Social Networking

**Scope**
This policy applies to administrators, staff and students for the purpose of establishing University standards and expectations for the professional use of social media.

**General Information**
Social networks are online communities where people meet, socialize, exchange files and share information. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, OrgSync, LinkedIn, and YouTube are examples of some of the popular social media services that currently make up the online landscape; however, this landscape is changing every day. Social networks may be used to communicate with prospective and current students and alumni, and build community by connecting with others who share common interests and goals. While it is understood that individuals may use social networks for personal reasons, this policy is intended to address the professional use of these media platforms by members of the St. John’s University community.

**Related Policy Documents**
The following University policies must be adhered to, as applicable, as they relate to social networking:
- Student Code of Conduct
- Policy #704 Discrimination, Discrimination-Related Harassment and Sexual Harassment and Related Complaint Procedures
- Policy #706 Confidentiality
- Policy #708 Violence in the Workplace
- Policy #712 Reporting Student Crisis Situations
- Policy #801 Professional Conduct (staff and administrators)
- Policy #901 Computer and Information Security
- Policy #1006 Crime Awareness and Reporting

**Policy**
Social media is expanding in popularity as a current and relevant way to reach and interact with prospective students, current students and alumni. St. John’s University maintains a growing presence on such platforms as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, YouTube and Eye of the Storm. The University approves certain individuals to create and maintain University-affiliated social networking pages and sites for University departments and student organizations. Employees who are designated to perform these functions may be required to do so as a condition of employment. Authorization and supervision of such sites for University departments resides with the appropriate Office of the Dean or Vice President. For
student organizations, authorization and supervision resides with the Office of Student Life.

The University’s Mission statement is the marker by which the ethical behavior of its community members should be measured and guided. This behavior extends to electronic communications, social media and any other online involvement. As representatives of St. John’s University, all students, faculty, staff and administrators are expected to act with integrity and honesty and to adhere to the Core Values of truth, love, respect, opportunity, excellence and service. Both the employee Professional Conduct policy #801 and the Student Code of Conduct emphasize the obligation of members of the University community to conduct themselves with responsibility compatible with the goals and purposes of an educational institution established in the Vincentian tradition.

While the University does not actively monitor social networks, as with other electronic resources, University systems and administrators may perform activities necessary to ensure the integrity, functionality and security of the University’s computers, networks and information systems. The University reserves the right to access and review activity. Additionally, in response to concerns, complaints or information provided by individuals or authorities, the University may look up profiles on social networking sites and may use the information in informal or formal proceedings. Any behavior, including that conducted in an online environment, which is found to be contrary to University policy or the Code of Conduct, will be investigated and handled according to the appropriate process.

Suspicious or threatening online activity involving any member of the St. John’s University community should be reported immediately to the Department of Public Safety at (718) 990-5252 or to the Vice President for Information Technology at (718) 990-5800.

Policy Standards and Expectations

The following apply to all site administrators of social media maintained for University purposes and departments. These standards refer to departmental pages and not personal profiles. Administrators and staff should create distinct personal and professional profiles if they decide to join departmental groups that have STJ student members.

1. Social networks, such as Facebook Fan Pages, should be used as a supplementary form of communication with students. St. John’s Central, Master Calendar, the University website, Web Digest and others should be used in conjunction with social networks to engage students effectively.

2. Student employees should not be named as sole page administrators, given the temporary nature of their assignments; an administrator or staff member must also serve as the page administrator. A manager may require an employee to maintain a Facebook page or other social media site as part of his or her job responsibilities.

3. To create an official University social media site, employees who have been authorized to do so should contact their Relationship Manager in the Office of Marketing and Communications. Once the site has launched, employees should always identify themselves and their roles within the University before posting.
4. Copyright and fair use laws must be respected and proper credit given to authors and necessary permissions obtained prior to publication. The Office of Marketing and Communications is tasked with ensuring that the image and branding of the University is maintained; therefore, employees must adhere to the University Brand Identity Guide regarding the use of images, logos, videos, etc. Questions should be directed to the appropriate Relationship Manager in the Office of Marketing and Communications.

5. Do not post confidential or proprietary information about STJ, its students, its alumni or employees. If the question about whether or not something is confidential or proprietary arises, employees should review policy #706 Confidentiality found in the HR Policy Manual.

6. Before posting photos of individuals, site administrators should ensure that they secure the approval of the Creative Director in the Office of Marketing and Communications regarding permission from persons identifiable in the photos. The Creative Director can be reached at extension 6140. Special permission is typically not needed for group photos taken around campus, but a posed photo of a student, for example, would require a signed release prior to publication or online use.

7. Any issues of questionable content should be brought to the attention of Human Resources. Should the University find that an employee has posted inappropriate or offensive content, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including termination of employment in accordance with University policy, as applicable. The tone and language of University-generated social networking sites must be respectful and appropriate to an educational environment.