



Social Guidelines

Posting to Social Media

Given the multitude of social media platforms, there are many ways to engage with our audiences. The following suggestions are meant to guide social media account administrators to create productive and respectful interactions:

- Post new content at least once per week – more frequently when possible.
- Allow for post engagement via likes, comments, etc.
- Include community guidelines for appropriate and respectful behavior on the account and post the guidelines whenever necessary to reinforce those expectations.
- Questions, calls to action and other engaging posts will encourage two-way communication.
- Share content from other university accounts – sharing is caring!
- Do not share rumors, personnel information, details of crisis situations or sensitive events, time sensitive University announcements, etc. in advance of postings on the main DU social media accounts. Once information is shared by the primary DU accounts, you may share it on other University accounts.
- Post other relevant information to the DU brand such as events around the metro Denver area or photography illustrating the DU lifestyle.
- Cross-post, share, or promote events or content relevant to the Korbel School and its strategic priorities.
- Create an editorial calendar so that the account is “fed” regularly, and content covers a wide variety of interests and areas that are relevant to the account and primary topic.
- Cancel all scheduled posts (if using a social media publishing tool) when there is a major incident or crisis so that the scheduled post will not appear insensitive or out of touch.
- Moderate comments as needed, providing facts and other helpful information along the way.

Accessibility

Whenever possible, follow all accessibility best practices by:

- Using alternate text (alt text) for images
- Providing captions of video content (open captions, captions that are embedded in the video, are helpful for all viewers since the many audience members will watch video without sound)

- Try to avoid video that is mostly visual such as campus panoramas with just a music track.
- In short, if you play the video with your eyes closed, do you get the same information or experience? How about with the sound turned off?
- Use initial capitalization, known as CamelCase, for hashtags because it makes the hashtag easier to read including for screen readers.
- Emojis will be described by a screen reader. Be cautious of the emoji(s) you select and put spaces between them, so the reader distinguishes between the text and the emojis. Also be aware that emoticons are different from emojis and are read differently by screen readers. Use emojis rather than emoticons whenever possible.

Photo and Video Content

It is important to remain mindful when posting any photos or videos to social media. Despite the ability to delete posts from many of the social platforms used by DU, consider all photos/videos to be permanently shared once posted, since nothing is ever really “deleted” from social media. Therefore, be sure to check whether any students in such photos or videos have any restrictions on release of their directory information under FERPA, as some students may have requested information not be shared (<https://www.du.edu/registrar/privacy/>) and do not share photos or videos of children under the age of 18 without having previously obtained written consent from their parent/guardian.

Livestreaming

Korbel School staff may choose to livestream events and other activities to social media accounts in close coordination with the Korbel School communications team. Please contact korbel.comms@du.edu if you anticipate livestreaming an event.

Crisis and Emergency

In a crisis or emergency, the main DU accounts run by the central division of marketing and communications will post information that can be shared by other official accounts. It is important to refrain from posting information ahead of these accounts or information found elsewhere.

Account Creation and Oversight

DU Social Media Directory – Coming Soon!

All official social media accounts affiliated with the Korbel School must be registered with the Korbel School communications department who will facilitate the account’s registration with Central MarComm. All official accounts in compliance with social media guidelines will be registered with the central DU Social Media Directory. To be listed as an official DU account within the DU Social Media Directory, accounts must meet the following standards:

- Register each account with Korbel School Communications Department. To do so, email korbel.comms@du.edu.
- Select from one of the profile graphics to pair with any appropriate photo (selected from the Social Media Toolkit)
- Select from one of the cover graphics to pair with any appropriate photo
- Commit to posting once a week (inactivity beyond 30 days will result in removal from directory)
- Adhere to accessibility, which includes consistent alt image tagging and captioning of images (please reference the accessibility section further in this document for more details)
- Identify an account owner and management team comprised of only DU employees

Only accounts listed in the DU Social Media Directory will have access to DU's Social Media Toolkit (to be released), a one-stop-shop self-help section for branded content, an organizational content calendar, and other helpful resources.

Creating an Account

When creating a new social media account on behalf of the University of Denver, or any colleges, units, divisions, or departments, follow these account creation and operation best practices:

- Create accounts with a DU email address and share the login information with the Korbel School Communications Department. This information will be kept confidential and the communications staff will not access your account unless there is an emergency or if the account becomes neglected and needs to be retired.
- Comply with all applicable University policies, federal and state laws, including privacy and confidentiality laws such as FERPA, with respect to students, employee, and alumni information.
- Respect intellectual property (trademark and copyright) and use DU branding elements responsibly. Do not modify DU branding elements without the direct approval and/or support from MarComm.
- Post community expectations, moderation protocols and any other specific guidelines on the social media account in the profile or on a "pinned" post.
- Example from @UofDenver accounts: The University of Denver may delete posts or comments that promote for-profit ventures that do not comply with DU policies. Posts that are grossly off-topic, abusive, contain profanity, pornography, are threatening, contain discriminatory language or language of bias or hate, and the like will not be tolerated. Any posts concerning potential harm to one's personal health and safety, or those that are discriminatory will be brought to the immediate attention of Campus Safety and/or the Office of Equal Opportunity/Title IX.
- Do not share any sensitive or private information via social media. Often hackers will use social media to gain knowledge that enables them to cause harm to University systems.

- Consider carefully who you “friend” or “follow” from your University account. Best practice suggests only activating these connections with other University accounts, employees and trusted University partners. We do not recommend following current students who are not either employed with the University or in a University leadership role (such as President of the USG).

Encountering Difficult Social Media Issues

Pause

Remain calm and take a break. Your ability to respond appropriately and professionally increases with a few moments of careful thought and consideration. A hasty response is likely to be a poor response.

Connect and Collaborate

It’s important to collaborate with partners across the University to report the incident and discuss potential responses with others. A response in isolation is likely to result in unintended consequences. Was the social media incident one of bias or hate? If so, please know that we have individuals and units that can support you. Depending on the situation, as a first step, you may contact the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) so that ODEI can provide support to individuals or groups that may be harmed by the post.

Connect with the Korbelt Communications Team to report the issue and receive support for your next steps and response. The Korbelt Communications Team will loop in MarComm as well as other parties on campus as needed.

Respond and Maybe Remove

Negative comments or criticism should not be immediately removed. Instead, a quick and polite response should be issued to attempt to engage with the individual/group and collaborate on a possible resolution.

- Blocking an individual: A good rule of thumb for blocking an individual is “three strikes and you’re out.” However, that may not apply in all cases. Some individuals (those posting pornography, threatening statements, or demonstrating hate) should be blocked or removed from the social media group immediately (after capturing the problematic post/comment with a screenshot).
- Someone posting a call for assistance, having had a negative experience, or looking for answers should receive a response with an offer for direct and immediate assistance. Negative experiences can be turned positive with empathy and rapid outreach. A post may not specifically call for support, so your social media monitoring team will need to read between the lines and extend an offer for support in most instances. Please connect with the Korbelt Communications Team if you encounter such an issue.

Notes:

- In some rare instances, the comment or post will warrant removal. Inappropriate comments (such as profane or pornographic, racist, or threats of harm) must be removed after being captured via screenshots and thoroughly documented. A response should be provided even for a comment/post removed.
- Other types of questionable content could include false, commercial, libelous, defaming, threatening, irrelevant, etc. Consult with Korbelt Communications team and MarComm for guidance.
- The University of Denver may delete posts or comments that promote for-profit ventures that do not comply with DU policies. Posts that are grossly off-topic, abusive, contain profanity, pornography, are threatening, contain discriminatory language or language of bias or hate, and the like will not be tolerated. This page is moderated by DU staff to maintain safety and promote appropriate interactions. Posts concerning safety and discrimination will be brought to the immediate attention of Campus Safety and/or the Office of Equal Opportunity/Title IX.

People/comments you will want to remove, but shouldn't

- Rude and outrageous – some people will post things that are rude, but there is a difference between rude and discriminatory, defamatory, etc.
- A known social media individual who frequently picks fights or complains (“troll”).
- Responses from well-intentioned individuals, providing information on behalf of DU that is not accurate. If the information is not accurate, address it and correct it – do not remove it.

Interactions you will want to engage in, but shouldn't

- An escalating situation in which you will likely not be able to maintain restraint and tact.
- A situation that appears to be handled by the community or in which you think the community is likely to jump in. As a reminder, the first steps are to pause, connect and collaborate. If you think the community will jump in, the time you take to pause, connect and collaborate will give them time to demonstrate their willingness to respond. If the community does not jump in, and you still feel you should respond, do so in a manner that does not invite escalation by providing a statement, the link to a website for more information, or direct contact information for a team member.

Some situations are no-win situations. Do not take these interactions personally, do not engage if you feel you are getting emotionally involved, and keep in mind that your responses are judged not only by the original poster, but by all stakeholders who may see your response.

Documentation prior to removal

Do not remove the post until you have properly captured it with a screen capture tool for documentation. Documentation is critical and must include both the original post and any associated information/interactions (comments, likes, etc.) so all facts can be later referenced as needed. Please submit screenshots to korbel.comms@du.edu.

Sense of Urgency

Your definition of “fast” likely is not the same as each of your stakeholder’s definitions. Therefore, the consistency in your response time should set the tone for how quickly you will respond to questions and comments. Though you should always respond as quickly as possible, after completing the “pause” and “connect and collaborate” steps, if you do not have an answer, you should respond as such. Tell the individual that you are thankful for their comment and that you are working to find an answer. In addition, set an expectation for when they will next hear from you. Will you be able to respond in a few hours? A day? Is this a more complex issue that will take a week or more to answer fully? Also, keep in mind that it may not be you who provides the next bit of information. Perhaps there is a Town Hall coming up that specifically addresses the issue. If so, and if the individual is a member of the DU community, point them to register or the link to join live. Maybe the next issue of the University of Denver Magazine has a feature article on the topic in question. It is okay to ask them to wait for publication and promise to share a link to the digital version when ready.

Ideally, comments and questions will be responded to on the same day they are posted/requested. If, on a regular basis, you know you will take longer (on average) for a response, be sure to post that information somewhere on the page. For example, Campus Safety social media accounts have a disclaimer that states that its social media accounts are not actively monitored 24/7 and that urgent matters of personal and public safety should be directed to a phone number instead.

Thoughtful Interactions

Spend as much (or even more) time listening as you share information. Social media is meant to be a two-way interaction and listening is a critical tool in building relationships and providing valuable insight. Engage in ways that provide value or context to the conversation.

Taking it Offline

There are times when it is best to facilitate a conversation offline and away from social media. It is important in these instances to acknowledge the conversation on the social media platform and indicate that the conversation is being taken offline. Taking conversations offline accomplishes a few key goals:

- It indicates to other audience members that you are responsive without the risks that could arise if the conversation continues on social media. Private information should be kept private and transitioning the conversation offline promotes that.

- Moving an unhappy person away from the platform will likely diffuse the situation as social media makes some people feel more empowered to use more forceful or colorful language. This is often because of the size of the audience.
- Some people will choose not to engage offline and end the conversation. While this is not ideal (we want to try to address and resolve as many conflicts as possible), in some cases, the person was not engaging to receive a resolution to the situation, but for attention. Ending these conversations in this way is preferable to removing/blocking the person from your social account.

Do not delete posts that are moved offline unless they are truly problematic. Always consult with the Korbel Communications Team first before attempting to remove a post.

Team Support

Social media is a team initiative at the University of Denver. It is completely appropriate to engage other accounts if they can help in an interaction. Not only will engaging others help resolve the issue at hand, but it will also help make the University of Denver community shine and foster a greater sense of belonging for everyone involved.

Example: “@UofDenver I was supposed to hear about financial aid like a week ago! I’m worried I won’t be able to attend DU now...”

Response: “Hi @user! Thanks for reaching out! @DuFinAid will respond just as soon as they can. In the meantime, have you tried logging in to PioneerWeb to check your account status? (Link)”

Sound Like the Human You Are

One of the most difficult parts of social media for an organization is that the organization is not running the social accounts – real people are! As employees, we are all different. We believe that is a major strength in our communications – especially on social media. Therefore, we encourage you to:

- Show empathy and understanding
- Offer an apology if one is warranted
- Admit mistakes or problems
- Be friendly, sincere, and be you

[Glossary of Social Media Terms](#)



Korbel Specific Social Guidelines

- All new staff that will be in charge of managing social accounts should schedule a training session. Please contact Courtland.matthews@du.edu to set one up.
- BEFORE creating a new social account, the account must be approved during an intake-meeting with the Korbel Communications team.
- Provide all username and password info for social accounts to the Korbel Communications team. Be sure to also provide the name and email of the individual managing the account. We will then pass along this information to central MarComm.
- Update social passwords on an annual basis. Password hacking is unfortunately common on the internet. Use a password with letters numbers and symbols.
- Dormant social accounts (those with 2 months of no activity) are at risk of deactivation. Accounts with 2 months of no activity will receive a warning. If the account continues to remain dormant, Korbel Communications will proceed to deactivate.
- Any students managing Korbel social accounts must read and sign the Korbel social waiver form.
- IMPORTANT: Even when you are personally engaging on social media, a Korbel affiliation on your profile has the ability to affect the university as a whole. If you identify your affiliation with Korbel in your profile or comments, other users will naturally associate you with the university. You should always think before you post, be civil to others and their opinions and not post personal information about others unless you have their permission.
- When page editors and administrators, especially students, have left Korbel and no longer require access to social media accounts, you must update/adjust your page roles immediately. Please contact Courtland.matthews@du.edu anytime an admin is removed or added.

**Please note that this an evolving document.*

Additional Resources and Guidance

[DU Code of Conduct](#)

[DU Information Security](#)

[DU Privacy Practices](#)

[DU Conflict of Interest](#)