Social & Online Media Participation Policy
POLICY FOR SOCIAL MEDIA PARTICIPATION

Overview
Social networks and other online media are a very popular mode of engagement and communication. These forums are great tools that aid communication, education, collaboration with others, research, business, remote work, etc. At the same time, these new forums open new risks associated with inappropriate use which must be addressed through professionalism training, guidelines, and appropriate corrective action when necessary.

The University of Minnesota, College of Veterinary Medicine relies on its faculty, staff, students, and house officers to ensure the trust and support of the communities it serves. While we encourage open communication in all forms both internally and externally, we expect that such communication reflects the highest standards of our enterprise and supports the privacy and trust of our clients, students, faculty and staff.

Monitoring appropriate use of social networks and online media is everyone’s job as representatives of the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine and we must behave and communicate in a professional manner both on- and offline.

Existing University Policies
The University of Minnesota has a set of Social Networking Site Guidelines which can be found at http://webdepot.umn.edu. The material includes an introduction to using social networking for official University of Minnesota business, best practices, and other policies that cover branding, conduct, confidentiality, and copyright and intellectual property.

University Relations collects links to all official social networking profiles from University of Minnesota schools, centers, institutes and other groups. To be added to the list, e-mail webdepot@umn.edu.

Scope
The following policy applies to the College of Veterinary Medicine faculty, staff, students, and house officers who participate in blogging, social networking sites and other social media. This includes, but is not limited to, YouTube, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs, and Google groups.
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General

The basic guiding principles for use of blogs and social networking sites require a conscious recognition of the profoundly public and long-lasting nature of on-line communication which provides a permanent record of postings. At core, each of us is responsible for online behavior, and the same personal and professional values, guidelines, and policies apply in these spaces just as they do in other areas of professional life.

- **Follow all applicable University policies.** This includes, but is not limited to, maintaining client/patient privacy, professionalism, conduct, ethics, sexual harassment, eCommunication standards, social networking site guidelines, copyright, intellectual property, computer, e-mail and Internet use.

- **Uphold the reputation of the College of Veterinary Medicine by being respectful and professional to fellow employees, students, partners, competitors and clients.** This includes refraining from:
  - Posting work/education-related information that may compromise the CVM, patient privacy or security.
  - Engaging in any form of harassment, including derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual’s race, age, disability, relation, national origin, physical attributes, sexual preference, or health condition.
  - Violating intellectual property, copyrighted or trademarked information.

Keep in mind that others’ posts on your page also reflect on you.

- **Assume that anything posted to a social networking website can be seen by anyone, including current and future employers.** Never assume that what you post is private. Remember that if you wouldn’t want your manager, fellow colleagues, classmates or others to see your comments, it is unwise to post them to the Internet.

- **Use your University affiliation appropriately.**
  - Where your connection to the University of Minnesota, College of Veterinary Medicine is apparent, make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the College of Veterinary Medicine.
  - If you communicate publicly on the Internet about University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine -related matters, disclose your connection and role. Use good judgment and strive for accuracy in your communications; errors and omissions reflect poorly on both you and the College of Veterinary Medicine and may result in liability for either/both parties.
  - For any personal online activity, use a personal e-mail address (not your umn.edu e-mail address) as your primary means of identification. Just as you would not use University stationery for a letter to the editor with your personal views, do not use your University e-mail address for personal views

- **Do not promote personal projects or endorse other products or brands on behalf of the University and/or College of Veterinary Medicine.**

- **Follow University brand standards.** Visit [http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Operations/OPMisc/BRANDING.html](http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Operations/OPMisc/BRANDING.html) for more information.
Confidentiality for clients/patients, research subjects, volunteers & cadavers

Confidentiality
- Client/patient privacy measures taken on social networking sites and other online media must be the same as those taken in any public forum.
- Discussions regarding specific clients/patients, research subjects, volunteers or cadavers are prohibited, even if all identifying information is excluded. It is always possible that someone could recognize the individual or client to which you are referring based upon the context.
- Under no circumstances may photos of clients/patients, research subjects, volunteers or cadavers, including photos depicting any body parts of these individuals, be displayed unless specific written permission to do so has been obtained.

Client contact
- Interactions with clients within these sites are strongly discouraged.
  - Do not give medical advice about individual cases using social media. Direct individuals with health inquiries to an appropriate hospital or clinic patient line.
  - Patient information obtained on a social networking site should not be entered in the patient’s medical record without the client’s knowledge and consent.

Clinical settings
- Refrain from accessing personal social networking sites while working or in clinical work areas.

Procedure

Employees and volunteers found in violation of the policy may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Student violations will be handled through the Student Conduct Code, Section V, Subdivision 16.