⛰ ALUMNI

Social Media Guide

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Preface

Why Use Social Media?

Social media are websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. **Social networking** is a term used to describe the use of dedicated websites and applications to interact with other users, or to find people with similar interests to one's self. The most common examples of social networking websites are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest & LinkedIn. These websites can prove to be powerful tools in connecting and engaging with your chapter members. They are also especially effective at reaching younger alumni. Having a public presence on social media makes it easier for alumni visiting the area to find and contact your organization. We strongly recommend your chapter utilizes at least one of these social networking websites to promote your chapter, hosted events, and community.

Which Social Networking Site Should I Use?

While we like to see chapters utilize more than one social media networking site we realize can be really overwhelming at first! In this guide, we'll review the pros and cons for the common social media site. After reviewing the common social media sites contained within this guide, you find you're still confused then we recommend **starting with a public Facebook Page** (not a Facebook Group). Don't worry – we'll explain the difference a little bit later in this guide.

Who Can I Ask for Help?

We know you'll have a lot of questions even after reading through this guide. Should you need further assistance or would like something explained in-depth, you can contact:

Meridith Balas, Director of Engagement at meridith.balas@mail.wvu.edu or

Allyson Cannon, Director of Marketing & Communication at acannon2@mail.wvu.edu

Additional resources are available at www.social.wvu.edu

Facebook Page

This is the social networking site we recommend chapters create first when beginning to use social media accounts for the chapter.

Why Should I Use a Facebook Page Instead of a Facebook Group?

Facebook Page: enable public figures, businesses, organizations and other entities to create an authentic and public presence on Facebook.

Facebook Groups: the place for small group communication and for people to share their common interests and express their opinion. Groups allow people to come together around a common cause, issue or activity to organize, express objectives, discuss issues, post photos and share related content.

While a Facebook Group may sound more appealing there are additional benefits to setting up a Facebook Page. We recommend using a Facebook Page for your alumni chapter because:

- It acts as a public profile for your chapter
- It provides a greater level of social media analytics
- It provides additional features such as upcoming event invites and photo sharing

Please avoid from setting up a separate Facebook Page & Facebook Group.
This is not only confusing for your members but causes double the work for you. If you need assistance changing a current Facebook Group to a Facebook Page, please contact Allyson Cannon, Director of Marketing and Communications.

How Do I Set-Up a Facebook Page?

1. Sign in to Facebook and go to facebook.com/pages.
2. In the top right corner, click "Create Page."
3. Click "Company, Organization or Institution."
4. Choose the category from the drop-down menu that best suits your chapter.
   a. The category can be changed later
   b. If unsure, choose "College or University."
5. In the "Company name" box, write the name of your chapter. Refer to the next heading titled, "What Should I Name My Page?" to learn how to name your Facebook Page. You can change your Facebook Page Name up until your Page reaches 100 Likes.
6. Select "I agree to the terms and conditions," then click "Get Started."

7. On the newly created page, click "Edit Info" and click "Your Settings" on the top of the left menu.
8. Click through the list on the left, familiarizing yourself with all the settings. A few of the most important are listed below.
   a. Under "Basic Information," you can change the category and page name.
   b. Under "Manage Admins," you can choose who is in charge of the page. To select someone as an admin, they must be a fan or "like" of the page. Multiple admins can be added, and have varying ability to change the page. If you choose to have multiple admins, try to only allow chapter board members or a small selection to have admin access.

What Should I Name My Page?

The easiest name is your chapter name! Using your chapter name helps members and potential members find your information quickly on the Internet and on Facebook.

Example: WVU Alumni Lone Star Chapter

While it is not recommended, some chapters like to include the word "Mountaineer" in their Facebook Page name.

Example: National Capital Area Mountaineers

Try pick a Facebook Page name similar to the two examples above. If you have questions, please reach out to Allyson Cannon, Director of Marketing & Communications.

What Should My Profile Picture and Cover Photo Be?

Please use the spirit mark for your chapter as the profile picture for your Facebook Page. This helps to clearly identify you to members and non-members. For the cover photo, you can choose your chapter's logo, use a photo from a chapter event, or use an image of campus.

What Should I Post?

The best items or "content" to post is from your own chapter! Facebook Pages are a great place to share event details, photos and general updates about your chapter.

General Updates

Content that keeps your members up to date on chapter happenings, university news, and information from the WVU Alumni Association are all great things to share on a regular basis. Often these types of posts will include links or websites for members.

Facebook Events

Facebook Events can act as digital invitations for your event. You can list the date, location, time, and a short description of the events planned. You can also include Squarespace, Eventbrite or other links for ticket sales. Facebook also provides the ability to virtually invite your members to the event and will send those interested or going to the event a reminder the day before. Create a Facebook also makes it faster to update members about changes to event details. To set up your first Facebook event, follow this step by step guide from Facebook.

Photos

Facebook makes it easy to share your thoughts on a photo, share an entire album of photos from an event with members, and everything in between! Photos tend to be the most popular posted items on social media, especially on Facebook. Try to include photos of people or places that your members can relate to. Graphics are also acceptable but should be limited to informational purposes.
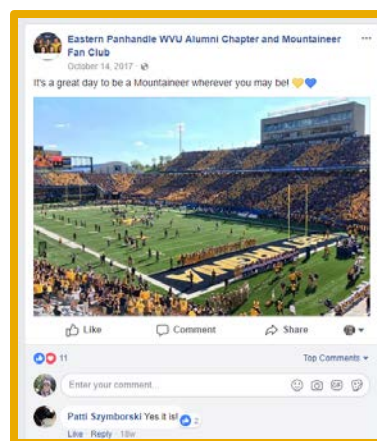
Sharing Content

You can also share content from a variety of sources. A list of content resources can be found on page 16 under Finding Content to Share on Social Media. To share on your chapter page, go to the post you'd like to share, click the share button, and then select "share to a Page" from the drop-down menu.

How Often Should I Post?

We recommend sharing something on your Facebook Page at least **once a week**. Ideally, you should post once a day to improve the likelihood that members will see your content in their **newsfeed**.

Other Tips

- Encourage your members to like your page and select "see first" under the "Following" tab on your Facebook Page. Learn what it means to "see first" from Facebook.

- Try to post a variety to content throughout the week instead of one type of content all the time.

Other Resources

Facebook Tips from WVU Social
https://social.wvu.edu/guidelines-and-tips/facebook-tips

The Anatomy of an Effective Alumni Facebook Strategy
https://www.brazen.com/blog/universities/the-anatomy-of-an-effective-alumni-facebook-strategy/

Best Practices for Engaging Your Alumni on Facebook
https://www.advanceprospects.com/best-practices-engaging-alumni-facebook/

Twitter

Twitter accounts are a faster way to communicate with your members than Facebook; however, Twitter is unique in that there are character limits for posts and replies.

Why Should I Create a Twitter Account for My Chapter?

WVU Alumni Chapter Twitter accounts can be a useful way to get an update to members quickly, keep track of conversations using **hashtags**, and share your chapter's thoughts live during an event (e.g. a WVU Football game). Also, Twitter users also tend to be younger than Facebook users which may positively impact your recruitment efforts of younger alumni.

How Do I Set-Up a Twitter Account?

1. Go to twitter.com. Under "Join Twitter Today" enter a chapter owned email address and a password.
   a. The password can be changed at any time later.
2. Under "Full name," write the full name of your chapter.
   a. Your Twitter name should include a reference to West Virginia University. Learn more about how to create your Twitter name and Twitter handle, read the section titled, "What Should I Name My Twitter Account & Twitter Handle?" below.
   b. The name can be changed at any time in the future.
3. Click the blue "Sign Up" button.
4. Please skip the next step, "Enter Your Phone" number unless your chapter has a shared phone line.
5. Under "Choose a username," enter a Twitter handle for your chapter account
   a. The username can be changed at any time in the future.
6. Disregard the "Interest" step and proceed to by using the blue "Next" button located in the upper right hand corner of your screen.
7. Disregard the "Want to find friends…" step and click "No thanks" button located in the upper right hand corner of your screen.
8. Check or uncheck the accounts your chapter wishes to follow from the "Make your timeline yours" step.
9. Choose whether or not you'd like to receive Twitter notifications in your browser. If you would not like to, then select "Not now".
10. You are now looking at your homepage. The box under the words "What's happening?" is the post box where you write a tweet. Each tweet can be a

maximum of 240 characters including spaces. At the very top of the screen is a search box where you can find other accounts. Usernames do not count towards the character limit in most instances.

11. Twitter will prompt you to confirm your account. Go to your e-mail inbox and click the link in the e-mail to confirm.

12. In the top right of the screen, look for a black and white image of a person. Click on it to view your profile, analytics, and settings and privacy. Select "Settings and privacy." This is the settings dashboard. Familiarize yourself with all settings. The most important ones are listed below.
    a. On the Account tab, you can change your username, contact e-mail address, and more.

13. Be sure to visit @WVUAlumniAssoc and click "Follow" on our profile.

What Should I Name My Twitter Account & Twitter Handle?

First, what is the difference between a Twitter name and Twitter handle?

Your **Twitter name** is the official name of your chapter. Your **Twitter handle** is what appears after the "@" sign and appears in your profile URL. Your handle is unique to your account, and no two are the same. Your Twitter name and handle can appear the same if your twitter name is less than 20 characters long; if not, you may need to use an abbreviated version of your Twitter name for your Twitter handle. Also, Twitter handles can only contain letters, numbers, and underscores; cannot contain periods.

The easiest Twitter name is your chapter name! Using your chapter name helps members and potential members find your information quickly.

Example: Name – WVU Frederick Alumni   Handle – @WVUFrederick

Example: Name – WVU Austin Alumni   Handle – @WVUAustinAlumni

While it is not recommended, some chapters like to include the word "Mountaineer" in their Twitter Name or Twitter Handle name.

Example: Name – DFW Mountaineers   Handle – @DFWMountaineers

Example: Name – Lone Star Mountaineers   Handle – @WVULoneStar

Try pick a Twitter name and Twitter handle name similar to the examples above. **You can include WVU in your handle**. If you have questions, please reach out to Allyson Cannon, Director of Marketing & Communications.

What Should My Profile Picture and Cover Photo Be?

Please use the spirit mark for your chapter as the profile picture for your Twitter account. This helps to clearly identify you to members and non-members. For the cover photo, you can choose your chapter's logo, use a photo from a chapter event, or use an image of campus.
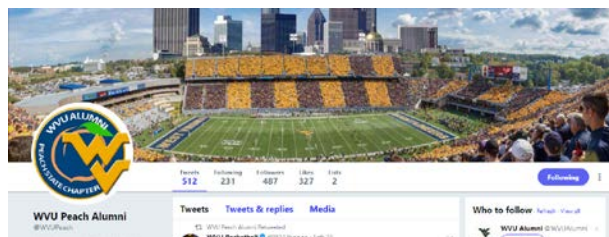
What Should I Post?

Tweets are short concise thoughts about a variety of topics. The best practice is to include a picture with every tweet and at least one **hashtag** in order to catch your members' eyes. You can also include links to websites or other twitter accounts (using the "@" symbol then typing in the Twitter handle name) in your tweets.

Retweets

Retweets are reposted or forwarded messages from another user to Twitter. Retweets can be a helpful tool when you don't have a lot of original content about your chapter to share. You can find accounts to follow and retweet on https://social.wvu.edu/social-directory.

Replies

Replying to other tweets is a great way to join an online conversation about your chapter, WVU or the Alumni Association.

For example, DFW Mountaineers replied to @WVUSwimDive's tweet letting the team know DFW Mountaineers would be there to support the team during their meet. Not only was this a fun response, but it quickly

informs members that there is a local sporting event taking place nearby. The DFW Mountaineers also effectively used **hashtags** and **emojis** in this tweet.

Live Tweeting

Live tweeting means to post comments about (an event) on Twitter while the event is taking place. The goal of live tweeting is to provide members who are not in attendance a taste of the event and tactfully explain what they're missing out on by being absent. Live tweets can be sent individually or as replies to an initial tweet about the event taking place.

This live tweet from the Lone Star Chapter effectively communicates to members not in attendance what's happening in the photo. Members not in attendance will hopefully feel like they're missing out on the "action" taking place and decide to participate in the next event.

How Often Should I Post?

We recommend send a tweet **at least once a day**. Since Twitter limits you to 280 characters, it is acceptable to break a single tweet into several shorter tweets.

Other Tips

- Change your Twitter theme color to an official WVU color. To change your theme color click "Edit Profile" > "Theme Color" > Type in a Web number. Official WVU Colors & web numbers can be found at https://brand.wvu.edu/

- Include your chapter's location. To change your location, click "Edit Profile".

- Include your chapter's website. If your chapter does not have a website, provide a link to your Facebook Page or a link to the WVU Alumni Association website (www.alumni.wvu.edu) To change the website click "Edit Profile".

Other Resources

Twitter Tips from WVU Social
https://social.wvu.edu/guidelines-and-tips/twitter-tips

5 Ways Universities are Engaging Alumni on Twitter
https://www.upandup.agency/social-media/5-ways-universities-engage-alumni-twitter

Top 5 Ways Universities Can Use Twitter to Connect with Alumni
http://www.adweek.com/digital/top-5-ways-universities-can-use-twitter-to-connect-with-alumni/
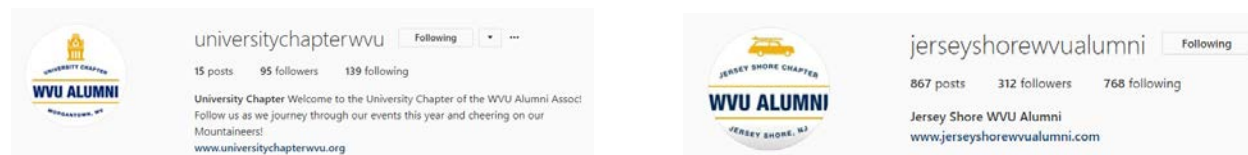
Instagram

Why Should I Use Instagram?

Instagram is the best social networking app currently available to share photos with your members. Instagram also provides in app photo editing which helps even a mediocre photo look amazing! This social networking site allows you to tag a specific location, tag people featured in photos, and comment on other people's posts.

What Should I Name My Account?

First, what is the difference between an Instagram Name and an Instagram handle?

Your **Instagram Name** is the official name of your chapter. Your **Instagram handle** is what appears after the "@" sign and appears in your profile URL. Your handle is unique to your account, and no two are the same. Your Instagram name and handle can appear the same if your Instagram name is less than 30 characters long; if not, you may need to use an abbreviated version of your Instagram name for your Instagram handle. Also, Instagram handles may only contain letters, numbers, periods, and underscores.

The easiest Instagram name is your chapter name! Using your chapter name helps members and potential members find your information quickly.

While it is not recommended, some chapters like to include the word "Mountaineer" in their Instagram name or Instagram handle name.
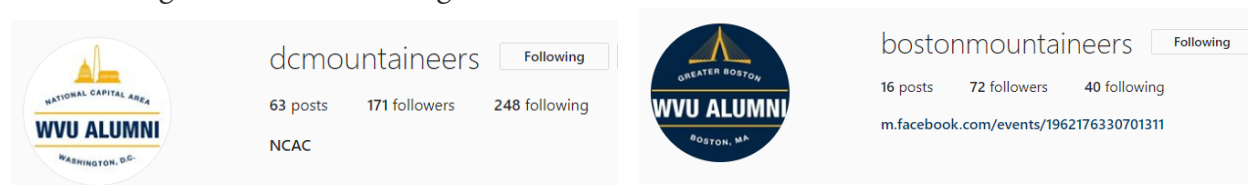
Try pick an Instagram name and Instagram handle name similar to the examples above. **You can include WVU in your handle**. If you have questions, please reach out to Allyson Cannon, Director of Marketing & Communications.

What Should My Profile Picture Be?

Please use the spirit mark for your chapter as the profile picture for your Instagram account. This helps to clearly identify you to members and non-members.

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What Should I Post?

Photos of course! You can also share videos up to 60 seconds in length on Instagram. Below are some ideas on what to showcase about your chapter:

Events

Your chapter events are great places to photograph what goes on and share it on Instagram with members who are unable to attend and nonmembers. We suggest trying to snap several photos at every event including: a group photo with your chapter flag, photo of the interior of the venue, any raffle items you have, exterior of the venue, and photos of special guests you had in attendance.

#MemberMonday

Think of each #MemberMonday post as a short, fun introduction for a member. You'll want to include the member's name, graduation year, current employment (or retirement), and one to three fun questions so the member's personality shines through. Example questions are: "What is your favorite memory from campus, why do you choose to participate in the chapter, or what is your favorite Mountaineer tradition?" You can find examples by searching for #MemberMonday on Instagram.

Graphics

Graphics can be an efficient way to communicate important information about your event. Try to follow WVU Brand Guidelines when creating your graphic. Find more information about graphic design under the Alumni Chapter Leader Resources page on www.alumni.wvu.edu.

Repost

To **repost** means to post (a piece of writing, image, or other form of content) online for a second or further time. This method can be a helpful tool when you're short on pictures from an event. The most popular way to **repost** photos from Instagram is to use the free Repost mobile app (available on iOS and Android).

How Often Should I Post?

To start, we recommend posting once a week. Try to working up to two or three times a week. Instagram users prefer you only post once a day.

Other Tips

- The most popular photos are the ones that include people's faces.

- Clear, un-blurred photos stand out more than extremely edited ones. We recommend taking photos where there is lots of light and with a cell phone or digital camera. If indoors, try to use flash to brighten the photo.

- Try to tag your game watch location in posts so nonmembers can refer back to your post to determine where the next game watch will be held.

Other Resources

Instagram Tips from WVU Social
https://social.wvu.edu/guidelines-and-tips/instagram-tips

The Best Time to Post on Instagram in 2018 –
https://later.com/blog/best-time-to-post-on-instagram/

The Ultimate Guide to Writing Good Instagram Captions –
https://later.com/blog/the-ultimate-guide-to-writing-good-instagram-captions/

How to Edit Instagram Photos: A Step-by-Step Guide to Using Instagram Filters & More - https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/edit-instagram-photos

Here's the Right Way to Repost Instagram Photos
https://www.popsugar.com/tech/How-Repost-Instagram-29828579

Social Media Management

Now that you've got your social media accounts set up, you might be feeling a bit overwhelmed on how to manage all the accounts at once and continually post content. This is where **social media management software** comes in! Why use a social media management software? Most software packages allow you to schedule posts in advance (saving you time) and provide some additional analytics. Below are some free tools you can use to manage your chapter's social media accounts.

Note: All software packages are different. Make sure to read carefully what is included to find the best fit for your chapter. Also, the information on this guide may be out of date – refer to the company website for accurate pricing and features.

Hootsuite

Hootsuite is by far the most recognized social media management tools for small businesses and organizations. The free plan allows you to manage 3 social media profiles in one place with one password. Hootsuite also provides free online courses and tutorials on how to use the platform.

To learn more, visit: https://hootsuite.com/plans/free

MavSocial

MavSocial is another option for chapters. The free plan allows you to manage 2 social media profiles and publish up to 10 posts daily.

To learn more, visit: https://mavsocial.com/sign-up/

Buffer

Buffer is another great option for chapters. Buffer's free plan allows you to connect up to three social media accounts and schedule 10 posts per account. Buffer also offers a mobile app for iOS and Android mobile phones.

To learn more, visit: https://buffer.com/#individuals

Almost all social media management software now comes available in paid plans as well. These paid plans typically include additional features and more analytics. Your chapter will need to decide if the investment is the right decision or not.

At the Alumni Association, we use Sprout Social. Unfortunately, there are no free plans available from Sprout Social.

Finding Content to Share on Social Media

It may seem overwhelming at first to brainstorm what content (links, photos, or messages) you'd like to share with your members; however, there are plenty of resources available from West Virginia University that provide the content for you!

WVU Social Media

WVU Social (www.social.wvu.edu) is the official website for all things social media and West Virginia University. You'll be able to find all the official WVU social media channels, guidelines and tips and a social directory of important organizations, offices, and entities across campus. Be sure to follow most if not all the accounts listed in the social directory – these accounts will also be sharing amazing WVU related content.

WVU Today

WVU Today (https://wvutoday.wvu.edu/) is a central hub for all stories, articles and press releases about West Virginia University. All the stories have social media icons you can use to share the story or you can just copy the link. Also, WVU Today has a section of the website just for alumni stories!

Mountaineer E-News

Get great WVU content sent straight to your email! Sign up for Mountaineer E-News.

Alumni News

You will soon be able to find amazing stories, images and links to share on your chapter social media accounts directly from the WVU Alumni Association website! Alumni Spotlights and All 'Eers videos are always available on the alumni website.

WVU Alumni Chapters

Other WVU Alumni Chapters, especially chapters that are established, can be helpful in learning what content alumni enjoy and where to find it.

Chapter Members

Don't forget about your chapter members! Members will often share photos of their visits to Morgantown and the WVU campus during sporting events or business trips. With the member's permission, you can often share their experiences with other alumni on your chapter accounts.

Social Media Best Practices

- **If you're including pictures, make sure you have the rights to them.** Be sure you're not infringing on copyright laws before using images you find on the web.

- **Mention other profiles & use hashtags.** Include other accounts in your posts by using the @ symbol, followed by their Twitter or Instagram handle. **Do this for attribution purposes**. Use **hashtags** by putting a # in front of a word or phrase so that it is instantly searchable, as well as making your tweet appear in other searches. This will help you become part of a larger conversation.

- **Be kind and responsive**. Thank people for reaching out to you. Respond to **direct messages** to your account in a timely fashion. Within 24 hours is acceptable.

- **Shorter is better**. Keep your posts concise and to the point will help members identify the important information and take action on it.

- **Make sure links work before sharing them on social media**.

- **You can shorten links for free at** Bitley.com, [Ow.ly](Ow.ly), or Tinyurl.com

- **Comply with NCAA regulations when posting about athletics.** If you have questions, please contact a representative from the WVU Athletics Communications team.

- **Don't discuss politics.** Please do not send or post messages about a specific candidate or ballot initiative, share or retweet messages from or on behalf of a candidate, publicize a campaign fundraising activity, or use any club resource in a way that could be interpreted as supporting a particular position in an upcoming election.

Glossary

Direct Messages: a private Twitter message sent to or from one of your followers. Direct messages can only be sent to a Twitter user who is already following you, and you can only receive direct messages from users you follow.

Emoji: a small digital image or icon used to express an idea, emotion, etc. in electronic communication. To learn more about each icon, visit Emojipedia.

Hashtag: is a word or phrase preceded by the "#" sign. #Hashtags are a simple way to mark the topic (or topics) of social media messages and make them discoverable to people with shared interests.

Live Tweeting: posting comments (Tweets) about (an event) on Twitter while the event is taking place.

Mention: The act of tagging another user's handle or account name in a social media message. Mentions typically trigger a notification for that user and are a key part of what makes social media "social". When properly formatted (for example, as an @mention on Twitter or +mention on Google+), a mention also allows your audience to click through to the mentioned users' bio or profile.

Facebook Newsfeed: is a list of updates including status updates, photos, videos, links, app activity, Pages and groups that you follow on your social media home page.

Repost: post (a piece of writing, image, or other form of content) online for a second or further time.

Retweet: a reposted or forwarded message on Twitter.

Social Media Management Software: is an application program or software suite module that facilitates an organization's ability to successfully engage in social media across different communication channels.

Social networking: is a term used to describe the use of dedicated websites and applications to interact with and find people with similar interests to one's self.

Tweets: the posting made on the social media website Twitter.

Additional definitions are available following the links below.

"[The Social Media Glossary: 226 Essential Definitions](#)" by Dara Fontein of Hootsuite. "[20 Common Instagram Terms & The Instagram Language](#)" by April Marie Tucker of MyLeadSystemPRO.