

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### I. **Purpose.**

Social Media (including personal and professional websites, blogs, chat rooms, and bulletin boards; social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and others; video-sharing sites such as YouTube; and email) are common means of communication and self-expression. At times, online postings may conflict with the interests of Mercer County Community College and its students, faculty and administration and therefore, the College has adopted the following policy. Breach of this policy may result in counseling and disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### II. **General**

#### A. **Confidentiality and Privacy**

Do not disclose the College's confidential or proprietary information or personal identifying information to anyone outside the College, in online postings or publications. Sharing this type of information, even unintentionally, could result in harm to the College and the individual as well as legal action against you and the College disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

#### B. **Your Identity Online**

You are personally liable for all communications and information you publish online. The College may be liable for online activity that uses College assets, a College email address or any email address that can be traced back to the College's domain, which is generally any internet address affiliated with the College. Using your name, position, and the College email address may imply that you are acting on behalf of the College. Social media and networking activities are public, and therefore, the College email address and the College assets should be used only to perform job-related activities.

Your personal participation in social media and networks outside the workplace should never be attributed to the College or appear to be endorsed by, or have originated from, the College. Exercise sound judgement. Comments or posting brought to the College's attention that may reasonably offend others in the workplace or college community may be in violation of this policy or other College policies. If such posts are found to violate College policy, you will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

If you choose to disclose your affiliation with the College in an online communication, you must treat all communications associated with the disclosure a professional communications governed by this and other College policies.

#### C. **Limitations on Online Publications**

Never identify any college-community personnel, student, faculty, staff or Board of Trustee member, in an online posting without his or her prior written

permission. Do not post any information or engage in any online activity that violates applicable local, state or federal laws, or professional rules of conduct.

Comply with all the copyright laws, including citations and links. When publishing direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos or videos, give credit to the original publisher or author.

All requests for references, for current or former college employees, must be directed to the Office of Human Resources. Comments you post about current and former employees have legal consequences, regarding of your belief in the statement's veracity. Only the College's Office of Human Resources is authorized to speak to employee matters outside of the College.

#### D. **Creating and Managing Content**

The appropriate PLT member, **MUST** approve any website, blog, chat room, video-sharing site, bulletin board, or other social media outlet that promotes the College. **No employee may incorporate the College logo or other intellectual property in a website, blog, chat room, video-sharing site, bulletin board or other social media without the expressed written permission from the President.**

If you have been authorized to maintain a website, blog, chat room, video-sharing site, bulletin board or any other social media that promotes the College, you are accountable for reviewing responses to online posts and resolving any concerns about the propriety of the responses before they are posted.

#### **Non-Negotiable Constraints (and Implications)**

1. Federal (FERPA) and state college student records laws prohibit communication of information related to a student's educational record of any kind absent the student's consent in a manner that exposes such information to a third party.

*Communication from a faculty or staff member to a student on an external system exposes that communication to a third party (the system owner). If the communication does not include legally protected information, no problem arises; if it includes legally protected information, the use of an unprotected external system for communication purposes violates FERPA and state law, and subjects the person initiating the communication to potentially severe sanctions including termination of employment or student expulsion.*

2. Federal HIPAA law prohibits communication of information related to an individual's health record in the same way FERPA protects academic information.

*The same precautions apply with regard to health information as to education records.*

Board of Trustees

May 23, 2019