

# Lehman College/City University of New York

## Social Media Guidelines

March 30, 2017

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Lehman College seeks to foster a sense of community through its various social media platforms. The goal of Lehman's social media efforts is to reach and communicate with the large population of social media users in a proactive and coordinated manner to amplify Lehman's messaging and attract persons to Lehman College as students, employees, funders, and supporting/collaborating community members and organizations.

An intentional social media program can:

1. Expand the Lehman brand and build support for Lehman's mission through consistent, dynamic, action-oriented, and focused messaging that motivates and raises awareness about the College, its students, faculty, alumni and events.
2. Encourage members of the community to take an action or establish a dialogue. A "call to action" can be clicking a link to learn more about scholarships and giving, registering to attend an Admissions open house, or deciding to attend a class.
3. Support the College's overall communications strategy by telling the story of our people, place, and programs and motivating the reader to share, or re-tweet, etc. the Lehman post to expand Lehman's reach.
4. Support and engage in the College's strategic commitment to student and community engagement and service.

These guidelines are intended for those faculty and staff that have created or are creating social media sites on behalf of the College. They are intended to assist with how you represent the College, school, division or department. No personal, private or FERPA-protected information may be posted on Lehman social media sites. This document is not intended to address personal content on privately maintained social media platforms.

### Social Media Guidelines

Lehman College has a growing online community that support the College and represent important voices. When it comes to creating and managing social media accounts on different platforms, Lehman's audience is best served by establishing a unified presence. Lehman's social platforms include but may not be limited to:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Instagram
- Pinterest
- Google+
- Flickr
- YouTube

## When considering a social media platform:

1. **Familiarize** yourself with existing web policies: Lehman social media sites are expected to adhere to existing information technology and branding guidelines of the College and the University. Please refer to the following for more information:
  - [Lehman College Web Policy \[PDF\]](#)
  - [CUNY Policy on Acceptable Use of Computer Resources \[PDF\]](#)
  - [IT Security Procedures – General \(March 26, 2009\) \[PDF\]](#)
  - Acceptable Use of University Computing Resources.
  - Policies regarding the disclosure of confidential or personal, private information.
  - Nondiscrimination, harassment and related policies.
2. **Register Your Site:** Please confer with the **Lehman Social Media Coordinator** to register your site and to discuss how the platform will be presented and linked to other Lehman sites. Also, please ensure that the coordinator has the site's credentials. Follow CUNY's and Lehman's branding guidelines in terms of the use of graphics, logo, etc.

Please also develop a strategy (see below) regarding the site's goals, and stakeholder audience. This will facilitate the College's ability to be better informed on the content that can be shared with appropriate groups.

Please submit your site name and strategy to [social.media@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:social.media@lehman.cuny.edu) so it can be added to the social media directory on the College website. Before opening a Lehman social media account, consider the following.

**Strategy:** A social media strategy involves an assessment of your 1) communication goals and objectives, 2) audience needs and interests, and 3) maintenance and content creation resources.

Ask if a given social media platform is an appropriate channel to meet these essential needs. Based on that evaluation, if your unit decides to proceed, the strategy you create will likely include the following focus areas: Listening, Influencing, Engaging, and Measuring. Items to consider include:

- **Goals:** What is the key message to your audience? What are your "calls to action" and content to be shared? Do you have sufficient content to maintain consistency? Will the account be managed year-round?
- **Community:** Who is the audience and how will it grow? What generates a following? Ask questions. Ask for opinions in your posts. Find something to get people engaged. Include actions that you want to see as a result of your post.
- **Site Management:** Are you able to properly maintain the site at a consistent level? Accounts need to be actively managed. Who is the back-up to ensure that content can be updated?
- **Coordination:** Can you spread our message without creating your own account? How will you link to/work with the main Lehman social media sites and other site owners across campus? Please use the college calendar of events to ensure that activities can all be found in one location.
- **Platform:** What platform is best suited to your message and audience and why?

## Responsibilities:

- You are personally responsible for the content you post when representing Lehman on social media platforms. Be sure that you follow all applicable State, University and related policies and guidelines, including FERPA, HIPAA and copyright requirements. Other policies and guidelines, include but the policies and guidelines mentioned above.
- The College does not endorse or use any social media platform as a secure means of communication for online business transactions or matters involving personal information. Lehman social media sites should not request, nor should individuals be asked to send payment information or private information via a social media platform.
- If there is an option to add information on your site, please add this disclaimer: *Content posted here does not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of Lehman College/CUNY.*
- Information in Lehman social media sites should be accessible to those with disabilities.

## Defining a Successful Social Media Presence:

- **Visuals:** Posts that include photos and videos are important for attracting an audience. Please make sure that you have the right to publish the visual content before you post. Copyright and trademark laws apply to online content, and student photos generally require a signed release. It is recommended to exercise discretion in determining what pictures to post and to seek permission from individuals that are being photographed. It is recommended that photos be edited to 72dpi resolution and 800x600 pixels (or 612x612 for square images).
- **One Voice:** Determine in advance who your audience is, and decide what type of voice you want behind your social media posts. Who is the individual that will manage your site? Multiple voices disrupt consistency and can cause confusion.
- **More than one Site Manager:** While it's important to have one voice, all sites should have two managers. This is especially necessary to address things quickly or when someone is on vacation. The College Social Media Coordinator should also have the site's credentials and can assist with a posting when needed.
- **SPAM:** Keep content fresh and current, but limit the number of updates so as not to become a nuisance to your audience. In general, it is recommended to post up to three times a day for Facebook, twice for Instagram, and multiple times for Twitter.
- **Tags and Hashtags:** Tag Lehman College official pages for optimum exposure. Lehman's Twitter handle is @lehmancollege or hashtag #lehmancollege #lehmancuny on Facebook and Instagram. Hashtag campaigns will be added based on special events, etc.
- **Social Media Campaigns:** Campaigns with defined messaging and hashtags are a great way to build awareness for an event or initiative. Planning and timing are essential for a successful campaign. If you are planning a social media campaign, consult the Social Media Coordinator.

- **Interact with Speed:** Answer questions from users. Show them that you are interested in what they are saying by being a part of the conversation. Proper interaction is done with speed. Don't wait to answer a question or jump into the conversation. As important as it is to be precise, it's just as important to be swift.
- **Originality:** When people read through your timeline of posts, you want them to think, "Wow, this person knows what they're doing." Original, interesting content can prompt that reaction.
- **Appropriateness:** Lehman's social media presence reflects our identity and we encourage posting relevant information that is respectful and courteous to our community. By creating your social media site, you've given users a platform to voice their opinions.

If you believe a user has violated your platform's Terms of Use, please consult with the Social Media Coordinator and Special Counsel. While preserving the sharing of opinions, the College reserves the right to remove posts that are inconsistent with our code of conduct, represent advertisements or spam, constitute or encourage illegal activity, infringe upon someone's rights, etc. Guidelines for *How to Comment* are available [here](#).

- **Evaluation:** Review your site's effectiveness once a month. This will help you understand how you can improve your communications to provide your audience with content they want.

If you have questions about this social media guidelines document, contact the College Social Media Coordinator at [yeara.milton@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:yeara.milton@lehman.cuny.edu)