The Role of Social Media at Southern

The Office of Integrated Communications & Marketing (ICM) guides and supports all university communications both internally and externally. The ICM director has designated a team within this office to advise and implement guidelines for the university's social media presence that reflect and uphold our university brand. These guidelines do not apply to private, individual accounts.

ICM & SOUTHERN SOCIAL

Southern Social is a team led within the ICM unit by the university's social media manager. The team comprises professional ICM staff who work in collaboration with student assistants to develop strategy, execute content, and assist university members in establishing and tracking their goals. The most critical mission of this team is to create an authentic, interactive, and dynamic social media culture for our immediate and extended Southern family.

SOUTHERN SOCIAL MEDIA COUNCIL

Southern Social invites all social media account managers to become extended members of the Southern Social team by participating in the Southern Social Media Council. The council meets quarterly in a casual and conversational format and maintains a digital group to discuss cross-departmental needs for support, resources, and campaign collaboration. Council members also make formal recommendations to the Social Media Executive Board (to be established) for policy and investment needs when necessary.

Instructions for joining the council are included in the **Verifying Your Account with Southern Social** section.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Through a collaborative approach and careful adherence to university brand messaging, Southern social media provides consistent and creative messaging, timely outreach, and exceptional customer service across all accounts and channels.

While SouthernCT.edu serves as the university's primary source of digital information, social media accounts should move forward these three university goals:

1. Recruitment by raising awareness of university products and services
2. Retention through problem-solving and meeting our audience's needs
3. Community building by encouraging and facilitating group interaction.

Events, polls, questions, and shareable content like curated photographs, news stories, feature stories, how-to videos and information that can influence a sense of belonging and improve overall experience and efficiency are the primary focus.

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Creating Accounts

First and foremost, set your intentions. We create social media accounts to:

- connect with and engage the SCSU community
- enhance and broaden the SCSU experience
- reinforce who we are and what we do.

We're all talking to everyone – it's the nature of university communications. But which demographic is most important to your area? Knowing the primary audience helps to determine a demographic, which in turn determines the platform(s) you will use.

STEPS FOR GETTING STARTED

1. Clearly define your target audiences, goals and objectives, and key messages.

2. Choose the best platforms to elevate your strategy:
   https://sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/.

3. Identify a permanent professional staff/faculty member to serve as an account administrator.
   Accounts may not be created and maintained exclusively by students.

4. Add someone from ICM as an account administrator. Email **olearya2@southernct.edu** for details.
   This is critical in the event that an account recovery is needed due to an unexpected administrator departure.

5. Choose a name for your account that can remain consistent across your platforms. See "Selecting a Name"
   for more guidance.

6. When available, include in the account's description/bio that you are affiliated with Southern, tagging the main
   university account for the platform that you are utilizing. These can be more creative, but a baseline example for the
   Southern School of Business (Twitter) would be: "Official account for the School of Business @SCSU"

7. Provide a link to your department/organization's page on SouthernCT.edu if it exists.

8. Here's a helpful guide for determining your posting frequency: **https://coschedule.com/blog/**
   how-often-to-post-on-social-media/. You might also want to consider using a **content calendar** to help you plan
   your posts in advance. If you go this route, the university also recommends Hootsuite for post scheduling and URL
   shortening. Create a free account at **https://www.hootsuite.com.**

SELECTING A NAME

Accounts created on behalf of the university should be formatted in as few words as possible. However, this will look different depending on which platform you use to engage.

Facebook   On Facebook, we recommend using the full university name with your division, school, department or organization for your page name, and @SCSU[name] for your username. Although your page name will be a bit longer, this recommendation is founded on brand consistency and searchability.

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Example:

- Southern Connecticut State University Athletics: @SCSUAthletics
- Southern Connecticut State University School of Business: @SCSUBusiness
- Southern Connecticut State University Alumni: @SCSUAlumni
- Southern Connecticut State University English Department: @SCSUEnglish

Twitter & Instagram   Due to character limits, we recommend using SCSU [Name] for your page name, and @SCSU[name] or SCSU_[name] for your handle. You may also choose to identify with the owl emoji at the end of your account name.

Example:

- SCSU School of Arts & Sciences 🦉 @SCSUArtsSciences OR @SCSU_ArtsSciences
- SCSU Mathematics Department 🦉 @SCSUMath or @SCSU_Math

On Twitter, especially, you should select the shortest handle possible for tagging. Longer handles will directly reduce the amount of content you can include in your post.

Snapchat   We are currently in conversations about whether to continue using Snapchat for official accounts, as many of the features and demographics are duplicated on Instagram – a platform we feel offers far superior insights and opportunities for brand-level engagement.

We do have a Snapchat account that is currently being deployed strictly as a takeover account. Contact **olearya2@southernct.edu** to schedule a takeover.

VERIFYING YOUR ACCOUNTS WITH SOUTHERN SOCIAL

We require all university accounts to register through Southern Social in order to gain access to the following benefits:

- A listing on the SouthernCT.edu web directory of social media accounts (coming this fall)
- Membership on the Southern Social Media Council
- Post sharing & tagging on main university accounts
- Post sharing & tagging on fellow university accounts
- Account support through ICM ➙ Southern Social
- Access to university social media subscriptions & resources as they become available
- Consideration for paid advertising.

Verify here: **https://www2.southernct.edu/icm/services-social-media.html**

*Note that if you change your page name, you will need to notify us so we can update your listing on the website.

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PROFILE PICTURES AND USE OF LOGO

The standalone Southern pillar may not be used as a "profile picture" on any social media. That image is reserved for ICM-run university accounts. Athletics logos and university logos should not be manipulated in any way.

Managing Accounts

CONNECTING ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY

Once your department's account has been created, "like" or "follow" the official university page, and all other university-verified social media accounts. Doing this creates links among us all, which makes our pages more social.

ACCOUNT ADMINISTRATORS

Southern employees identified as administrators of accounts are responsible for managing and monitoring content in those spaces, as well as for removing content that may violate policy (see below).

Should a permanent employee assigned to your account leave the university for any reason or no longer wish to be an account administrator, ICM should be notified and another account administrator must take their place.

STUDENT "ADMINISTRATORS"

Student assistants may be added to social media accounts as "content editors" or given posting privileges, but with the understanding that they are accountable to these guidelines and to the social media administrators in the departments they serve. Students must be removed from social media accounts once they are no longer active within the department, office or program in an official capacity.

STAY UP-TO-DATE

Follow other university accounts in your area and subscribe to industry newsletters. Some favorite universities are UMichigan, West Virginia U., and NYU. Some favorite blogs and resources are Hootsuite, Sprout Social, and Social Media Today.

Amplifying Content

POSTING TO UNIVERSITY ACCOUNTS

To request a post, email **olearya2@southernct.edu.** Decisions will be made based on the following criteria:

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• Does this post support top-level university goals?

• Is it accessible to screen readers? (posters and graphics are not accessible)

If your request is approved, the social media team may refine content approach, platform distribution, and timing.

PAID SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

Paid social media advertising decisions are made by ICM leaders, in collaboration with university leadership. Priority academic programs are determined in coordination with the graduate dean and provost annually. Events are advertised based on the potential reach of the appeal and whether the event furthers top-level university goals.

EVENT HOSTING

We gladly accept invites to co-host events on Facebook from other university accounts and vetted external partners.

BEST PRACTICES

• Make the experience as engaging and interactive as possible. This is the place where our community comes to be heard.

• Unlike other platforms, we're not here to do all of the talking – at least not on the surface. Curate and moderate.

• Check your inbox frequently – you face 24/7 customer service expectations which, yes, are impossible but nonetheless expected.

• Keep it concise. Lead with the most important information and leave it at that.

• Focus on headlines.

• Link back to the Southern website/resources when appropriate.

• Infographics can replace words.

• Know platform guidelines for image posting, and caption appropriately.

• Keep your cover photos fresh (at minimum seasonal).

• Don't use copyrighted images.

• Use flyers minimally and judiciously.

• Don't use extremely low quality or blurry images, try to keep things looking clean

Branding Touchpoints

TONE

We are kind, casual, culturally relevant, fun-loving, die-hard Owl fans.

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VOICE
- Be engaging – everything is a conversation.
- Be playful – humor and collegial banter are encouraged, when appropriate.
- Be team players – apologize for experiences, not for institutional decisions/policies.
- Be an educator – make suggestions to improve future experiences and guide them to the process, policy, or answer whenever possible.

HASHTAG MESSAGES

Southern uses hashtags to reinforce our brand identity and group consistent content. Hashtags should be placed at the end of your post, before emojis, tags, and links – except on Instagram, where you may use several links to promote your post. On other platforms, limit to one hashtag per post.

University Hashtags:
- Southern Connecticut State University: **#SCSU, #SouthernOwls**
- Class years: **#Owls2023**
- Grad years: **#SCSU2023**
- President Joe: **#SCSUTopOwl**
- Social Justice: **#Owls4Justice**
- Athletics: **#SCSUOwls**

#ExpectMore #BeMore
- **What it means**: Southern is a pivotal resource for dream achievement, purpose fulfillment, and successful navigation of the real world because of the range of opportunities generated by a thoughtful and engaged academic career.
- **When to use:** Success stories, social justice, overcoming adversity

#BeMoreDriven
- **What it means:** Work hard, aim high, and reach your mark by taking advantage of resources and support services across campus.
- **When to use:** Athletic & academic achievement, overcoming obstacles

#BeMoreInspired
- **What it means:** Use the skills, opportunities, and networks you build on campus to figure out what you love and find meaning and purpose in what you do.
- **When to use:** Internships, study abroad, research, community service

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#BeMoreConnected
  - **What it means:** Build relationships and grow your network through faculty mentoring, student organizations, professional affiliations, and community connections.
  - **When to use:** Networking, community connections, building relationships, faculty/student work

#BeMoreDaring
  - **What it means:** Experiment with majors, have tough conversations, travel the world, and take risks.
  - **When to use:** Stories that go outside of the normal comfort zone, risk-taking, entrepreneurship

EMOJIS

A well-placed emoji can help infuse just the right touch of a emotion with a post. Avoid using more than three emojis in a row, unless you are using them to bullet, such as using a checkmark.

The following emojis are recommended at the end of your post.

  - 🦉 Southern pride
  - 🦉💙 Southern pride with the warm and fuzzies
  - 🔝🦉 President Joe

TAGGING

When you mention another page in your lead, you should tag them in the body of your content – not at the end of your post. This helps avoid duplication and shorten posts. If you do not mention them in the body of your content, you can mention them at the end of your post, following your hashtag, emojis, and this symbol: |

SHARING LINKS

Use Hootsuite to shorten your links and remove your link preview – this will help your content appear more organic in the newsfeed. Upload photographs as separate media and include your shortened URL at the very end of your post following this symbol: |

Advertising

All social media advertising must be reviewed by Southern Social prior to launch.

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Final words:

- Read each social media platform's TOS (Terms of Service) and understand that the TOS represent a set of policies each social media account must follow.
- Understand that your department or organization's social media account(s) represent the university. Use good judgment about content, and respect privacy laws. Do not include confidential information about the university, its staff, or its students.
- Representation of your personal opinions as being endorsed by the university or any of its organizations is strictly prohibited.
- By posting content to any social media site you agree that you own or otherwise control all of the rights to that content, that your use of the content is protected fair use, that you will not knowingly provide misleading or false information, and that you hold the university harmless for any claims resulting from the content.
- Southern reserves the right to mandate that you remove any content for any reason including, but not limited to, content that it deems threatening, obscene, a violation of intellectual property rights or privacy laws, or otherwise injurious or illegal. Content that is reported as falling into any of these categories will be reviewed by Integrated Communications and Marketing and reported to the appropriate Cabinet member when deemed necessary and appropriate. The page administrator will be notified to remove the questionable item once a recommendation has been made. Failure to comply within 48 hours may lead to further action by the university administration.
- When using or posting online material that includes direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos, or videos, always include citations. Providing a link to the original material or account can fulfill this requirement as applicable.
- Refrain from using information and conducting activities that may violate local, state, or federal laws and regulations.
- Contests should be coordinated with Southern Social.

Page administrators must also familiarize themselves with and adhere to:

Current CSCU IT Policies

Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

If you have any questions or would like personal assistance in getting your account up-and-running, contact **olearya2@southernct.edu.**

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