating a successful social media page requires careful planning and resource allocation. Before you begin to use social media on behalf of SU Ag Center, please remember the following:

Keep in mind other Southern University policies:
This document does not affect other University policies that might apply to use of social media, including (but not limited to) the Harassment policy, Computer Use policy, Logo Usage policy, Workplace Violence policy and University Web Policy. If your use of social media would violate any of the Institution's policies in another forum, it will also violate them in an online forum.

Get necessary approval
Before starting a social media site for your program area, or unit, make sure you have approval from the Office of Technology and Communication Services. Only authorized employees may be a "content owner" or "administrator" for SU Ag Center social media websites. Social media accounts that are being set up to represent an overall Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center and College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences "voice" or initiative must first be approved through the Office of Technology and Communications Services.

Approval Process
All SU Ag Center related social media initiatives must first be approved by the proper authorities. Submit an explanation of the proposed social media initiative to the Associate VC for Communications & IT/Deputy CIO and/or Communications Services or designee. Additionally, a helpdesk ticket must be submitted via the Helpdesk Portal on the website.

The following questions shall be considered when there is a request to establish a University-hosted social media site and to participate in Internet discussions via social media on behalf of the University:

- *Will the site be used in such a manner that positively supports the institution's values, mission and goals?*
- *Can engagement with the audience add value to both the University and the audience?*
- *Is the approach as effective or efficient as other approaches that might be used (i.e. would an existing initiative or the Ag Center's main website accomplish the same goals)?*
- *Does the use of social media enable the SU Ag Center to offer services it might not otherwise be able to offer or enhance current services?*
- *Do sufficient resources exist to appropriately manage the platform?*
  - At least two faculty or staff members shall be designated to monitor the medium, identify problems that emerge and act when necessary. Always having multiple content owners or administrators for every social media application will ensure that the application can continue to

thrive and be updated regularly even if one of the existing administrators changes jobs or leaves the SU Ag Center.

Prepare for the necessary time commitment

A social media site will only be effective if the administrators take the necessary time to generate interesting and interactive content and build relationships with the online community. A channel that lies dormant can be worse than no channel at all. Keep the page fresh, posting at least twice per week, but not so frequently that you will fill up users' timelines. Posts should be brief and end with a link to content on the SU Ag Center's website when possible. Keep in mind that the overall goal is engagement. Be sure to share other relevant SU Ag Center content, thank people for re-tweets (when appropriate), initiate and join discussions

- *Pages shall be updated on an ongoing basis by the department or unit that created them.*
- *Establish a process to enable rapid response to any problems that may arise.*
- *Ensure an engaging, interesting environment for visitors. To be effective, pages must be dynamic and will require updating frequently.*
- *The approved faculty or staff member shall continuously monitor the social media platform, identify problems that emerge and act when necessary.*
- *The Office of Technology and Communication**s** Services is charged with the responsibility to monitor social media initiatives, counsel those who represent the University online on adherence to these policies and take action to restrict or remove an employee's ability to publish should efforts to correct the situation fail.*

Use of the SU Ag Center Brand

Any use of university marks, such as logos and graphics, shall comply with the *SU Ag Center Brand and Graphic Identity* polices of the Office of Technology and Communication**s** Services. Please use official logos and graphics that represent and adhere to the University's guidelines. Don't use the SU name for endorsements. Do not use logos, word marks, or any other brand's artifacts for personal use on social media. If you choose to promote a product, cause, political party, or candidate on social media sites, do so via your own, personal account.

- o The SU Ag Center does not monitor the personal social media sites of its employees; however, the University reserves the right to review any site or activity deemed as potentially in violation of the guidelines listed here where the University is in any way affiliated. On personal sites, identify your views as your own. If you identify yourself as an SU Ag Center faculty or staff member online, it should be clear that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the institution. Ensure that your personal social media sites contain content that is appropriate.

Make it easy for people to find your site

To maximize exposure and participation with your social media site you will want to make it as easy as possible for people to find it when searching online. A couple of suggestions on how to do this:

1. Please ensure that the SU Ag Center is listed prior to your program, office, or unit's title.
2. Try to avoid only using acronyms when naming your site.

Raising money via social networks

Charitable contributions to or on behalf of any organization whose mission is to support the SU Ag Center, cannot be solicited, nor can they be accepted, unless approved in advance by the Office of Technology and Communication Services and the approval of the Chancellor's Office.

Posting on Behalf of SU Ag Center

Sharing SU Ag Center news, events or promoting faculty, staff and student work through social media is an effective and low-cost way to engage various audiences of the Campus. In addition to the general guidelines discussed above, employees creating or posting on social media sites on behalf of SU Ag Center should remember to:

1. ***Be Accurate***
   Make sure you have all the facts before you post. All research, data reporting and analysis made public on the Web should be verified for accuracy. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible. That is how you build the trust of your community.

2. ***Realize your posts are public***
   Remember your audience. Your online presence is available to the public at large. This includes prospective clients, students, colleagues, alumni and other stakeholders. Consider this in content selection before publishing to ensure the post will not alienate, harm or provoke any of these groups. If you have any questions about the appropriateness of the material you are posting to a SU Ag Center social media site, please check with your supervisor or Office of Technology and Communications Services.

3. ***Keep confidential matters private***
   Do not post proprietary information about the SU Ag Center, including information about clients, students, alumni, or employees. Information collected in connection with research may be protected under a Nondisclosure Agreement, research protocol or other applicable law or agreement. Any protected information must not be disclosed through social media.

4. ***Be transparent***
   If you are posting as a representative of the SU Ag Center, your posts are viewed as representing the views of the Center, so make sure to post responsibly and with respect to others in your community. Your posts directly reflect upon the Center.

Responding to negative comments

When you find yourself disagreeing with others, keep your comments appropriate and polite. If you find yourself in a position where the communication becomes antagonistic, avoid being defensive. Please be respectful of other people's opinions. Do not publish content containing slurs, personal insults or attacks, profanity or obscenity, and do not engage in any conduct on a social media site that would not be acceptable in Southern University workplaces or classrooms.

If an employee is involved in an online altercation where disciplinary action seems necessary, the Office of the Chancellor and/or the Office of Human Resources shall be consulted and will determine an appropriate course of action for faculty and staff members.

Don't be afraid to ask for help

If you receive a question you cannot answer, forward the question to the proper authority. If you see incorrect information about the SU Ag Center, contact the Office of Technology and Communications Services at (225) 771-5669 for assistance. Also contact, the Office of Technology and Communication Services if you have trouble creating or monitoring your social media site.

Best Practices
- Protect confidential and proprietary information: Do not post confidential or proprietary information about the SU Ag Center, clients, employees, or stakeholders. Employees who share confidential information do so at the risk of disciplinary action or termination. Employees must adhere to state and federal laws related to security and privacy information.
- Encourage comments from followers of your social media platform but monitor interaction to ensure that discussion does not attack individuals or entities, does not use offensive language and is not threatening. Reserve the right to remove inappropriate comments from users.
- Respect copyright and fair use: Be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the Center. General information about copyright laws can be found on the U.S. Copyright Office website at **http://copyright.gov**/.
- Have a plan: Users should consider their messages, audiences, and goals, as well as a strategy for keeping information on social media sites up to date. An Office of Technology and Communications Services staff person can assist and advise you with your social media planning.
- Link back to the SU Ag Center: Whenever possible, link back to the Center's website. Ideally, posts should be brief and redirect a visitor to content that resides within the main website. When linking to a news article about the SU Ag Center, check with the proper authorities first.
- Do not use any of the SU Ag Center's logos or other images, or iconography on _personal_ social media sites.
- Do not use the Center's name to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate.
- Strive for accuracy: Get the facts straight before posting them on social media.
- Review content for grammatical and spelling errors: This is especially important if posting on behalf of the Center in any capacity.
- Be respectful: Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully considering how they could reflect on the Center and its institutional voice.
- Remember your audience: Be aware that a presence on social media is or easily can be made available to the public at large. This includes current employees, colleagues, and peers. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not alienate, harm or provoke any of these groups.
- Terms of service: Obey the Terms of Service of any social media platform employed.

An Overview of Social Networking Sites:

Facebook: An online social networking service in which "Pages" representing individuals, businesses, organizations, and brands share their story, interacting with an audience of "Friends." Viewers may "like" or comment to support a status.

Twitter: A real-time information network that connects the user to the latest stories, ideas, opinions and news in a "Tweet" of 140 characters or less.

Instagram: A fun way to share and experience moments as they happen with the SU Ag Center community through a series of pictures, videos and captions.

YouTube: A social platform that allows billions of people to discover, watch and share originally created videos. YouTube provides a forum for people to connect, inform and inspire others across the globe and acts as a distribution platform for original content creators and advertisers large and small.

Blogs: A website (such as Tumblr) on which an individual or group of users record opinions, information, etc., typically in the form of a short article.

LinkedIn: A business-oriented social networking site encouraging brand awareness, development of professional identity, professional opportunities, business deals, as well as new ventures.

Pinterest: A content sharing service that allows members to "pin" images, videos and other objects to a virtual bulletin board. Users can create an unlimited number of boards, each on a different topic.

Policy Approval
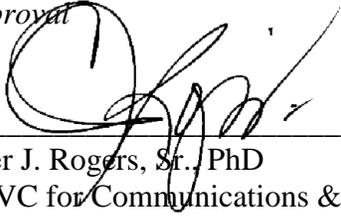
_____   *July 14, 2022*
Christopher J. Rogers, Sr., PhD   Date
Associate VC for Communications & IT/Deputy CIO - Client Services

OTCS Policy Developed January 29, 2021,
Rev. 07.14.2022

Southern University Agricultural Research & Extension Center
College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences
Office of Technology and Communications Services
Social Media Request Form

Date of Request: _____

Please provide all the required information and return this form to the Communications Office. The request should be submitted 7 days prior to site set-up.

Your Name:_____ **Email:** _____

Social media site you are requesting: (Select all that apply) ___ Facebook ___ Twitter ___ Instagram

Requested date to post new site: _____

User Name(s) or Handle(s):_____

Site Password(s):_____

1. Provide a brief statement of why the site is required and how it will advance the mission of our organization:

   _____

   _____

2. Provide a description or sample of the content you will be hosting on the social site:

   _____

   _____

3. Name of authorized users to maintain and update the site: _____

4. Details you want listed on social media profile (Name, Phone number, Web Address, Email, etc):

   _____

   _____

FOR OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY/COMMUNICATIONS ONLY:

Approved by Department Head	Initial:_____ Date:_____
Received by Communications Office	Initial:_____ Date:_____
Approved by Technology/Communications Director	Initial:_____ Date:_____
Inventoried	Initial:_____ Date:_____

Updated March 27, 2019