SOCIAL MEDIA VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

Social media provides an excellent opportunity to reach a wide audience and to tailor communications to individuals with very specific interests. As a volunteer representing all or part of the UChicago alumni community, it is important to maintain an individual voice while representing the community well.

There are three staff-maintained social media accounts for the general UChicago alumni community. Consider interacting with these accounts as resources to reach a wider UChicago alumni audience.

- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Twitter (@UChicagoAlumni)

The majority of alumni club/affinity groups have specific social media accounts associated with their UChicago alumni community. Consider interacting with the some of these accounts as well.

- Alumni Clubs Social Media Pages
- Affinity Groups Social Media Pages

TIPS FOR WRITING SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

Although some of these tips reference specific social media services and websites, most can be applied to all social media content.

USE COMPLETE SENTENCES

If abbreviations are needed to preserve character limits, use them sparingly and use only common abbreviations. A better way to save characters is to see if you can shorten the sentence by rewriting it.

MIND THE CHARACTER LIMITS

Tweets are limited to 140 characters, Facebook status updates to 5,000 characters, and updates in LinkedIn to 200 characters (including spaces and links). You may want to write under the character limits to allow for reposting of your content by others.
REVIEW CONTENT BEFORE LINKING

Ensure that links go directly to what is implied in the posting and that the content is appropriate for the audience.

USE A LINK SHORTENING SERVICE ON ALL LINKS

Shortening links saves characters and allows tracking of clicks and easier sharing of content. A good option is bitly.

TAG CONTENT TO INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARING AND FINDING

Hashtags (#) are used in Twitter as a one-click search function, and placing an at sign (@) in front of a name allows you to notify users when you refer to them on Twitter or Facebook. If possible, incorporate tags and links into the sentence structure.

Example: Justine Nagan talking up @theinterruptors on the #MAPHreunion panel (cc: @Kartemquin). #UCAW11.

ATTRIBUTE INFORMATION TO ITS ORIGINAL SOURCE

Twitter has commonly accepted formats for attribution. “RT” followed by a space and then an @ tag indicates that a tweet was reposted unaltered. “MT” indicates that language was borrowed and modified. “Via” or “HT” is used to indicate that the language of the post was not used but the source of the information is the identified user.

KEEP PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS PRIVATE

Send direct messages in Twitter and private messages (rather than wall posts) in Facebook. Keep conversations private if information is not intended for a wider audience or contains private information, such personal phone numbers or email addresses.

SET GROUND RULES BEFORE PROBLEMS ARISE

As the manager of an online community, allow open expression but prevent behavior and comments that are abusive to individuals. Rather than needing to justify any moderation after the fact, establish ground rules for the community and stick to them. Try to phrase them in a way that empowers rather than restricts the community.

Example: This is a place to create, promote, and celebrate group experiences in the UChicago alumni community. Please feel free to share your perspective on collective experiences within the community. We support open, respectful, and engaging conversation.

BE POLITE AND RESPONSIVE

Thanking people for reposting your links can have a big impact on the growth and strength of your social network. When someone asks a question or addresses you
directly, acknowledge them promptly and let them know that you will follow up with them if you need to gather more information.

**BE SOCIAL AND ENGAGE**

Others will be more likely to engage with you if you are also engaged. Sharing, linking, liking, and voting for other content will make people more likely to do the same for your content. Engage others by commenting on their content and asking them questions.