

		University Policy
University Policy Name: Social Media Policy		University Policy No: UP-01-05
Initial Adoption Date: February 6 , 2026		Revision Date(s):
Responsible Unit: Office of Communications		Responsible Executive: VP, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer
Authority	Sections 112.22, 1004.097, and 1012.81, Florida Statutes; BOG Regulation 1.001(3)(g), FAMU Regulation1.021(1)(g), (h), (t), (5)(c); BOTP-2008-01	
Applicability	All FAMU employees, appointees, volunteers, and general public members using University Social Media Accounts	

I. Policy Statement and Purpose:

A. Statement

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) is committed to the highest standards of freedom of speech and expression. FAMU recognizes the vital role that social media can play in both expressing free speech and in communicating, collaborating, and interacting with students, alumni, faculty, staff, non-FAMU colleagues, and the general public. Social media may also have a substantial impact on the University's reputation and image. FAMU encourages its employees to use social media as a means to connect with the FAMU community while being thoughtful about the potential substantial impact on the University's reputation and image.

This Policy applies to all FAMU faculty, staff, and students who are employed by FAMU in any capacity, as well as third party vendors that manage, maintain or support a University-approved and operated social media site. The Policy also applies to other individuals, such as volunteers and appointees, who use internally managed or owned University computing resources.

This Policy applies to all forms of social media, including, without limitation, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, X, Snapchat, blogs, and online comments. Per Section 112.22, Florida Statutes, certain prohibited applications shall not be operated on FAMU's wired and wireless networks or on any FAMU-issued or owned device, district-owned devices, including a cellular telephone, desktop computer, laptop computer, computer tablet, or other electronic device capable of connecting to the Internet which is owned or leased by FAMU and issued to an employee for work-related purposes. Such applications are also prohibited for use to communicate or promote any University activity, content, units, or similar type subjects, or for use in any "prohibited action" as defined in Florida Statute §112.22(1)(f).

B. Purpose

This Policy sets forth standards: (1) supporting appropriate uses of social media; (2) prohibiting conduct on social media that may be unlawful, contrary to FAMU regulations or policies, or

UNIVERSITY POLICY NAME: Social Media Policy	UNIVERSITY POLICY NO: UP-01-05	PAGE: 2 of 5
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violative of applicable professional standards; (3) providing guidance for identifying and managing occurrences involving social media activity that could violate this Policy or adversely impact the University or its constituents; (4) providing instruction on how FAMU manages posts on official University social media platforms; and (5) providing guidance for employees choosing to use social media to communicate, collaborate, and interact with students, faculty, staff, alumni, stakeholders, and the general public on matters concerning or impacting FAMU.

II. Definitions:

- A. Social Media Platform (Platform):** Any digital service, or application that facilitates user interaction, content creation, content sharing, or social networking.
- B. Social Media Platform Account (Account):** An established relationship between the user and a Platform that requires registration with the Platform before activation.
- C. Social Media Platform Administrator (Administrator):** A University employee whose responsibility is to maintain a University-Sponsored Account.
- D. Social Media Platform Post (Post):** Any comment, visual post, share, tweet, retweet, direct message, blog or journal entry, time-limited entry or message, or any other interpersonal interaction or communication published on a Platform.

University-Sponsored Account: A social media account approved, created and administered by a University unit for the purpose of informing the University community or the general public of the unit's activities or events.

III. General Requirements:

- 1. Social Media Platforms** are essential tools to communicate with members of the University community and the general public to build awareness and engagement of and interest in the University. Social media is part of the student experience, and provides added value for additional stakeholders, including faculty, staff and alumni. The use of Social Media Platforms requires professionalism and "excellence with caring" to ensure successful and lawful communication.
- 2. Prohibited Social Media Posts** – FAMU employees shall not use any Social Media Platform in a manner that violates: (i) federal, state, local or, when applicable, foreign laws, currently in effect or as may be amended; (ii) FAMU regulations, policies, procedures, or professionalism standards currently in effect or as may be amended; (iii) University accreditation principles currently in effect or as may be amended; (iv) National Collegiate Athletic Association rules or regulations currently in effect or as may be amended; or (v) Southwestern Athletic Conference rules or regulations currently in effect or as may be amended.

By way of example, but not limitation, this Policy prohibits social media communications that: (i) depict child pornography in violation of criminal laws and FAMU regulations; (ii) constitute threats of violence; (iii) are intended to cause severe emotional distress; (iii) contain false and/or defamatory statements that could harm a person's reputation; (iv) violate state and federal laws and FAMU's regulations prohibiting discrimination based on a protected class or sexual harassment; or (v) constitute criminal conduct or a violation of FAMU regulations, policies, or procedures.

This Policy shall not be interpreted or applied to prohibit any speech protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, Article I, Section 4 of the Florida Constitution, or the Florida Campus Free Expression Act, Florida Statute § 1004.097.

3. **Standard of Review and Disciplinary Action** – The University shall review Social Media Posts on a case-by-case basis applying an *objective* standard of review. Substantiated violations of this Policy or applicable laws may result in employee disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the University. Student employees are also subject to the University Student Code of Conduct.
4. **Maintaining the Confidentiality of Student and Applicant Records** – Federal laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Florida law, and Florida A&M University regulations governing the confidentiality of student and applicant records (and information from such records) apply to social media use. Personally identifiable information (PII) from student, alumni, or applicant records should *never* be released, shared or published via social media. PII includes, but is not limited to, academic records, disciplinary records, correspondence through e-mail or other means, or, with limited exceptions, any other records individually identifying students at the University (or applicants to the University). A general overview of FERPA is found in FAMU Board of Trustees [Policy Number 2017-02](#).
5. **Improper Disclosure of Research and Intellectual Property** – Any unapproved disclosure of copyright information, unpublished research data, or unprotected intellectual property may compromise the University's intellectual property rights. Such materials shall not be released, shared or published on social media where disclosure could reasonably impair patent protections, copyright protections, breach contractual or grant obligations, or violate applicable laws.
6. **Other Forms of Restricted/Confidential Data** – Releasing, sharing or publishing other forms of legally restricted records, data, or information via social media is strictly prohibited, including, without limitation: (i) social security numbers; (ii) financial information; (iii) employee or student medical information; (iv) limited access employee records pursuant to FAMU's Institutional Data Governance Policy UP-01-04 and Section 1012.81, Florida Statutes; (v) trade secrets, copyrighted materials, materials covered by export control laws and regulations; and (vi) other materials the University is required to maintain as confidential by law or agreement. While those affiliated with FAMU may disclose information about themselves, they should exercise caution in doing so for their own protection. Once disclosed through social media, the information may be accessed indefinitely and, in many contexts, (*e.g.*, actual and potential employers, professional licensure authorities, elections, current and future family members) that may not be contemplated at the time of disclosure.
7. **Misrepresentation** – Those affiliated with FAMU may not portray themselves as acting or speaking on behalf of the University or any part of the University, such as a college, department, or any other unit, or present a social media account as an official University account, unless authorized to do so in writing by the vice president (or their designee) with authority over the applicable unit. Even when acting in one's University capacity, FAMU faculty, staff, students, appointees, volunteers, etc. may not represent their own positions and opinions on social media as the positions or opinions of the University. The University's name, logo, insignia, or trademarks may not be used on personal social media pages or sites, or to endorse a product or support a cause, whether political or otherwise.

UNIVERSITY POLICY NAME: Social Media Policy	UNIVERSITY POLICY NO: UP-01-05	PAGE: 4 of 5
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When using social media in a personal capacity, reasonable precautions must be taken to indicate that the activity is being conducted as a private person and not as an employee, agent, or spokesperson of the University. Such precautions include using heightened privacy settings, not identifying oneself as a FAMU employee or affiliate, and adding a written disclaimer clarifying the views and opinions expressed solely belong to the individual, such as:

“The views and opinions expressed in this post are my own and belong solely to me. My personal views and opinions are not endorsed by, approved by, or affiliated with FAMU.”

8. **FAMU Social Media Account Authorization** – Authorization to present a social media account as an official University activity must be in writing by the University Vice President with authority over one’s unit, as well as the Vice President, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer or his/her designee. For additional support complying with the written approval process, as well as additional resources and guidelines, please contact the University’s [Office of Communications](#).
9. **Community Commenting Guidelines** – The FAMU sponsored and managed online social media accounts are intended to inform users of FAMU-related news and events, as well as foster FAMU-related discussion and a sense of community among users and viewers. FAMU welcomes you to comment on our social media posts and encourages positive interaction amongst Rattlers. We also encourage our community to foster and reciprocate respectful and courteous connections and communications.

Before you post, please duly consider the FAMU Core Values and review these FAMU Community Commenting Guidelines (“Guidelines”).

FAMU Social Media Accounts are limited public forums. Any responsive comments to a post must be related and responsive to a post. FAMU reviews comments made on FAMU Social Media Accounts and reserves the right to moderate or block comments that are:

- Threatening or encouraging harm to people or property;
- Constituting or encouraging illegal activity;
- Obscene or vulgar;
- Discriminatory, threatening, or harassing;
- False or defamatory;
- Commercial posts or spam;
- Inclusive of confidential information;
- Made in violation of Florida or federal law;
- Knowingly false and malicious statements regarding FAMU or a FAMU employee that may objectively cause reputational or other harm; or
- Derogatory statements, slurs or insults regarding FAMU or a FAMU employee based on protected characteristics (*e.g.*, race, religion, sex, age, or disability) that may objectively cause or contribute to a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment.

Comments to the FAMU Social Media Accounts are solely the author’s/poster’s views and opinions and do not reflect the views or opinions of FAMU. By posting a comment on FAMU’s social media pages, you agree to follow this Policy, these Guidelines, and applicable Florida and

UNIVERSITY POLICY NAME: Social Media Policy	UNIVERSITY POLICY NO: UP-01-05	PAGE: 5 of 5
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federal laws and regulations, now existing or as may be amended. Your comments may be removed if they violate this Policy, these Guidelines, or applicable laws or regulations, now existing or as may be amended, and may be referred to law enforcement if appropriate.

FAMU, in its sole and absolute discretion, may elect to: (i) post Social Media content without enabling the comment feature; (ii) deactivate the comment feature at any time; or (iii) to archive all posts and related comments in conformance with Florida law and University regulations.

Under Florida law, the content of and engagement on FAMU's Social Media pages are subject to public records law. By engaging with our content, posting comments, or messaging these pages, your information may become a public record. FAMU and all parts of the University – such as colleges, departments, and all other units – shall maintain all public records in conformance with Florida law and University regulations.

- 10. Administration:** The Office of Communications is responsible for administering this Policy and may conduct periodic reviews of all University social media accounts to ensure content accuracy, compliance, and alignment with this Policy and applicable laws and regulations.

For questions about these Guidelines or concerns about content posted on FAMU's Social Media Accounts, please contact the FAMU Office of Communications at 850-599-3413, Communications@famu.edu, or 1601 MLK Jr. Blvd., Suite 200, Tallahassee, FL 32307.

The Office of Communications' web page is located at:
<https://www.famu.edu/administration/communications/index.php>.

Marva B. Johnson

2/6/2026

Marva B. Johnson, J.D.
President

Date

Alonda Thomas

February 6, 2026

Dr. Alonda Thomas
VP, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer

Date

Attachment(s)	n/a
Related Resource(s)	Communications Policy BOTP-2008-01 FAMU Alert Policy UP-03-04 Student Education Records-BOT Policy Number 2017-02 UP-01-04 Institutional Data Governance Policy.pdf U.S. Constitution, Art. I § 4