Social Media Guidelines

Thousands of current and future students, faculty, staff, alumni, and donors are using communication channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, and many others to stay connected. CSU and CVMBS Communications believe that having a presence in these areas will allow us to broadcast information and interact with a broader audience in an enriching way. In order to operate within these mediums effectively, Colorado State has developed a social media policy to ensure that any and all interactions on behalf of CSU represent the University’s best interests.

CVMBS has adopted CSU’s policies and developed College-specific guidance to ensure a positive, professional experience for the public when they interact with our College. CSU encourages the University community to be actively involved with social media. These guidelines are broad in nature to accommodate any differences in online venues while maintaining a universal code of conduct.

University Officially Recognized Social Media Accounts

The University has established an application process for groups to be recognized by the University as official social media accounts.

All officially recognized social media accounts will be publicly listed by the University at http://socialmedia.colostate.edu/social-media-directory/. This listing most likely increases SEO visibility of your social media account.

CSU’s Social Media Leadership Team is housed in the University’s Division of External Relations and reviews and approves all social media applications. The CSU Social Media Online Application can be found at http://socialmedia.colostate.edu/application/. Your CVMBS Communications team can offer input for your successful application. Contact cvmbs_social_media@mail.colostate.edu for any questions or concerns.

All officially recognized social media accounts will be given a disclaimer to post to the account declaring it as an official Colorado State University social media account and includes a link to CSU’s social media policy:

Disclaimer Statement: While we are affiliated with Colorado State University, comments made on this account are our own and not that of the University. If you would like to review our social media policy please visit this webpage. http://www.socialmedia.colostate.edu/page/Social-Media-Policy.aspx
Profile Image/Avatar

All applicants of officially recognized social media accounts are required to submit the profile image/avatar of each account to both creative services and cvmbs_social_media@mail.colostate.edu as part of the application process to ensure that CSU’s branding standards set forth in the Communicator’s Toolbox are upheld.

College-Level Social Media Sites

The CVMBS Communications Team, along with CVMBS Office of Advancement, are creating and maintaining several core sites to serve as a foundation for social media communications and connections with College constituents. These are:

1. College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Facebook a.
   b. Serves as College-wide community for past, current or potential future students, alumni, faculty, employees, researchers, donors and as support for the news media.

2. College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Google +
   a. https://plus.google.com/1128600244454644426850/posts
   b. Serves as College-wide community for past, current or potential future students, alumni, faculty, employees, researchers, donors and as support for the news media.

3. College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Twitter
   a. https://twitter.com/csuvetmedbiosci
   b. Serve as quick daily feed of interesting news, publications, awards, whereabouts, speaking engagements, interesting discoveries from every avenue of the College’s activities.

4. College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Instagram account
   a. https://instagram.com/csuvetmedbiosci
   b. Serves as College-wide community, and represents College in a visually dynamic way.

5. College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences LinkedIn
   b. Group: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/2792630
   c. Serve as primary alumni and/or donor connection especially with respect to employment networking.

6. College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences YouTube
   a. http://www.youtube.com/csuvetmedbioscience
   b. Serve as repository for all video work supporting the websites and approved by CVMBS Communications – enhances leveraged usage across the College.

7. College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Flickr
   b. Serve as repository for all photo work supporting the websites and publications and approved by CVMBS Communications – enhances leveraged usage across the College.
8. Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital Facebook
   a. https://www.facebook.com/CSUVetHospital
   b. Serve as a VTH connection to rDVMs, the veterinary industry, clients, students, faculty, employees, and community.

9. Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital Twitter
   a. https://twitter.com/CSUVetHospital
   b. Serve as quick daily feed of interesting news, pet health guidance, publications, awards, whereabouts, speaking engagements, and interesting discoveries from every service area of the hospital.

10. Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences Pinterest Board
    b. Serves as a visual bookmarking tool for clients, veterinarians, veterinary students, pet owners and pet lovers on pet-related health topics and tips.

11. Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital Instagram
    b. Serves as a community for and connection to the veterinary industry, clients, pet lovers, prospective students, current students, faculty and employees.

**Content Policies**

1. Posting, releasing or otherwise disclosing photos, identifiable case descriptions, images, or records related to the educational, clinical, or research activities of the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences (including the CSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital and the Diagnostic Medicine Center) via social networking sites, whether associated with CSU and CVMBS or a personal site, is prohibited. Posting photos of human and animal cadavers is prohibited. Refrain from taking any photos in the anatomy labs.
   These guidelines apply to all students, faculty, staff, clients, and visitors of the College and the hospital, and to all activities of the College and the hospital, on or off campus, related to veterinary clinical services, teaching, and research. Pictures of animals (whether owned by the University or client), and client information are strictly forbidden from being published or posted on personal social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, blogs, message boards, or internet websites without prior approval from an appropriate supervisor or department head, or either the director of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital and Clinics or director of the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories and a signed release by the client. These guidelines are to promote the safety and privacy of students, faculty, staff, clients, and visitors. Failure to comply with these guidelines could result in damage to persons or property; may be a violation of legal, professional, and/or ethical obligations; and may result in disciplinary action by the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and/or CSU, up to and including dismissal.

2. All materials (such as Mp3 recordings, class notes/handouts, videos, slide presentations, etc.) posted on Canvas or the CVMBS website and other College educational resources are solely for
the use of our students for educational purposes. They should not be copied or distributed to anyone outside of the Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences without prior written approval of the author/instructor.

3. Numerous social networking sites are used by veterinary students. As professional students, you are encouraged to *think before you post* to these sites. These sites are available to the public and posting inappropriate personal material may not serve your professional goals, your veterinary career, or the reputations of the College and Colorado State University. Ensure that your social media activity does not interfere with your work commitments. Faculty and staff are not encouraged to use scheduled work time for personal social media use.

4. Use good judgment about content and respect privacy laws. Do not include confidential information about the College, the University, its staff, or its students.

5. Representation of your personal opinions as being endorsed by the College, the University, or any of its organizations is strictly prohibited. You may not use the College name, the Veterinary Teaching Hospital name, or the CSU name to promote any opinion, product, cause, or political candidate. Be sure to include the statement, “This is my personal opinion and not necessarily that of the University” when necessary.

6. 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 indemnify and hold the College and the University harmless for any claims resulting from the content.

7. While CSU and the College do not regularly review content posted to all social media sites, it shall have the right to remove any content for any reason posted to approved CSU social media sites, 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.

8. When using or posting online material that includes direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos, or videos, always include citations. Provide a link to the original material if applicable.

9. Refrain from using information and conducting activities that may violate local, state, or federal laws and regulations.

10. CSU CVMBS strongly discourages “friending” of patients on social media platforms. Staff in patient care roles generally should not initiate or accept friend requests except in unusual circumstances, such as a situation where an in-person friendship pre-dates the treatment relationship. Similarly, CVMBS discourages staff in management/supervisory roles from initiating “friend” requests with employees they manage. Managers/supervisors may accept friend requests if initiated by the employee, and if the manager/supervisor does not believe it will negatively impact the work relationship.

11. Unless approved by the CVMBS communications team, your personal social media name, handle, and URL should not include the Colorado State University or CVMBS’s name or logo.

12. Ask the CVMBS Communications team (cvmbsweb@colostate.edu) if you have any questions about what is appropriate to include in your social media profile(s).
Content Guidance

Be Authentic

Be authentic when you write, tweet, or communicate in any way using social media. Let your audience know your role within the College (student, staff, faculty, etc.) on your personal social media pages to make your intentions transparent to friends/followers of your social media pages. Use the disclaimer, “While I am an employee at Colorado State University, comments made on this account are my own and not that of the University.”

Consider Your Audience

Remember that readers include current and future clients/students/referring veterinarians, research colleagues, and current/past and future employees. Consider that before you publish and make sure you are not alienating any of these groups.

Understand the Concept of Community

Community exists so you can support others and they can support you. It is not just a place for advertising or self-promotion. Offer praise to others and share others’ information. Offer good ideas that you hear. Pay attention to what your community finds interesting and contribute in that way.

Bring Value

In a good community, people help each other grow and learn. So add value. Help someone who is having a problem (with our organization or another). Ask good questions and let people share their ideas. Offer science-based information whenever possible to help the discussion – but don’t argue.

Pay Attention

Pay attention to what others in your field are doing and saying and what they are interested in. Keep an eye on what people are saying about CSU, the College, your department, your field, or your competition. There is quite a bit to learn.

Be Transparent

CSU CVMBS does not endorse people, products, services, and organizations. On social media websites such as LinkedIn, where your affiliation to CSU CVMBS is known, personal recommendations or endorsements should not be given or requested when acting as or representing CVMBS.
Account Administrators

All CVMBS social media accounts should have at least two CVMBS employees as administrators at all times to ensure an adequate level of engagement and the protection of these guidelines. Should one of the CVMBS employee administrators of an account leave the College for any reason or no longer continue to be an account administrator, it is the individual’s supervisor’s responsibility to designate another media administrative role, and notify CSU’s social media team to update the social media directory at socialmedia@colostate.edu.

If there are not two CVMBS employees available to serve as account administrators when a social media account is being considered, then the account should not be implemented under any circumstances. CVMBS does approve the implementation of social media account utilizing CSU PR as the secondary administrative support. If there are problems identifying a new administrator for a long-standing CVMBS social media account, contact the CVMBS Communications Team at cvmbs-socialmedia@colostate.edu.

CSU employees identified as administrators of accounts are held responsible for managing and monitoring content of their officially recognized accounts. Administrators are responsible for removing content that may violate the University or CVMBS Conduct Policies. Administrators at any time can contact CVMBS Communications for consultation or CSU’s Social Media Leadership Team if CVMBS Communications is not available.

CVMBS student organizations that wish to create social media accounts should contact the CVMBS Communications Team at cvmbs-socialmedia@colostate.edu for assistance. CVMBS social media administrators are required to follow the conduct policies that apply to client/doctor confidentiality and privacy laws, unless otherwise given written permission from the doctor and/or a signed copy of the photography consent form from the client.

Administrators should always receive written consent from their supervisors before posting content to the CVMBS/VTH social media pages. Administrators of CVMBS should retweet other Twitter accounts’ tweets at their best discretion. The information that the CVMBS and VTH Twitter accounts’ retweet should reflect the CVMBS and CSU’s mission and brand. Social media administrators do not need permission to tweet/retweet once written permission to tweet freely is given to the administrator from their supervisor/s. Written permission will be given only after the supervisor deems that the administrator has had adequate experience representing the CSU CVMBS mission and voice. Administrators do not necessarily need permission from their supervisors when responding to comments/tweets from the audience. However, administrators should always use their best judgment when responding to comments/tweets, and should ask for assistance from their supervisor when they are unsure of an appropriate response. All responses should reflect the mission and voice of CSU CVMBS.
Administrators are encouraged to use their best judgment about posting information—especially information collected from the Veterinary Teaching Hospital. Clients that are undergoing intensive treatments and are not guaranteed to recover should not be shared on social media networks until the health status of the client has been determined by a medical professional at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, even if the client has given written permission. Clients undergoing minor procedures and checkups are permitted to be shared on social media networks. Administrators should always receive written consent from their supervisors before posting any content about any client from the Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

Every CSU-affiliated social media account should include the following disclaimer statement:

Disclaimer Statement: While we are affiliated with Colorado State University, comments made on this account are our own and not that of the University. If you would like to review our social media policy please visit this webpage. [http://www.socialmedia.colostate.edu/page/Social-Media-Policy.aspx](http://www.socialmedia.colostate.edu/page/Social-Media-Policy.aspx)

It is important for administrators to use their best judgment when posting about specific personnel fundraising (faculty, staff, family, etc.) or tragedies that are connected to the VTH/CVMBS. Administrators should receive written consent from the executive director’s office to promote the fundraisers via social media. Administrators should keep in mind that any response made to readers/viewers in private could go public. This includes emails, Facebook messages, Twitter direct messages, etc. Any answer given to a reader/viewer in private should be written as though it is a public message.

The members of the central communications social media team are the administrators who have posting authority, regardless of other personnel’s posting access. This includes the CVMBS College Office Director, the CVMBS College Office Assistant Director, and assigned social media managers. All post requests for the CVMBS/VTH social media pages should be sent by email to [cvmbs-socialmedia@colostate.edu](mailto:cvmbs-socialmedia@colostate.edu).

Administrators should not delete, disable, or hide posted and shared content on social media accounts. If the content posted by an administrator is incorrect, it is important to address the mistake, admit to the mistake, correct the mistake, and move on. If there is negative feedback posted on or directed at the CVMBS/VTH social media pages, the content should never be removed from the page by an administrator. The response CVMBS/VTH gives to the negative comment is the most important factor. Viewers/readers following the conversation will most likely concentrate on how CVMBS/VTH is handling the negative comment rather than the negative comment itself.

How to respond to negative feedback on social media pages:

- Respond as quickly as possible
• Be thankful, polite, and respectful of your customers, even if you think they are incorrect
• Be honest and transparent
• If your clients/audiences have inaccurate information, correct them
• Tell clients/audiences how you are going to address their complaints, and what the next steps are
• Give clients/audiences a way to stay in touch with you, and invite further feedback (ex: separate email)
• Do not give a similar generic response to each negative comment; be human, different, and sincere
• It is important to respond to negative comments, but use your best discretion about when engaging in the conflict is appropriate
• Never delete content/comments, unless they contain: racism, sexism, verbal abuse, inappropriate language, pornographic content, blatant antagonistic behavior toward other community members, and/or any illegal activity

Existing Colorado State University Conduct Policies

• Acceptable use
• Copyright information
• IT security policy
• Personal records privacy and security policy
• Privacy statement
• Website requirements and guidelines
• FERPA/Privacy policies
• Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual
• Student Code of Conduct
• Social Media Policy
• Application
• Best Practices in Social Media
• Facebook Best Practices
• Twitter Best Practices
• Flickr Best Practices
• LinkedIn Best Practices
• YouTube Best Practices
• Tips for Creating Profile Images