Social Media Policy

The purpose of this policy is to explain the use of social media for the distribution of information and to protect the rights of Charleston Southern University (CSU) and our employees. CSU recognizes that the Internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics using a wide variety of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Linked-In, Plaxo, You Tube, My Space, blogs, wikis, chat rooms and other similar forms of online journals, diaries or personal newsletters not affiliated with the Organization. However, the use of social media can pose risks to CSU’s confidential and proprietary information, reputation and brands and can jeopardize CSU’s compliance with business rules and laws applicable to our industry.

To minimize these business and legal risks, to avoid loss of productivity and distraction from employees' job performance and to ensure that CSU’s IT resources and communication systems are used only for appropriate business purposes, CSU expects all its employees to adhere to the following rules regarding use of its equipment as it relates to social media.

General Provisions
As used in this Policy, "social media" includes, but is not limited to: video, wiki postings, Facebook, Twitter, Linked-In, Plaxo, You Tube, My Space, chat rooms, personal blogs or other similar forms of online journals, diaries or personal newsletters not affiliated with the Organization. CSU’s IT resources include all computer systems and associated software and functions (e.g., the Internet and Internet connections, email systems and any CSU equipment connected to or used by such resources).

Authorized Comment
No one other than the Human Resources Department is authorized to speak for CSU with respect to a reference for or comment about the work performance or character of a current or former employee.

Business Use of Social Media
CSU employees, who are authorized by their manager, may use CSU’s IT resources to participate in social media at work as a means of generating interest in CSU and creating business opportunities by promoting and raising awareness of the CSU brand, searching for potential new markets, communicating with employees and customers, to brainstorm issues or respond to breaking news or publicity and discuss corporate, business-unit and department-specific activities and events. Employees may use appropriately CSU’s logos, trademarks, materials, etc. to the extent authorized by their manager.

When participating in these media for the purpose of generating interest in CSU, you must ensure that the use of these communications maintains CSU’s brand identity, integrity and reputation, while minimizing any actual or potential legal risks, whether used internally or externally.
When using social media for business purposes, employees are expected to protect the privacy of CSU, its employees, clients, customers, business partners, suppliers, vendors and are prohibited from disclosing personal employee and non-employee information and any other proprietary or non-public information to which employees have access.

Such information includes, but is not limited to, customer information, trade secrets, financial data and strategic business plans. In this context, CSU also prohibits the posting of disparaging or defamatory statements about CSU’s business interests, including social media communications that reasonably may be construed in a way that could damage CSU’s goodwill and business reputation.

**Personal Use of Social Media**
Other than for approved Business Use of Social Media, as defined above, unless specifically approved in advance by a manager, employees are prohibited from using CSU’s information technology resources and communication systems for personal social media purposes at all times. Employees may not use personal resources for social media purposes while on work time. However, employees may use their personal equipment and resources on non-work time (e.g., at home, lunch time, authorized breaks) to engage in social media in accordance with the rules set forth below.

CSU is concerned about employees identifying themselves as employees of CSU because it may create the impression that your personal social media activity represents the views of CSU. If you choose to disclose your affiliation as an employee of CSU, you should include a disclaimer that your views do not represent those of CSU. For example, use such language as "the views expressed on this website/blog are mine alone and do not represent the views of my employer," unless the context of the post otherwise makes that clear. We suggest that you write in the first person and do not use a CSU email address when communicating via social media. Always strive to be accurate, respectful, professional and honest in your communications. Remember that what you publish might be available to be read by the public (including future employers and social acquaintances) for years in the future.

Other than as explained in Business Use of Social Media, above, employees are prohibited from using CSU’s logos, trademarks, brand names, taglines, slogans, confidential/proprietary information and copyrighted materials or reproducing CSU materials of any kind, in actual or modified form, in any social media, without written permission from your Manager.
Nothing in this policy is intended or will be interpreted to restrict employee rights under the National Labor Relations Act, including discussions of wages, hours or working conditions that otherwise comply with this policy.

**Executives and Managers:** The recommended standard disclaimer does not exempt CSU’s administration and managers from special responsibility when using social media. By virtue of their position, they must consider whether any personal thoughts they publish may be misunderstood as expressing CSU’s positions. A manager should assume that his or her employees, or employees of companies/organizations with whom CSU does business, can read what is written. Social media is not the appropriate venue for managers to communicate about CSU’s policies to employees.

**Compliance with Related Policies and Agreements**
Social media should never be used in a way that violates this or any other University policy or employee obligation. If your post would violate any of CSU’s policies in another forum, it will also violate them in an online forum.

**Intellectual Property and Confidential Information**
CSU’s Confidentiality Policy restricts employee use and disclosure of its confidential information and intellectual property. Beyond these mandatory restrictions, employees must treat CSU’s confidential information and intellectual property accordingly, and not do anything to jeopardize them through use of social media. In addition, employees should avoid misappropriating or infringing the intellectual property of other companies and individuals, which can create liability for both employees and for CSU.

To protect against personal and Company liability for copyright infringement, where appropriate, reference sources of particular information employees post or upload and cite them accurately. If employees have any questions about whether a particular post or upload might violate the copyright or trademark of any person or company (outside of fair use exceptions), it is their responsibility to ask CSU’s University Relations Department before making the communication.
Respect Coworkers and CSU’s Business Affiliates
Employees must not post anything that co-workers or CSU’s customers, clients, business partners, suppliers or vendors would reasonably find offensive, such as ethnic slurs, sexist comments, discriminatory comments, insults or obscenity.

Employees should not discuss or post in social media any business-related matters regarding CSU’s customers, clients, business partners, suppliers or vendors without their written permission.

Employees are prohibited from using social media in a manner that defames or disparages CSU’s customers, clients, business partners, suppliers or vendors; harasses other employees in any way; circumvents policies prohibiting unlawful discrimination against past or current employees or applicants for employment; or violates any laws or ethical standards (for example, never use social media in a false or misleading way, such as by claiming to be someone other than you or by creating an artificial “buzz” around our business, products or services).

Reporting Violations
The University requests and strongly encourages employees to report any violations or perceived violations of this policy to managers, department heads or the Human Resources Department.

Discipline for Violation(s)
CSU investigates and responds to all reports of violations related to social networking and other related policies. Violation of the CSU’s Social Media Policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. The level of discipline will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Legal Action
CSU reserves the right to take legal action where necessary against employees who engage in unlawful conduct.

Employee Acknowledgement
I agree to the terms and conditions set forth in this policy:

Employee Name: _________________________________

_________________________________________  ______________________
Employee Signature                     Date