

External Communications, Media Relations and Social Media Policy IA 200.2

Responsible Officer:

Vice President for Strategic Marketing and Communications/Chief Marketing Officer

Introduction

The Office of Strategic Marketing and Communications ensures that written and digital print materials developed for the College community and other external audiences will be high quality, consistent, and accurate. This includes print, broadcast, online, and social media, which act as a conduit to reach these audiences.

Nothing contained within this policy is intended, nor shall be construed, as an attempt by Morehouse College to stifle, reduce or otherwise interfere with the rights or protections granted under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, or to negatively affect academic freedom which our faculty members enjoy, as defined by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP)'s *1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for ensuring that a strong, positive brand image—which is consistent with Morehouse College's mission, vision, policies, and values—is proactively communicated to all external audiences.

Applicability

This policy on interacting with news media representatives applies to all Morehouse College employees, faculty, trustees, offices, and its subsidiaries.

Definitions

News Media—For the purpose of this policy, news media shall refer to representatives of newspapers, magazines, newsletters, online publications,



television, and radio.

Brand is our promise of what Morehouse College delivers. It reflects the College's mission, vision, and values, and is the foundation upon which all business is conducted. Brands have three primary functions: (1) to help consumers choose from an array of options; (2) to communicate the intrinsic quality of a product or service and reassure customers that they have made the right decision; and (3) to use distinctive imagery, language, and associations to encourage customers to identify with the brand.

Social Media is a category of interactive computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests, and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks.

Multimedia is content that uses a combination of different content forms such as text, audio, images, animations, video, and interactive content.

Policy

Employees, faculty, divisions, units, or departments that wish to reach out to news media (reporters, columnists, editors) in the attempt to garner press coverage about a student or College program (official event, achievement, etc.) must first contact and get approval from the OSMC. Also, it is the sole responsibility of the OSMC to respond to and manage news media requests about students and any official College programming. Employees and faculty are required to refer any news media inquiries regarding students or official College programming to the OSMC. This policy does not apply to media coverage of faculty research, expert opinion, or other individual professional activities or accomplishments. Employee [sic] and faculty should advise the OSMC of invited guest [sic] to the College if such guest is of public or political notoriety, whereby one reasonably should assume the College would have an interest in communicating with news or media agencies. **Failure to comply with this policy may subject the individual involved to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.**

The OSMC has relationships with numerous news media contacts and will work with faculty and staff to coordinate publicity or visibility for programs, College programming or events, students, or newsworthy issues. All news releases, press briefings, and statements to the news media that mention Morehouse College, or its employees, agents, or representatives shall be routed through, and disseminated by, the OSMC. The OSMC will coordinate with the Sports Information Director (SID) or other designees in the Athletics Communications Department (ACD), with respect to news and events as it relates to our athletic department and teams.

Instances in which the news media requests coverage, statements, or releases

pertaining to an event, all such releases and statements to the news media must be routed through, approved, and disseminated by the OSMC.

It is the event sponsor's responsibility to assess the potential media relations impact to the College when organizing an event on campus; and must coordinate planning media relations with the OSMC and/or SID accordingly. The event sponsor will then introduce the OSMC to the talent's/invitee's PR team to coordinate media relations.

**Morehouse College reserves the right to create exceptions to this policy for any event, guest, timeframe, etc.*

A. Requests for Official College Position or Response

All inquiries seeking an official response or a statement on behalf of Morehouse College should be directed to the OSMC Vice President/Chief Marketing Officer or Associate Vice President or PR Director of the division.

Authorization to speak on behalf of Morehouse College may only be given by the Morehouse College President or the OSMC Vice President/Chief Marketing Officer. No faculty or staff member may make official statements on behalf of the College without consultation with, and express authorization from, the President and the OSMC Vice President/Chief Marketing Officer.

Any employee who has not been authorized to speak to the media in the context of his or her role as an employee must direct inquiries from the media to the OSMC. No employee is authorized to speak "off the record" on behalf of Morehouse College to media on any matter about the College.

B. Requests to Faculty and Staff Regarding Subject Matter Expertise

Morehouse College is proud of its faculty and staff, and their expertise and scholarship in a vast array of subjects and disciplines. Many senior administrators and staff also have expertise. If a College faculty or staff member is contacted by a member of the media, it is recommended that he/she shall inform the OSMC and notify the OSMC Associate Vice President or PR Director.

All media on Morehouse College property must have an OSMC escort and Morehouse media credentials.

Student-athletes, coaches and athletics administrators who are contacted by media, must direct all inquiries to the director for communications in the ACD and the OSMC to coordinate interviews and issue credentials to media on campus.

Morehouse College complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding the retention and release of personal and/or educational records of all current employees and students.

****Under no circumstances should any information about any legal matter, regardless of its status, or any confidential matter be discussed publicly without the prior approval of the Office of General Counsel.***

C. Photography/Brand Marketing for External Use

Morehouse College reserves the right to photograph members of the campus community including, but not limited to, its students, faculty, and staff, in situations appropriate to the image of an academic institution, and to publish likenesses in Morehouse College publications, video, websites, the news media, social media, or other recruitment or promotional materials.

All external communications are guided by Morehouse College's mission, vision, values, and brand. Faculty and staff will follow College [brand guidelines](#) and seek the review and approval of the OSMC for College materials distributed to the public for marketing and informational purposes, including newsletters, blogs, and advertisements.

Faculty and staff will also follow College brand guidelines and seek the review and approval of the OSMC for all informational and marketing content posted on morehouse.edu. The OSMC maintains the quality and consistency of all written and visual materials used to communicate Morehouse news and the College's value proposition to target audiences.

D. Media Credentialing for Reporters Visiting Campus for Interviews and Events

The OSMC has sole authority to issue media credentials and media escorts to reporters who visit campus. To protect the brand, outside groups who rent Morehouse College facilities for events that may attract media interest must also seek approval from the OSMC to invite media to Morehouse College. The OSMC will then issue all necessary media credentials and send a representative to assist with media check-in/support at the event.

The OSMC will work in concert with the SID to conduct media relations and provide media credentials for media seeking to cover sporting events on campus.

It is the responsibility of each Vice President, dean, department head, or

director to implement procedures to comply with this policy.

SOCIAL MEDIA

I. Introduction

Social media is a powerful communications tool that has a significant impact on organizational and professional reputation. Because it blurs the lines between personal voice and institutional voice, Morehouse College has created the following policy to help clarify how best to enhance and protect personal and professional reputations when participating in social media.

Both in professional and institutional roles, employees should follow the same behavioral standards online as they would in real life. This includes obeying all laws and complying with professional expectations and guidelines for interacting with students, parents, alumni, donors, media, and other college constituents when online as in the real world. Employees are liable for anything they post to social media sites.

In reality, there is no such thing as an “anonymous” post. Any posts or comments submitted for others to read should be posted with full identification of the writer. Where your connection to Morehouse College is apparent, make it clear that you are speaking only for yourself and ***not*** on behalf of Morehouse College. A disclaimer, such as, "The views expressed on this [blog; website] are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer or Morehouse College" is recommended.

The following contains additional guidelines and examples of best practices and is intended to help you understand, from a wide range of perspectives, the implications of participating in social media.

II. Guidelines

These guidelines address the use of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, blogs, and other social media networking sites and tools by College personnel and students. The College will maintain and publish descriptions of social media platforms in use by the College and monitor the use of these platforms. The College may also periodically publish information about best practices for use of social media.

1. Rights and Responsibilities

- a. Persons authorized by the College to post entries on behalf of the College shall have no expectation of privacy over such use.
- b. Persons authorized by the College to post entries on behalf of the College shall adhere to all College policies, procedures, and standards of conducts.
- c. Persons authorized by the College to post entries on behalf of the College using social media shall adhere to acceptable standards of personal conduct outlined in student and faculty/staff guidelines.
- d. For postings not specifically authorized by the College, the College takes no responsibility for such content published on social media sites.
- e. Without express authorization, social media shall not be used in any way as to suggest or infer an official communication on behalf of the College.
- f. Authorized persons must monitor posting activity and keep information published on social media sites accurate and up to date.

2. Authorized Social Media Activities

- a. Any social media presence purporting to be an authorized Morehouse College activity must receive that authorization under the terms outlined in this policy.
- b. Any sanctioned Morehouse College social media presence or activity should be restricted to the following uses:
 - Student recruitment and retention.
 - Unofficial and informal communication with the alumni body and friends of the College for friend-raising and fundraising support.
 - Publicizing and marketing College activities and college brand enhancement.
 - Informal communication to the media and other stakeholders.
 - Purposes authorized by senior administration at the College.

III. Suggested Best Practices

This section applies to those posting on behalf of an official college unit. However, these guidelines may be helpful for anyone posting on social media in any capacity.

□ Think twice before posting

Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Search engines can discover posts years after they are created, and comments can be forwarded or copied. One easy test to consider is whether you would feel comfortable making the statement at a conference or to a member of the media. If not, then reconsider whether you should post it online. If you are unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, ask your supervisor for input or contact the OSMC.

□ Strive for accuracy

Confirm your intended statements are factual before posting on social media. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors.

□ Be respectful

Understand that social media invites comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the poster and/or the College.

□ Remember your audience

Be mindful that your posts (or pictures) in social media can be made available to the public at large. This includes prospective students, current students, current employers and colleagues, and peers. Consider the consequence of anything you post.

□ On personal sites

Always identify your views as *yours* and not the College's. If you identify yourself as a Morehouse College faculty or staff member online, you should make it clear that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the institution.

□ Photography

Photographs posted on social media sites easily can be taken, used, or appropriated by visitors. Consider adding a watermark and/or posting images at 72 dpi and approximately 800x600 resolution to protect your intellectual property.

IV. Institutional Social Media

Only employees who are specifically authorized by the Office of the President or the OSMC may post on behalf of the College or an official college unit. The following policies **must** be adhered to, in addition to all policies and best practices listed above:

1. Notify the College

Departments or units that have a social media page or would like to start one should contact the OSMC to ensure all institutional social media sites coordinate with other Morehouse sites and the content of those sites. All institutional pages must have a full-time appointed *employee* who is identified as being responsible for content.

2. Acknowledge who you are

If you are representing Morehouse College when posting on a social media platform, state your authority to do so, along with your job title.

3. Have a plan

Divisions/Departments should consider their messages, audiences, and goals, and regularly update information on social media sites.

4. Link back to the College

Whenever possible, link back to the Morehouse College website. Generally, posts should be brief, redirecting a visitor to content that resides on one of the official Morehouse digital channels such as morehouse.edu, Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook.

5. Protect Morehouse's institutional voice

Social media posts should be professional in tone and in good taste. No individual Morehouse College department should present its social media site as representing the College as a whole. Posts should all be clearly linked to the particular department or unit rather than to the institution as a whole.

6. Submit multimedia posts for review

Videos, microsities, and other online multimedia follow the same policies and guidelines for approval as other communications products. All multimedia content should be submitted to the OSMC for approval before posting.

Social Media (Generally)

Protect confidential and proprietary information

Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Morehouse College, students, employees, or alumni. Employees must still follow the applicable federal requirements such as FERPA and HIPAA, as well as NCAA regulations. Adhere to all applicable College privacy and confidentiality policies.

Respect copyright and fair use

When posting, respect the copyright trademark and intellectual property rights of others and of the College, including but not limited to, Morehouse College's name, logo, emblem, seal, photographs, and images.

Do not use Morehouse College logos for endorsements

Do not use the Morehouse name, logo, or any other College images or iconography on personal social media sites. Do not use Morehouse's name to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate.

Respect College time and property

College computers and time on the job are reserved for College-related business.

Implementation

January 14, 2019

Revision History

Last revision completed on **May 7, 2021**