Social media at Langara

GUIDELINES & BEST PRACTICES

Communications & Marketing Department
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Social media at Langara

Social media tools offer powerful and effective ways to communicate with audiences, share information, and foster relationships. As an educational institution, Langara College supports programs and departments being active in the social space.

The Communications & Marketing Department manages the college-wide social media channels, which represent the full spectrum of programs and departments across the organization. Managing social media channels is incredibly time consuming, so many areas choose to share their content through our existing channels (which we welcome and highly encourage). We have built a large following of students, employees, alumni, and community members across many channels and we are happy to use them to help share your messages. If you have the bandwidth to manage your own channel, please read this document thoroughly so we can guide you through the process.

GUIDELINES & BEST PRACTICES

We have developed guidelines and best practices to support faculty and staff who wish to use social media to represent specific programs or departments. We ask that you follow these guidelines to uphold the College's brand and to help you get the most out of your engagement efforts. When representing the College on any social network, please be mindful that there are significant impacts to professional and organizational reputations.

Setting up a new channel

Once you've applied for a new social media channel, we will guide you through the following steps:

1. **Apply to get started.** The first step to getting a new social media account set up for your program or department. Reach out to your Communications Officer to get started (we are working on an online form for this first step).

2. **Read the guidelines and sign the agreement form.** Please read through this package, sign the agreement form, and submit it to Communications & Marketing.

3. **Choose an account name**. Think of an account name that is easily identifiable and searchable. If possible, it should begin with 'Langara' or 'Langara College' as a best practice for search optimization. Avoid the use of vague acronyms.

4. **Choose representative imagery.** Give us ideas on what images represent your area (keywords and examples are helpful). We will take care of designing your avatar and cover photos so they are consistent with the College branding. Strong visuals will give your account a professional look and allow people to quickly identify you.

5. **Decide who will be managing the channel.** Roles can include administrators, editors, managers, and content contributors (Note: While we highly recommend having paid employees manage social media channels, we understand that some areas want to integrate students in a strategic way. Please review our *Involving Students* section.) Langara College (business account) must be the administrator of the page. This ensures that should a staff member leave the College or no longer maintain the page, it will not be orphaned. A page can have as many editors, managers, or contributors as you see fit.

6. **Get listed on Langara's social media directory.** Once your account is properly set up, your Communications Officer will add it to the College's Social Media Directory. This makes your account official and allows others to easily locate and follow your new account.

Managing your channel

Each social media platform varies, but they are all online tools that enable people to interact, share content, and collaborate with each other. These are the major components to managing your own channel, no matter which platform you choose. Visit www.iweb.langara.bc.ca/webteam for more tools, tips, and resources.

Develop a content strategy

Consider your goals, audience, and message for sharing relevant information and keeping the content up-to-date. Having a social media content plan (a calendar of what and when you plan on posting) will help keep you on track.

Post engaging content

Share news stories, upcoming events, student and faculty accomplishments, galleries, interesting projects, and important reminders. Include a call to action or a link for details if it is applicable (watch, read, check out, sign up, learn more, etc.). These are all touch points for your audience to build a deeper relationship with your program or department. Try to follow the 80:20 rule when it comes to soft selling (ie. sharing content that's valuable and interesting) versus hard selling (ie. register now, attend an info session, etc.)

Monitor and listen

Assign at least one person to keep tabs on what people in your community are talking about. There is a wealth of information out there, and genuinely listening can arm you with a lot of valuable knowledge. It's also a great way to tap in on feedback (for a lecture, event, program, etc.) as well. Tracking hashtags is a great way of following conversation topics.

Follow relevant accounts

Follow other accounts in your discipline or industry and engage with them. Be mindful that the accounts that you follow/friend/like can lead to the impression that the College supports certain individuals, products, or companies. Avoid obvious endorsements unless there is an established partnership.

Grow your following

Reach out, share quality information, and recognize people and peers. Consistent participation will increase your following organically. Encourage people to follow the program/department account in your materials and touch points (department website, course outlines, promotional materials, invitations, newsletters, posters, email signature, etc.) Reminder to be selective and vigilant about the conversations you choose to jump into as they may affect your reputation.

Measure your efforts

Think about how you will measure success (ie. Number of clicks, number of fans/followers, unique page views, etc.). There are a lot of online tools that can provide you with this data on a regular basis. Be realistic about the growth of your channels – social media requires a lot of nurturing, much like real life relationships.

Posting content

Here are best practices for posting content on your social media channel in terms of tone, style, frequency, and more.

Be transparent and respectful

Being authentic and respectful are essential for being a part of the online community. When discussing negative experiences, be constructive and respectful. Do not post confidential information about students, employees, or members of the Langara Community. Overall, a good rule of thumb - if you wouldn't say it in person, don't say it online.

Review our brand guidelines

Familiarize yourself with Langara's brand. Our down-to-earth, friendly brand voice is well suited for social media. Review our brand voice and photography guidelines:

https://langara.ca/departments/communications-marketing/brand/brand-standards.html

Double-check before you publish

Everything is public, so check your facts, grammar, and spelling before you post. Make sure what you put out there is clean and credible. Cite and link your sources whenever possible (see Copyright section for details). If you make a mistake, correct it quickly.

Respond to comments in a timely fashion

Respond to questions and comments regularly, even the negative ones. It is recommended to check in daily. Remember that your community is entitled to express their viewpoints, and sometimes there may be a difference in opinion. Those should be acknowledged and responded to as well. Keep in mind that discrimination, harassment, and libel are not tolerated. If a controversial situation arises, contact the Communications & Marketing Department for an official response.

Post consistently

Consistency is the key to building a strong social media community. Be consistent in terms of your tone, timing, frequency, and message. Post relevant content on a regular basis so you don't lose the interest of your audience. There's no rule about how often you need to update your account, but we recommend at least 3-5 posts a week. Keep in mind that social media posts have a short life span.

Pitfalls

Avoid topics that are potentially controversial or could portray the College, including employees or students, in a negative light. Potential topics include: religion, politics, sexual references, alcohol, drugs, or topics that are otherwise considered 'in poor taste'. In general, if you're not sure if you should post it, don't. Please consult Communications & Marketing if you have any questions.

Copyright

This section outlines copyright considerations and best practices for those posting content created by others to social media.

What is copyright?

Simply put, copyright is the right to copy and prevent others from copying your work.

What is protected by copyright?

Copyright applies to all original literary, artistic, dramatic, and musical works. This includes photographs, videos, visual art, songs and more in both physical and digital format.

Who owns copyright?

The first owner of copyright is the creator. However, creators often license or assign copyright to other parties. For example, a music label might hold the rights to your favourite song, rather than the musical artists themselves. Digital technologies have made copying easier than ever before. As works move from Facebook to Instagram to Twitter without proper attribution, it can be difficult to determine who owns a work. The first clue is the copyright © statement. If you suspect that a work has been posted illegally, respect the creator by not sharing it further.

Can I post a copyrighted work to social media?

Posting works on social media (even those publicly available on the Internet) is considered copying. Best practice is to use works with intellectual property licenses that permit free use and re-purposing by others, such as those provided by Creative Commons. The most basic requirement of these licenses is attribution. Be sure to check the terms of use before sharing.

If you want to use a copyrighted work without a CC license, you will need to seek permission from the copyright owner unless the use is permitted under a users' right in the Copyright Act.

Can posting content on social media be considered fair dealing?

It depends. Fair dealing is an exception in the Copyright Act that permits use of copyrighted works for purposes such as education, without permission from the copyright owner.

The Supreme Court of Canada has outlined six factors, or tests, to help you decide whether your use is fair. If your use is commercial in nature or entails sharing a copyrighted work widely on the web (i.e. via a public account), it is likely to be considered unfair to the copyright owner.

How do I get permission to use a copyrighted work?

- Contact the copyright owner

- Contact the Copyright Collective Society that represents the owner

- Contact the Copyright Clearance Center

- Contact the Langara Copyright Office

Once you have obtained written permission, be sure to save a copy for your records.

Can I use a copyrighted work to create a new work?

Yes, the Copyright Act allows you to combine copyrighted works to create new works (e.g. mashups and remixes) without permission from the copyright owner, provided that the use is non-commercial and the original creator is credited where reasonable.

What are the implications of posting copyrighted content on social media?

When you sign-up for a social media account, you agree to certain license terms. For example, when you create a public Instagram account, you grant the service a license to use the content you post without payment or permission. Check each service's terms of use before you start posting.

What are the penalties for infringing copyright?

Copyright owners will typically begin by asking you to stop using their work if they believe it constitutes infringement. They may also seek a court order or injunction requiring that you remove the infringing content from your account.

In more extreme cases, a copyright owner may file a claim for damages suffered as a result of the infringement. Under the Copyright Act, copyright owners may be awarded $100 to $5,000 for non-commercial infringement and $500 to $20,000 for commercial infringement.

Students, staff, and faculty at Langara have an individual responsibility to act in accordance with the Copyright Act and the College's copyright policies and directives.

Questions about copyright?

We're here to help! Visit Langara's copyright website or contact the College's Copyright Office.

Conduct guidelines

College policies

Use good ethical judgment and follow Langara's policies. If you are unsure about whether to post something, ask Communications & Marketing. While faculty and staff have a right to freedom of expression, the College has an obligation to protect the reputation of the institution and its members. All Langara-related social media channels should adhere to the College's policies including:

- [Computer and Computer System Use](#)
- [Copyright Compliance](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Respectful Workplace](#)

Confidentiality

Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Langara, its students, alumni, employees, vendors, or business partners. Be aware of liability **-** nothing about social media is private.

Involving students

We understand that some areas want to engage students in running their program/department's social media channel. If you plan on doing so, we recommend the following actions:

- Select trusted students who have excellent writing skills and experience with the platform. Review their social media channels and ask for samples of their work.

- If the expectation is for the student to run the channel in an ongoing capacity (ie. For one month or longer), he/she should be compensated. Options to consider: Co-operative Education, Student Work Assistance Program, or honorariums'.

- Each account should have at least two staff members as editors in addition to the student access. When a student leaves the position, their access should be removed and the password should be changed for security.

- Pay close attention to their work. While social media is fun and engaging, it an important representation of your program/department, and ultimately the College brand. It only takes one post to diminish your reputation.

- If you are interested in engaging students for a short period of time (ie. one-day takeovers, guest posts, special features, etc.), it can be done on a voluntary basis.

For more guidance on involving students, please contact Communications & Marketing.

Contact

Communications & Marketing
Email: webteam@langara.ca
Website: www.iweb.langara.bc.ca/webteam

Social Marketing/Social Media Agreement

I, _____, have read the social media guidelines as set out by

Communications & Marketing at Langara College. I accept that by using College-branded

social media channels and marketing tools, I am representing Langara and its standards

and principles. I agree to allow Communications & Marketing to access these social media

and marketing channels, to ensure that successful logins will be available in the future.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Snapchat
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Other _____

NAME _____

DEPT _____

EMAIL _____

DATE _____