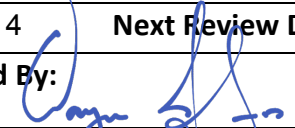




RESPONSIBLE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA	Policy No.: GW-COMM-001	Version: 1.0
Original Implementation Date: 09-01-2024	Page 1 of 4	Next Review Date: 09-01-2027
Prepared By: Dawn Skeete-Walker, VP Communications and Marketing	Approved By: 	President

1.0 Purpose:

This policy establishes consistent standards for the appropriate use of social media by faculty, staff, students, contractors, and other representatives of SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University, University Hospital at Downstate, BIOBAT, partners and affiliates, and Downstate Health Physicians.

2.0 Policy:

- 2.1. This policy and its guidelines apply to social media sites officially designated by SUNY Downstate and/or its programs and extends to external and personal sites where an affiliation with SUNY Downstate is known or identified.
- 2.2. In posts to social media accounts designed for professional networking and communication – or if individuals identify themselves as having a Downstate affiliation of any kind, they are required to make explicit that any views shared to this account are theirs alone and do not reflect the views, opinions or policies of SUNY Downstate.
- 2.3. This policy does **not** apply to content that is non-Downstate related. Social media activities that do not associate or identify faculty, staff, or students with SUNY Downstate, do not use SUNY Downstate email addresses, do not use SUNY Downstate identifiers (e.g., the logo), do not discuss SUNY Downstate, and are purely about personal matters without referencing or connecting SUNY Downstate in any way.
- 2.4. This policy applies to all forms of social media. Please see the Social Media Guidelines.
- 2.5. SUNY Downstate reserves the right to amend this policy to adapt to evolving online environments and legal changes, as necessary.
- 2.6. SUNY Downstate employees are permitted to use social media for business-related purposes; such usage is subject to specific restrictions outlined in this policy and Social Media Guidelines. These restrictions, supervised by departmental supervisors and in accordance with SUNY Social Media Guidelines, aim to uphold regulatory compliance, maintain privacy and confidentiality, and promote best practices in the use of social media.
- 2.7. Personnel may be authorized to use SUNY Downstate sponsored or controlled social media for various purposes, such as promoting a department’s message or interacting with peers and healthcare leaders.
- 2.8. SUNY Downstate’s Office of Communications & Marketing **MUST** authorize and approve all official social media sites, which include those created by SUNY Downstate on Downstate-owned or external domains on its behalf, sites developed by SUNY Downstate departments

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and programs, authorized student organizations, and sites on external domains approved for use by employees as part of their job responsibilities.

- 2.9. SUNY Downstate reserves the right to monitor all official Downstate social media accounts and require changes to them. SUNY Downstate may also request removal of items from personal accounts identifying a link to Downstate. Failure of an individual to remove such posting may result in disciplinary action.
- 2.10. SUNY Downstate’s Office of Communications and Marketing will request re-application for sites biennially confirm an account is still active, to sunset social media handles that are no longer in use, and to confirm the responsible party or SMA is still actively involved.
- 2.11. SUNY Downstate logos may be used on official Downstate sanctioned social media accounts and only if authorized by SUNY Downstate’s Office of Communications & Marketing as outlined in this policy.
- 2.12. All authorized social media accounts must utilize proper SUNY Downstate branding, and only “@downstate” accounts should utilize the shield logo alone as an identifying icon. See <https://www.downstate.edu/news-events/communications-marketing/new-brand.html> for more information, including image guidelines and editorial tips. Personal social media accounts may never use SUNY Downstate logos.
- 2.13. To prevent copyright infringement, users must have permission from the copyright owner to post any media that is not already in the public domain.
- 2.14. When using social media to communicate on behalf of SUNY Downstate you must:
 - 2.14.1 Adhere to University, state, and federal privacy laws, such as FERPA and HIPAA;
 - 2.14.2 Adhere to University, state, and federal laws and policies (in general) (e.g., non-discrimination policy, sexual harassment policy, etc.)
 - 2.14.3 Not disclose private information on SUNY Downstate’s social media channel(s); and
 - 2.14.4 Promptly remove the item and/or report any concerning information (i.e., anything that violates the above) to SUNY Downstate Communications at comms@downstate.edu.
- 2.15. Photographs of SUNY Downstate premises may not be posted on any personal social media account if they:
 - 2.15.1 Are of anywhere in the hospital, animal facility or labs;
 - 2.15.2 Will violate privacy (including but not limited to patient or student privacy);
 - 2.15.3 Are proprietary; and/or
 - 2.15.4 Are unpublished research materials.
- 2.16. Individuals may choose to re-share posts from official SUNY Downstate accounts; any comments or discussions individuals add to these posts must conform with Social Media Guidelines.
- 2.17. Personnel may not post or share any materials received in an official capacity at SUNY Downstate that have not been made available to the public. This may include financial information, unpublished research materials, and/or other proprietary information.

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- 2.18. In times of crisis, parties responsible for social media accounts should refrain from posting anything until an official statement from SUNY or Downstate Health Sciences University is released.
- 2.19. Individuals found to be in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

3.0 Definitions:

- 3.1. Social Media: includes blogs, vlogs, podcasts, discussion forums, and popular platforms like Facebook, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn, among others.
- 3.2. Social Media Administrator (SMA): individual responsible for managing a Downstate-connected social media handle.

4.0 Responsibilities:

- 4.1. Social Media Administrators must follow this policy and its guidelines.
- 4.2. This policy applies to all faculty, staff, residents, students, and other representatives of SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University including University Hospital at Downstate, BIOBAT, partners and affiliates, and Downstate Health Physicians.
- 4.3. The Office of Communications and Marketing is responsible for authorizing official SUNY Downstate social media accounts on behalf of the University.
- 4.4. The legal and procurement department is responsible for ensuring that all contractors/vendors follow this and other Downstate policies.

5.0 Procedures/Guidelines:

- 5.1. Social Media Administrators may apply for an official SUNY Downstate account for their department by completing the Social Media Account Request Form.
- 5.2. A new Social Media Account Request Form should be completed to designate a new SMA when the current Social Media Administrator is leaving the institution.
- 5.3. Individuals who identify concerning issues on social media accounts (official or otherwise) should immediately report these concerns to the Office of Communications and Marketing's email socialmediaalerts@downstate.edu or to make a report anonymously use [SUNY Downstate's Compliance Line](#) at 877-349-SUNY.
- 5.4. In the event of perceived immediate threat or danger resulting from cyberstalking on social media, please call University Police at extension 2626 or from the outside dial at (718) 270-2626. Please call 911 only in an actual emergency.

6.0 Attachments:

- 6.1. Social Media Guidelines
- 6.2. Social Media Account Request Form

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- 6.3. [GME Social Media Policy](#)
- 6.4. [Non-Discrimination Policy](#)
- 6.5. [Sexual Harassment Policy](#)

7.0 References:

- 7.1. [SUNY Social Media Responsibility: Task Force Recommendations](#)
- 7.2. [SUNY Downstate Brand Guidelines](#)
- 7.3. [Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)
- 7.4. [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act \(HIPAA\)](#)

Revision History:

Revision	Author	Revisions Made	Effective Date
1		<ul style="list-style-type: none">•	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">•	