Saint Mary's University Students' Association
Social Media Policy

Social Media Policy introduced September 2013

1.   *Strategic Purpose*

i. This policy governs the publication of, and commentary on, social media by employees and/or volunteers of Saint Mary's University Students' Association (SMUSA), its related companies (i.e. The Gorsebrook) and student societies.

ii. There must be a separation between postings made as an individual and those made on behalf of Saint Mary's University Students' Association (SMUSA) or The Gorsebrook Lounge (The Gorsebrook). Postings made on behalf of SMUSA of The Gorsebrook must reflect the image and policies of the organizations.

iii. For the purposes of this policy, social media means any medium for online publication and commentary, including without limitation to blogs, wikis and sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology (i.e. computers, e-mail, the internet etc.)

iv. SMUSA employees and/or volunteers are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with this policy. SMUSA employees and/or volunteers are subject to this policy to the extent that they identify themselves as a society member, society executive or SMUSA employee (other than an incidental mention of place of employment in a personal blog on topics unrelated to SMUSA).

v. Publication and commentary on social media carries similar statutory obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary.

vi. These guidelines are a supplement to the Saint Mary's University Social Media and Personal Privacy policy 5-1003: *http://www.smu.ca/webfiles/5-1003SocialMediaPersonalPrivacy.pdf*

2.   *Respect*

i. Social media identities, logon ID's and user names may not use SMUSA's name without prior approval from the associated Coordinator and President. Social media must be updated regularly and kept current and relevant.

ii. The public in general, and SMUSA's employees and/or volunteers and customers, reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Do not say anything contradictory or in conflict with SMUSA policies or the SMUSA website.

iii. Do not be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may reasonably be considered objectionable.

iv. Do not blog anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. We actively pursue policies embedded in transparency and honesty. Use your real name, be clear about who you are, and identify that you are associated with SMUSA. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty - or dishonesty. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out.

v. Access to administrate all social media accounts will be removed if administrators are caught in breach of posting any of the following items:

a. Racist, sexist, religious discrimination or anything intended to be deliberately inflammatory (the offender may also be subject to disciplinary action resulting in termination of employment).
b. Promoting non-society events at external bars/clubs.
c. Promoting events which SMUSA does not support internally (pub crawls, parties, etc.)
d. Promoting any illegal activities or activities in violation of the student code of conduct (promoting essay-writing services, for example).
e. Posting items not aligned with the respective brand identity.

3.   *Protect*

i. Many social media users include a prominent disclaimer saying who they work for, but that they're not speaking officially. This is good practice and is encouraged, but don't count on it to avoid trouble - it may not have much legal effect.

ii. Privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to allow anyone to see profile information similar to what would be on the SMUSA website. Other privacy settings that might allow others to post information or see information that is personal should be set to limited access. Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see.

iii. Customers, partners or suppliers should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval. Never identify a customer, partner or supplier by name without permission and never discuss confidential details of a contractual engagement. It is acceptable to discuss general details about projects and to use non-identifying pseudonyms for a customer (e.g., Customer 123) so long as the information provided does not violate any non-disclosure agreements.

iv. There are two primary brands represented online: SMUSA and The Gorsebrook Lounge. The brand identities are kept separate because:

a. SMUSA information should reflect the general student body and not promote alcohol. This maintains the organization's image to the university and external partners.
b. Much of SMUSA's membership is below the legal drinking age in Nova Scotia. The Gorse-brook Facebook page has an age restriction to prevent students under 18 years old from view-ing information or photos posted on the page.
c. There is an abundance of information to share with students on a daily basis. In order to bet-ter manage engagement and provide information students want, there are two separate opt-in streams to prevent de-friending.
d. The Gorsebrook is a strong brand that many do not relate directly to SMUSA. By managing a separate profile, it allows the brand to have a different identity.
e. Separate profiles allow for different groups of administrators.
f. Make sure that blogging does not interfere with your job or commitments to customers and/or student members.

4.   *Inform*

i. It is important to always remember that when you post on an institution's social page or blog that you are to speak as the institution and not as a member of said institution.

ii. It is perfectly acceptable to talk about your work and have a dialog with the community, but it's not okay to publish confidential information. Confidential information includes things such as unpublished details about our software, details of current projects, future product deadlines, financial information, research, and trade secrets. We must respect the wishes of our corporate customers and/or student members regarding the confidentiality of current projects. We must also be mindful of the competitiveness of our industry.

iii. If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them), deal with it quickly - better to remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action.

For Example: consider what might happen if an SMUSA employee is in a meeting with a cus-tomer or prospect, and someone on the customer's side pulls out a print-out of your blog and says "This person at SMUSA says that product sucks." Saying "Product X needs to have an easier learning curve for the first-time user" is acceptable; saying "Product X sucks" is risky, unsubtle and amateurish.

iv. Social media use is all about careful consideration and proper judgment. Using your blog to trash or embarrass SMUSA, our customers, or your co-workers / fellow volunteers, is dangerous practice and ill-advised.

5.   *Noteworthy Considerations*

Before Posting, Please Consider This

The best way to be interesting, stay out of trouble, and have fun is to write about what you know. There is a good chance of being embarrassed by a real expert, or of being boring if you write about topics you are not knowledgeable about. Quality, grammar, syntax and sentence structure are all very important aspects of maintaining a professional image.

The speed of being able to publish your thoughts is both a great feature and a great downfall of social media. The time to edit or reflect must be self-imposed. If in doubt over a post, or if something does not feel right, either let it sit and look at it again before publishing it, or ask someone else to look at it first.

Appropriate information to post on behalf of each brand:
(including, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pintrest)

i. **Saint Mary's University Students' Association:**

a. Promoting SMUSA events
b. Posting photos from non-Gorsebrook campus events
c. Promoting events at The Gorsebrook (do not promote alcohol prices)
d. Promoting volunteer opportunities
e. Partner information relevant to SMUSA membership
f. Information from SMUSA services
g. University events/updates/issues/reminders/opportunities
h. General community events that are relevant to Saint Mary's students and do not promote competitor's establishments

ii. **The Gorsebrook Lounge:**

a. Promoting events at The Gorsebrook
b. Posting photos from events held in The Gorsebrook
c. Partner information/events relevant to The Gorsebrook patrons
d. Promoting events/activities in which The Gorsebrook staff may be participants

6.   *Enforcement*

i.   Policy violations may cause social media administrator privileges to be revoked.

ii. Policy violations by volunteers / staff will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination for cause. Social media identities are subject to approval and employment status.

iii. Policy violations by a society will result in funding and / or official status being reviewed.