

Bard

Guidelines for Employee Social Media Use at Bard College

Social media gives us the opportunity to engage with the people and issues that matter to us like never before. This field is constantly shifting, with new technologies emerging rapidly. While it's difficult to offer universal or comprehensive guidance for social media in an ever-changing environment, we can provide best practices and policies for Bard. Social media users on the Bard campus should keep in touch with the Office of Communications with questions and concerns. Please reach out to the social media team for support at socialmedia@bard.edu.

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Policies for Accounts that Represent Official College Programs

Reach out to the Office of Communications before starting an account or if you have difficulties. Contact us at socialmedia@bard.edu.

Commercial, explicit, or defamatory content is prohibited.

Do not endorse political candidates. This is not allowed under Bard's nonprofit status.

Respect privacy and content ownership. Do not bring privately posted content into a public forum without permission, such as posting a friend's private Facebook photo to a Bard program's account. Credit all photography and quotations. Make sure photos are copyright free or obtain permission to share them. See Bard's copyright guidelines on bard.edu/communications.

When photographing individuals, obtain consent. If you plan to take photos during a class or event, make people aware in advance or at the start of the event, and give them the option to opt out. If you want to take candid, close-up photos of individuals out and about on campus, identify yourself and inform them of your intentions with the images.

Related to the above, be conscientious about **how you represent individuals from underrepresented groups**. Consider, for example, the context in which you share

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photos of **people of color**. Are you representing Bard students, staff, and faculty accurately? Did they give consent to be photographed? Are you portraying them and

their work at Bard in an authentic way? For members of the **LGBTQ+ community**, make sure the individual is aware that the photos you are taking will be available publicly, particularly if the context of the image would imply that the person is a member of the LGBTQ+ community. [Further reading: how to avoid tokenism and misrepresentation in marketing](#) (by Nova Reid).

Follow the Bard College [employee handbook](#) for standards of community behavior. Note: for guidance on student use of social media, please view the [student handbook](#).

Before Starting a New Social Media Account on Behalf of a Bard College Office or Program

Consider your audience. Why would you like to start an account? What do you hope to accomplish? Who are you trying to reach? This will clarify whether you should create an account, as well as inform the kind of content you post and what social platform you use if you move forward.

Who will post? Does that employee have the time to do this? Make a succession plan: who is going to take over if/when that staff or faculty member is no longer managing the account? Make sure to coordinate with any coadministrators or related accounts.

Plan your time. Social media is time consuming. A good rule of thumb is to post to each of your accounts daily. If you are certain you have time to devote to it and lots of content to post, begin with one account (rather than multiple accounts on different platforms), in consultation with the Communications Office.

Login security: Choose unique, hard-to-guess passwords for each account. Keep usernames and passwords in a secure location where a few employees on your team can access them. Assign a few administrators with specified access on services that allow this (Facebook, YouTube, etc.). Consider using a service like LastPass to share and update passwords within your team. Share usernames and passwords with the Office of Communications as a backup.

Familiarize yourself with some quick **tips for taking good smartphone photos**. [Here's one](#). See especially the notes about getting close instead of zooming in, and

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also about taking candid. Use phone settings for special modes, if you have them, such as for portraits. Make smart but not excessive use of filters.

Consider your **return on investment**. What are you trying to accomplish? How will you measure success? Event attendance? Ticket sales? Donations? Conversation engagement? Other actions?

Best Practices for Bard Programs on Social Media

If you are managing a social media account on behalf of an official Bard College office or program, you are **representing Bard** publicly in all your interactions with that account. How you represent the College may vary depending on your program's mission and your social media audience, but all your posts should be made with Bard's institutional identity in mind.

Engage others in conversation. Follow other Bard College accounts, faculty, and people of interest. Follow institutional and individual leaders in conversations that interest you. Tag other accounts, people, and places in your posts and use hashtags to join and follow conversations of interest. Share others' posts, relating the conversation to Bard's work and your program's goals. See bard.edu/communications/socialmedia for quick links to official Bard College social channels for ideas of what accounts to follow.

Use a short but clear **handle** that mentions Bard—for example, @BardAlumni, @Bard_FisherCtr, @BardAthletics, etc.

Use a square **logo** and engaging banner image, where applicable. If you don't have a logo, email publications@bard.edu to request a design. See Bard's logo guide for general-use information at bard.edu/communications/branding.

Use **rich content**. Photography and video are most likely to gain the attention of your audience. Focus on telling stories and painting a picture of what your program is doing and what life is like on campus.

You may use social media to promote events, but that is not the primary purpose of these platforms. After all, readers can visit your program's calendar to find event information. **Balance events and announcements with rich content** and open questions to start conversations with your fans/followers. Consider a balance of visual content, events, links to articles/conversations/sites of interest, and calls to action.

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Be present. **Devote the time** to your accounts so that they become resources for people. Answer questions. Check facts before posting. Make it fun.

Crafting Your Voice

Voices at Bard include the **institutional** voice of the main Bard College social accounts, which is the most formal and reaches out to a variety of constituents (prospective students, current students, families, alumni/ae, donors, friends, and members of the media). Each Bard College **program, office, or institute** on social media has its own voice, which aligns with Bard's larger brand, but can be more targeted to a specific audience in both tone and content. Lastly, there are **individual** voices on the private accounts of staff, faculty, and students. See the last section of this document for information on best practices and privacy for individual accounts.

Browse the main Bard College accounts on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to get a sense of College style and voice.

Keep in mind your audience—whom are you trying to reach? That will help determine your style and tone.

Your voice: smart and social, connected but not casual, academic but not stuffy.

Copy edit: even short content posted to social media needs to be edited. Think of social media as a Bard College publication. Everything should be high quality: text, photos, and video.

Privacy for Personal Accounts on Social Media

If you are using a personal social media account that identifies you as a Bard employee, please choose your privacy settings carefully, or, if your account is public, remember that anyone can see what you post.

Even **protected or private social accounts** are not truly private. An unscrupulous follower can publicly share a screen capture of your post. Platforms can be breached and your data compromised. Be thoughtful about what you share and update your unique, secure password regularly.

For staff and faculty who **interact with students on social media**, you will balance the private and the public. This offers both rewards and challenges. Social media can be a powerful classroom tool—for example, on Twitter, where faculty can share information and host discussions in real time. On the other hand, blending the

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personal and professional can become awkward if you and your students are not cautious about your privacy settings and what you post.

A good solution for privacy considerations is to **keep accounts separate for different uses**. For example, you may have a Facebook account that is for friends and family only, a LinkedIn account for professional networking, and a Twitter account for promoting your academic work, writing, and course-related interaction with your students. Tools like Hootsuite and TweetDeck can help manage multiple accounts. You can also often manage different accounts within an app (e.g. multiple Instagram accounts) or between apps (e.g. comanaging Instagram and Facebook accounts, since they share a parent company). Be attentive as you switch between accounts to avoid any posting errors.

Learn more about:

- [Editing your privacy settings on Facebook](#)
- [Creating and posting to lists in Facebook, thereby tailoring your posts to a particular group of friends](#)
- [Protecting your Tweets](#)
- [Protecting your Instagram account](#)