

Connect with UWS on Social Media

Social media is a great way to find out about events and happenings at University of Western States. At UWS, we recognize the importance of social media as a means of connecting, engaging and communicating with people all over the world. We are committed to being innovative and forward-thinking in our social media approach.

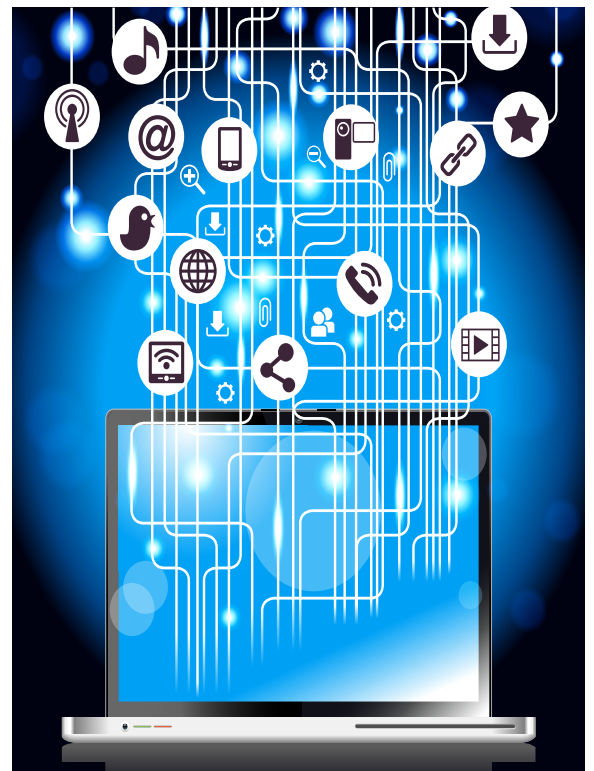
Online platforms have a significant impact on organizational and professional reputations because they blur the lines between personal and institutional voices. UWS has created the following guidelines to clarify how best to enhance and protect reputations when participating online as a representative of UWS.

These guidelines are provided to help ensure that online media communications done in the name of UWS reflects respect for the fundamental principles and core values of the organization, as set forth in university policies. Before you begin publishing, please familiarize yourself with these policies and the UWS social media guidelines to ensure consistency online.

These UWS policies and laws include:

- *UWS Policy 9001 – Student Conduct*
(found in Udocs)
- *UWS Policy 2503 – Social Media*
(found in Udocs)
- UWS Employee Conduct
(outlined in the UWS Employee Handbook)
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), a federal law

If you are a student or staff member interested in starting a social media account affiliated with the university, **please contact the communications department** before doing so. All accounts must be created in conjunction with this department.



Best Practices for Personal and Social Websites

If you choose to identify yourself as a part of UWS or discuss matters related to the university on a personal website, social site or blog, many readers will assume you are speaking on behalf of UWS. In order to protect the reputation of UWS, your communication must be transparent, ethical and accurate and in accordance with *UWS Policy 2503 - Social Media* because you are liable for anything posted to social media sites. Failure to comply with this policy while posting as a UWS representative will be considered a violation of university conduct. **All official UWS social media accounts must be created in conjunction with the communications department, located in the science building.**

Think Twice Before Posting: Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. If the content of your message would not be acceptable for face-to-face conversation, over the telephone or in another medium, it will not be acceptable for a social networking site. Ask yourself, would I want to see this published in the newspaper or posted on a billboard tomorrow or 10 years from now? If you are unsure about posting something, **contact the communications department and we will provide counsel.**

Be Considerate and Respectful: We ask that you do not use the web to disrespect or embarrass UWS or our partners, including both nonprofit and corporate partners, donors, students or employees. Content on social media often encourages comments or discussions of opposing ideas, and you should be prepared to respond carefully.

Follow Copyright Laws: Give credit for non-original material. In other words, give credit for content that is not yours.

Use Disclaimers and Be Transparent on Your Personal Pages: If you are posting on your personal page and have identified yourself as a part of the UWS community, make it clear in your profile these are your views and not those of UWS. If you discuss UWS on social media, disclose your role with the university, whether that be student, faculty or staff.

Protect Your Identity: While you should be honest about yourself, don't provide personal information that scam artists or identity thieves could use. Do not list your home address or telephone number.

Maintain Confidentiality: UWS students, staff and faculty are expected to conduct themselves professionally in their communications about the university, which includes compliance with FERPA and HIPAA laws. Do not reveal confidential UWS information. If you publish online content about UWS, by all means talk about your good work and make meaningful connections with your readers; but you must accomplish this while respecting the privacy and confidentiality of partners, patients and communities.

Respect Work Commitments: Remember that social networking activities are personal and should be done on your own time unless you are promoting UWS or have been assigned to perform an online activity related to UWS.

Respect Your Audience: Refrain from using ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenities, or engaging in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the UWS community.

Be Accurate: Do your research; avoid posting inaccurate content. However, if you do make a mistake, own up to it and be upfront and quick with your correction.

Departed Administrators: When page editors and administrators, whether they are students or staff, have left the university they should no longer have access to UWS social media accounts. It is imperative to update page roles upon departure.

Photography: We must have signed photo release forms from any people identifiable in photos in order to use their image or quotes. In the instance where this is not possible, it is best to refrain from using the image and substitute for a picture that does not show individual faces. Additionally, do not download copyrighted photos from the internet to use on any communications. Let the **communications department** know about your needs to find a suitable, relevant photo.

Note on Privacy:

You can adjust privacy settings on social media and decide exactly how much of your information should be available to the public or to people you connect with online on various platforms. It is important that you do the research to understand and set privacy settings to ensure your online presence is showcasing only the best things about you as a representative of UWS.

Engage with Social Media Platforms at UWS

UWS has an audience of students, faculty, staff, parents and alumni and friends that keep in touch via social media. Tell **communications@uws.edu** about your personal or business blog and social media accounts so we can help expand your reach by sharing posts and collaborating. UWS does not police online sites, but we do seek to aggregate the most powerful stories and highlight UWS voices. The internet is all about connecting with stories, so share links to content posted on UWS social media sites and help power a movement by inspiring others to do the same.

Facebook: When you join Facebook, search University of Western States and “like” the page to receive updates and recent news.

- **Participate in the Conversation:** Join the conversation on the UWS page. Post thoughts and ideas directly on the UWS Facebook wall by tagging UWS or visiting the wall and posting directly to it.
- **Share Your Content:** If you have stories you want to share that pertain to Western States, tag UWS or post content directly to our Facebook wall. For content you want us to post directly **email communications@uws.edu**. UWS reserves the right to not use content if it is deemed inappropriate or irrelevant.

Twitter: Once you join Twitter, follow @UWS_news and find people you know or follow causes you care about by using the search feature on the platform. Twitter moves very quickly, so it is important to check in often, and you always have the option of making your content private. Start tweeting about UWS. Follow and retweet our content. All messages on Twitter, known as “tweets,” are limited to 140 characters, including punctuation and spaces. Photos do not count toward the character limit.

- **Twitter Basics:** Once you have a Twitter account, you can search for @UWS_news or go directly to the URL: twitter.com/UWS_news. Click the button to “Follow” @UWS_news on Twitter.

Instagram: Instagram is the home for visual storytelling and is a community of more than 500 million users. The platform merged with Facebook in 2012, and each time you post a picture, you are able to share it to other social media platforms as well. Join Instagram and follow @uniwesternstates for more content and images. Please be sure to tag @uniwesternstates in your own photos so the university is able to engage with you.

Hashtags: Hashtags all begin with the “#” symbol and act as conversation labels on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. On these platforms, hashtags become clickable and direct the user to a stream of images or posts containing the designated hashtag. There is no official way to create a hashtag – anyone has the power to make them at any time. There are no spaces or special characters in a hashtag and any text between the “#” symbol and the first subsequent space becomes a searchable hashtag. Here is a list of hashtags to keep up with UWS:

- UWS network-related content: #UWS, #universityofwesternstates, #integratedhealthcare
- Northwest Center-related: #NWCLFM
- DC program: #doctorofchiropractic, #chiropractor, #chiropracticcare, #happyspine, #spinehealth, #doctor
- Throwback Thursday: #TBT
- ESS/SPP programs: #workinsports, #sportsbiz, #sportsscience
- Alumni news: #UWSalum
- Wellness tips: #wellnessminute, #wellnesswednesday, #wellness, #nutrition, #health, #healthymindset, #fitlifestyle, #functionalmedicine, #fitcampus, #mindfulnessmonday
- Continuing education: #academics, #highered, #education
- New student information: #welcometouws, #discover