SONORAN UNIVERSITY
OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Social Media Policy

1. **POLICY STATEMENT/PURPOSE**
    a. Social media are robust communications and marketing tools that may significantly impact organizational and professional reputations. However, because there is no clear distinction between personal voice and institutional voice, Sonoran University of Health Sciences has developed the following guidelines to help clarify how best to enhance and protect personal and professional reputations and promote a harassment-free environment while participating on social media platforms.
    b. To allow for the laws, professional expectations, and guidelines for interacting with both internal and external parties, it is important to apply them online as you would in person. Due to the added scrutiny of publicity and time, the potential for uninformed or contextless interpretations can create dangerous precedent that is contrary to our core values. While Sonoran University respects an individual's rights to interact knowledgeably and socially, interactions with social media can create significant negative impact to even unintended parties. Thus, the entire Sonoran University community is responsible for maintaining the institutions' integrity no matter where, when, or how they interact with social media.
    c. While acting in a professional capacity, staff and faculty already follow the laws, expectations, and guidelines for interacting with students, alumni, and the public. This same behavior would be required to be held to an even stricter standard, as the additional scrutiny of publicity, time, and uninformed or contextless interpretations are a reality of making statements in digital spaces. This stricter adherence to existing policy and guidelines applies to all existing and future social network channels.
    d. Sonoran University respects an individual's right to interact knowledgeably and socially; however, interaction with social media can significantly impact the individual, staff, faculty, students, and the public. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the entire Sonoran University community is responsible for maintaining the institutions' integrity no matter where, when, or how they interact with social media.
    e. Sonoran University staff, faculty, and students are responsible for the content they publish on their accounts on third-party websites and application services.

2. **HISTORY/BACKGROUND**
    a. Sonoran University encourages its students, faculty, and staff that when they are posting to social media sites and web pages, whether personal or belonging to a third-party, to not post anything that could be seen as insulting, obscene, derogatory, discriminatory, unprofessional, a form of harassment, offensive to any minority group or individual's nation of origin, targeted to a specific gender, religion or sexual orientation or engage in virtual conduct that would not be acceptable on the physical campus.

3. **DEFINITION(S)**
    a. **Social Media:** Social Media is defined as media designed to be disseminated through social interactions, created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Examples include, but are not limited to LinkedIn, Twitter,

Facebook, Instagram, Threads, YouTube, TikTok, podcasts, message boards, blog/vlogging (University as well as personal) and online encyclopedias like Wikipedia. Because of the emerging nature of social media platforms, this definition will only attempt to cover some of the relevant platforms.

b. **Terms of Use:** Policies and agreements regarding material owned and licensed for commercial business purposes. These can be found in any copyright or intellectual property agreements.
c. **Terms of Service:** Policies and agreements regarding the use and services offered by third parties to utilize their platforms and services.
d. **Sonoran Community:** Defined as all university employees, students, candidates, Trustees and Advisory Council members, invited guests, patients, clients, and members of the public present on the Sonoran University campus for legitimate and lawful purposes.
e. **HIPAA:** The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. Legal statute concerning individual citizen's personal health information.
f. **FERPA:** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 is a United States federal law that governs the access to educational information and records by public entities such as potential employers, publicly funded educational institutions, and foreign governments.
g. **Title IX:** Title IX is the most commonly used name for the federal civil rights law in the United States that was enacted as part of the Education Amendments of 1972. It prohibits sex-based discrimination in any school or any other education program that receives funding from the federal government.
h. **Obscenity:** Speech or materials may be considered obscene (and therefore unprotected) if the speech meets the following (extremely high) threshold: It (1) is blatantly offensive by community standards and/or (2) lacks literary, scientific, or artistic value.

4. SCOPE/KEY STAKEHOLDERS

a. Faculty, Staff, and Students of Sonoran University of Health Sciences

5. POLICY ITEMS

a. Sonoran University will actively protect it's brand identity, trademarks, and intellectual property. The University may pursue all available recourses to block, remove, or delete social media communications that create a false endorsement by the University or inappropriate or unauthorized use of the University's intellectual property.
b. The following items are prohibited from being posted on social media channels:
    i. Confidential and/or proprietary information about Sonoran University, its staff, faculty, or students
        1. This includes all confidential and propriety information, that would be in violation of:
            a. FERPA (Federal Education Records Protection Act)
            b. HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)
            c. Regulations regarding Title IX
            d. Sonoran University Policy on Conflict of Interest
c. The iconography, images, and other assets of Sonoran University without the expressed permission by the Marketing Department. The following are items

concerning conflict of interest, public impropriety and misconduct and the prohibition thereof:

i. The use of Sonoran University's name logo, iconography, or copyrighted material for personal gain, endorsements of any product, business, cause, demonstration, political party, candidate, or commercial purpose
ii. Harassment, including speech and other conduct, targeted at an individual, that effectively denies educational access, research, medical care, opportunities, or rights
iii. Defamation
iv. Statements that are made with the intent to debase, lower, degrade, discredit, or devalue any individual
v. Expression that unduly obstructs or interfere with the freedom of others
vi. Violation of institutional Values, Student Code of Conduct, or Employee Standards of Conduct & Discipline

d. Sanctions for Violations of the Social Media Policy may include disciplinary action leading up to dismissal/ expulsion or termination of employment.
   i. A full description of the Student Code of Conduct can be found in the Sonoran University of Health Sciences' Student Handbook
   ii. A full description of the Employee Standards of Conduct & Discipline can be found in the Sonoran University of Health Sciences' Employee Handbook – Section 4.1 & 4.2
e. Photography posted on social media sites can easily be appropriated by visitors. To protect the intellectual property and constituents of the institution, consider the following
   i. Altering the photo by added a watermark
   ii. Posting images at least at 72 dpi and approximately 1080px x 1440px
      1. Images of this size are suitable for viewing online, but are not suitable for print
   iii. Obtain written release from any constituent featured in a photo published on social media

6. RESONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Marketing Department

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

a. Employee Handbook
b. Faculty Handbook
c. Student Handbook
d. Freedom of Expression Policy
e. Conflict of Interest Policy

8. NEXT REVIEW DATE

Yearly from date of approval

9. POLICY AUTHOR/CONTACT

Director of Marketing

10. REFERENCES

Social Media Policy, Original Policy

11. VERSION CONTROL AND CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Date Approved	Date Effective	Amendment Information
1	President's Council	01/24/18	01/24/18	
2	President's Council	09/23/20	09/23/20	Minor Edits
3	President's Council	7/26/23	7/26/23	Policy has been re-written
4	N/A		6/2/26	Minor Edits