



CHARLESTON
SOUTHERN
UNIVERSITY



SOCIAL MEDIA HANDBOOK

CHARLESTON SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY





As stewards of the CSU brand, we tell the stories of our students, faculty, alumni, and partners in ways that are not only engaging, but also mission-aligned. These guidelines will help you share quality content, stay consistent, and honor CSU policies and community standards.

Charleston Southern University (CSU) students, faculty, and staff are expected to perform their duties and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Charleston Southern's biblical values and in a manner which reflects favorably on the university. All social media posts contribute to the university's brand and should communicate a professional image.

Account Setup

Getting an Account: The First Steps

Sub-accounts must be approved before creation. Keep hashtags to a minimum, as they are decreasing in popularity. Focus on our main CSU-branded hashtags and use additional ones only as needed. Hashtag overload can make your post look cluttered and less professional.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The primary administrator must complete the [Social Media Application](#) before creating any social media accounts related to the university.

From there, a meeting will be scheduled with the Office of Marketing and Communication to review these guidelines, answer any questions, and walk through the setup process. To prepare, please bring:

- Post ideas
- At least one month of planned content

WHY GET APPROVAL?

- To ensure that CSU is properly represented through the affiliation of the page
- To be listed on the Social Media Directory and to assist people with finding your page
- To define the purpose of the account
- To ensure that any logos adhere to the CSU Branding & Style Guide
- To allow CSU's social media team to easily find and share pertinent information
- To avoid conflicts with other pages



Please note: Social media accounts are approved on a case-by-case basis.



Passwords: Do Not Share or Change

Up to **two** approved student moderators may be signed into the account to post content, with the staff/faculty admin responsible for overseeing all activity.



Any changes to account admin must be reported immediately to the Office of Marketing and Communication, and a password reset will be required.

PASSWORD SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

Passwords and account settings may not be changed without approval from the Office of Marketing and Communication.

- Two-factor authentication, if enabled, must be connected to the sponsor's university email.
- Passwords may not be shared with the general public, other departments, or unapproved students.
- Marketing and Communication can be given administrative access (Facebook) or updated login/password information (Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, etc.) once registration is approved, as needed.
- Should the owner of the sub-account desire a Facebook page to fall under CSU's Meta Business Suite, administrative access must be given to the Marketing and Communication office.

ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The faculty/staff administrator who completed the application will be **held responsible for all actions** related to their accounts. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Photographs
- Graphics
- Text
- Hashtags
- Comments



Account Ownership

All CSU-affiliated social media accounts are created and approved through the Office of Marketing and Communication and remain the property of the university. Student moderators help manage and grow the account, but they do not own it.

CONTINUITY AND OVERSIGHT

Accounts must remain connected to the faculty/staff admin and Marketing and Communication for oversight and continuity, especially when student leadership transitions occur.

- The Office of Marketing and Communication reserves the right to monitor messages for security purposes.
- When an account is made, its information is stored in a private internal log and added to our social monitoring system in case of an emergency.
- If a primary and/or secondary administrator privileges change after approval at any point, contact information **must** be updated with Marketing and Communication.

PROFILE STANDARDS

- Usage of CSU's logo and name must follow the [CSU Branding & Style Guide](#).
- Once the accounts have been approved, Marketing and Communication will provide the department with their official CSU social media profile picture (this does not apply to student organizations, just administrative and academic departments).
- Do not use the university logo as a profile picture or cover photo on your personal account.

Compliance and Review

ACTIVE MAINTENANCE

It is the responsibility of the administrator of a social media account to actively monitor the social media account; content must be current, accurate, and a **positive** reflection of the university's image.

- Pages will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure proper use.
- **Pages with posts older than 30 days will fall into probationary mode.**
- **Pages with the last post greater than 90 days will qualify for removal.**

PROBATION AND CLOSURE

Pages that do not adhere to the Social Media Policies will go under probation for 30 days.

At the start of the probationary period, you will receive suggestions for maintaining your page.

At the end of the 30-day period, your page will be reviewed for:

- Approval
- Continued probation
- Closure

Individual administrators who fail to comply with these policies more than two times will require training or loss of administrative access.



Questions? As always, you can contact the Office of Marketing and Communication for guidance and support. Probation is the last thing we want for an account, and we are here to help.

Content Best Practices

Captions and Hashtags

WRITING GREAT CAPTIONS

Captions should be clear, engaging, and purposeful. Use them to explain what's happening in the photo or video, tell a brief story, or invite interaction through a question or call to action.

- Keep captions conversational and authentic.
- Break longer captions into short paragraphs for readability.
- Let your department's personality shine, but remember that you are representing your organization and Charleston Southern University.
- Include a clear call to action when appropriate (comment, share, register, attend, head to link in bio).
- Proofread for spelling, grammar, and tone.



Please note: Hyperlinks do not work in Instagram captions. Utilize the link in bio option or stories.

HASHTAG STRATEGY

Keep hashtags to a minimum as they are decreasing in popularity. Focus on our main CSU-branded hashtags and use additional ones only as needed. Hashtag overload can make your post look cluttered and less professional.

Always include CSU-branded hashtags:

- #CharlestonSouthern
- #CSUBucs
- #BucNation

Include topic-specific hashtags based on your content (academic programs, events, student life, athletics, etc).



Remember: Use Pascal Case for hashtags (#LikeThis) so screen readers can interpret them correctly. This is something we are starting to implement across the board.

Check your hashtag! Ensure it is not only relevant but also read it to be sure it cannot be misconstrued for another phrase or meaning.

Posting Schedules

Plan ahead to share two to three posts per week to keep your account consistent and active.

WHY PLANNING MATTERS

We know it can be tough to balance social media with school, work, and home life, which is why planning is so important.

- Create a content calendar to plan posts at least one week in advance if you are able.
- Schedule content around key dates (events, deadlines, holidays).
- Use Instagram's internal scheduling tools to prepare content in advance and avoid last-minute stress.
- Leave room for spontaneous, timely content.



Important: For optimal engagement, administrators should post at least twice a week. Posting rarely and inconsistently could lead to probation and removal of your account.

CONTENT MIX

Aim for a mix of content such as:

- Event, class, or meeting promotions
- Student spotlights
- Behind-the-scenes moments
- Fun or educational posts
- Announcements and news
- Community partnerships



Instagram Stories and Highlights

Stories are a great way to share quick updates, event reminders, and behind-the-scenes moments.

USING INSTAGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Use Instagram Highlights to save important stories so new followers can catch up later.

- Keep Highlights organized by theme (Events, Takeovers, Tips, etc.) so your content is easy to browse.
- Remove or archive outdated content to keep your account clean and professional.
- Use clear, concise names for each Highlight category.



Pro tip: Highlights are one of the first things new followers explore. Make sure they tell your story clearly and completely.

Tagging the Main Account



Remember: If you tag Charleston Southern's main accounts, we can reshare your content! If you don't tag us, we don't see it.

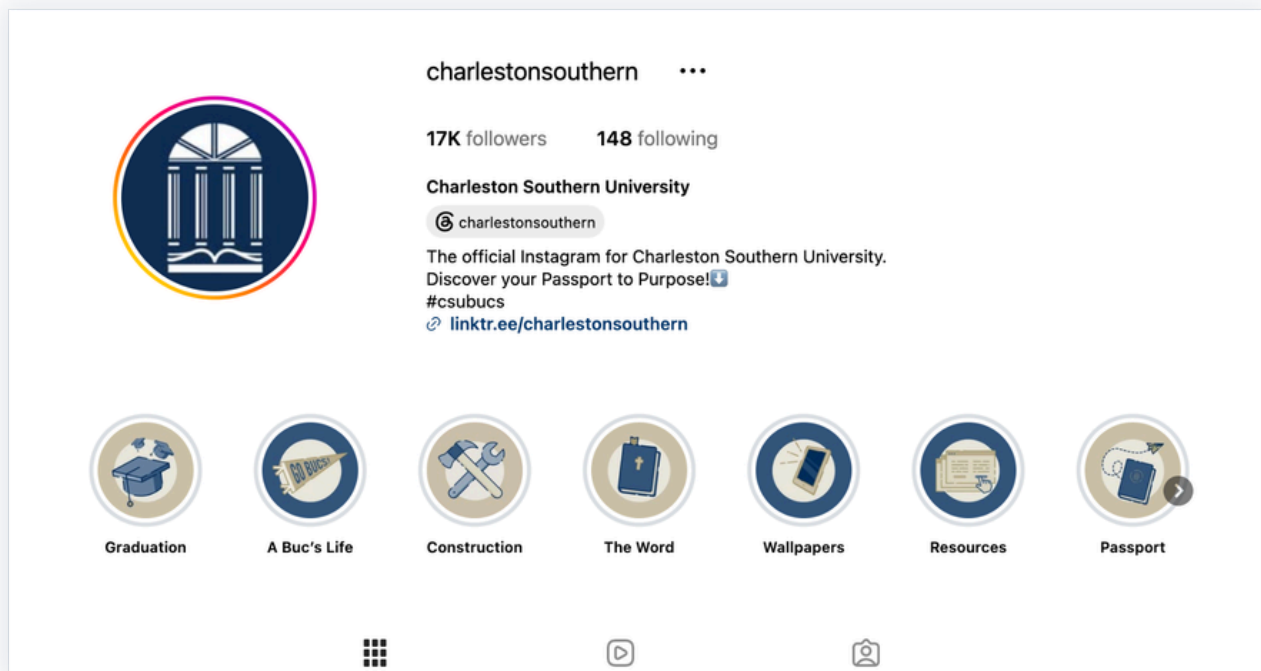
Always tag the main Charleston Southern University account to increase visibility and enable content sharing.

WHY TAG THE MAIN ACCOUNT

- Helps the Office of Marketing and Communication find and share your content
- Increases your post's reach by connecting to the larger university audience
- Creates a network of connected CSU content across platforms
- Makes it easier for prospective students and families to discover your program

ADDITIONAL TAGGING BEST PRACTICES

- Tag partner organizations or departments when collaborating
- Tag the main sub-accounts (Alumni, Athletics, Admissions, Student Life) if applicable
- Try to avoid tagging students to comply with FERPA guidelines



Posting Best Practices

Mission Alignment

Keep the Office of Marketing and Communication informed of larger-scale events like guest speakers, conferences, or service projects so we can better support you and share information.

Administrators should ask themselves if posts convey a message that is **consistent with the university's mission, vision, and biblical core values**.

- All social media posts contribute to the university's brand and should communicate a appropriate image
- Again, content must be current, accurate, and a **positive** reflection of the university's image
- Accounts should reflect the activities, accomplishments, and community spirit of your program or department

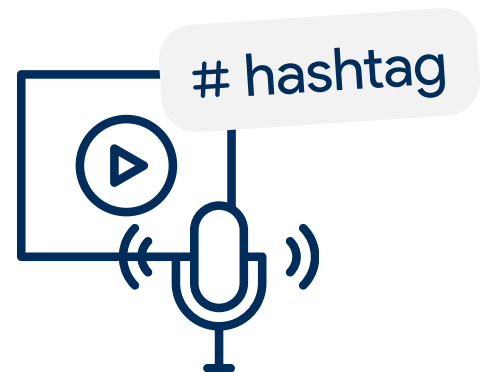


Remember: You represent Charleston Southern University, not just your subset of CSU.

Accessibility

Design posts with accessibility in mind. Use inclusive Christian-minded language and provide captions for videos so content is usable by all audiences.

- Use Pascal Case for hashtags (#LikeThis) so screen readers can interpret them correctly
- Ensure audio is clear and not distorted in videos
- Editing should enhance rather than distract



PLATFORM-SPECIFIC ACCESSIBILITY



Flyers and QR codes should not be posted on Instagram as static posts or stories, as they are not screen-reader friendly. Instead, use digital-friendly graphics, short videos, or photos that convey the same information.

Visuals

HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT IS ESSENTIAL

High-quality visuals are key to building credibility and engagement. Photos and videos should be clear, well-lit, and thoughtfully composed.

- Sound should be clear in videos.
- Editing should enhance rather than distract.
- **Avoid blurry, overly dark, or heavily filtered images.**
- **The Office of Marketing and Communication supports content creation for main accounts only.** Sub-accounts are responsible for creating their own graphics, stories, videos, etc. For larger scale events, we can provide assistance on a case-by-case basis with proper advance notice through the MarComm request system.

COPYRIGHT AND PERMISSIONS

 **Only use content you have the right to post.** Do not pull images, graphics, or videos from search engines or other accounts without permission.

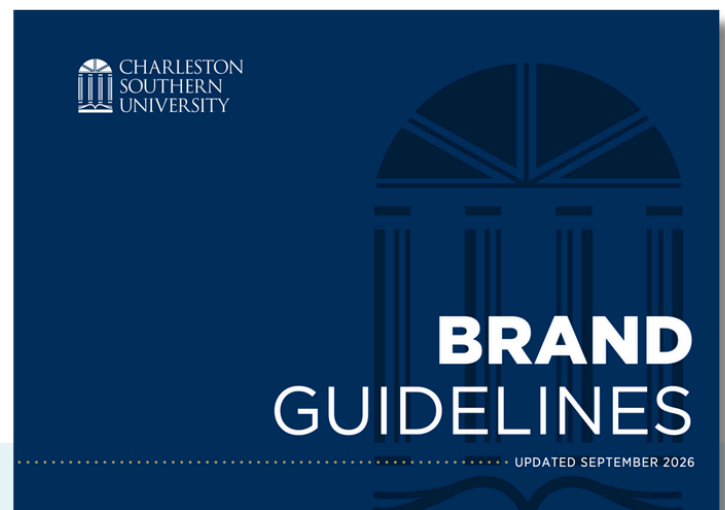
- Canva is a great free tool for copyright-free images and graphics.
- Be mindful of intellectual property rights.

Note on Media Releases: While all CSU employees and students have signed a media release form upon orientation/acceptance, always exercise good judgment when posting images.

- Be extra cautious when posting photos of minors, especially those taken off campus through partnerships, mission trips, etc.

BRAND STANDARDS

- Usage of CSU's logo and name must follow the **CSU Branding & Style Guide**.
- The Office of Marketing and Communication will provide official CSU social media profile pictures once accounts are approved.
- **Do not** create custom variations of university logos or marks.
- More information can be found in the Branding section.



Strategy and Planning

BUILD COMMUNITY

Determine your intended audience and identify your community.

- Which communities would you like to engage and communicate with?
- Collaborate with influencers and thought leaders within your department.

SET CLEAR GOALS

Define your goals and objectives so you can measure results and refine your content strategy.

- Why do you want to use this account?
- Do you want to increase access to students, faculty, staff, and coaches?
- Spark digital engagement with a specific community?
- Solicit user-generated content?

Determine your goals, write them down, and seek feedback from your team.



CONDUCT RESEARCH

Research similar accounts within your niche for ideas and best practices.

- Create a competitive landscape of your peers.
- Conduct a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats).
- What do you see working? What could you adopt (not copy) for your own content?



Engagement Best Practices

Following: Community Connections

Be intentional about the accounts you follow.

WHO TO FOLLOW

Prioritize Charleston Southern's official accounts:

- @charlestonsouthern (Instagram and TikTok)
- Charleston Southern University (Facebook and LinkedIn)
- @csuniv (Twitter/X)
- Other official CSU departmental sub-accounts

Connect with local community partners:

- Area schools and organizations
- Charleston-area businesses and nonprofits
- Local government and community groups
- Churches and ministry partners
- Lowcountry organizations aligned with your mission



FOLLOWING BEST PRACTICES

- Use good judgment when deciding which accounts to follow - avoid following students and political organizations.
- Avoid accounts that could reflect poorly on your organization or Charleston Southern University as a whole.
- Regularly review your following list to ensure it remains appropriate.
- Consider how your following list represents your program and CSU.



Remember: The accounts you follow are visible to your audience and contribute to your program's professional image.

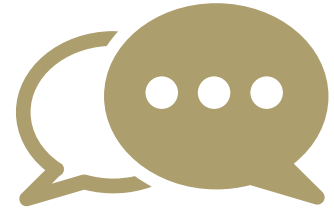
Engagement and Community Guidelines

Social media is about building (and maintaining) relationships. Every new account is a new channel of communication.

RESPOND PROMPTLY AND PROFESSIONALLY

Respond to comments, mentions, and direct messages promptly and in a respectful, professional tone.

- Always follow the rules and community guidelines of the platform you are using (Instagram, Facebook, etc.)
- Acknowledge positive comments with gratitude
- Answer questions



PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Do not argue with followers or respond in a way that could reflect poorly on your organization or the university.

- Keep responses courteous even when faced with criticism
- Maintain a professional tone in all interactions
- Remember that your responses are public and permanent
- Stay aligned with Charleston Southern's biblical values in all communications



If a comment, message, or interaction requires removal or further action, escalate the situation to the Office of Marketing and Communication.

WHEN TO ESCALATE

Contact the Office of Marketing and Communication immediately if you encounter:

- Inappropriate, offensive, or threatening comments
- Spam or suspicious activity
- Questions about sensitive university matters
- Media inquiries (print, television, radio, online)
- Potential policy violations

For guidelines on responding to specific situations, refer to the [Social Media Response Chart](#).

Analytics and Reporting

REVIEW YOUR INSIGHTS

Review your account insights to see what types of posts perform best and to measure engagement.

Key metrics to track in order to make future informed content decisions:

- **Reach:** How many people saw your content
- **Engagement:** Likes, comments, shares, saves
- **Follower growth:** New followers over time
- **Story views:** Engagement with Stories content
- **Best performing posts:** Which content resonates most



WHAT THE DATA TELLS YOU

- Which posting times work best for your audience
- What content types generate the most engagement (photos, videos, carousels)
- Which topics your audience cares about most
- How your account is growing over time



Don't forget to add your social media successes to your resume or portfolio!

Managing a thriving account demonstrates valuable marketing/communication and community management skills.

Two-Way Communication

Remember that social media is a two-way street! Engage in conversation with your audience.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

- Like and comment on posts from followers and partner accounts
- Share user-generated content **(with permission)**
- Ask questions to spark conversation
- Run polls and surveys to gather feedback
- Celebrate your community's accomplishments
- Respond to Stories mentions and tags

FOSTER COMMUNITY

- Highlight student voices and experiences
- Showcase faculty and staff contributions
- Share behind-the-scenes glimpses of your program
- Build anticipation for upcoming events

Safety Best Practices

Crises and Escalation: Don't Hesitate



If your account receives threatening messages, inappropriate content, or comments that could damage your organization or Charleston Southern University's reputation, do not respond.

Alert your faculty/staff admin and the Office of Marketing and Communication right away so the situation can be managed appropriately and in a timely manner.

WHEN ESCALATING, PLEASE PROVIDE:

- Screenshots of the problematic content
- Any relevant background information/context



Safety and Security

PROTECTING YOUR ACCOUNT

Never click suspicious links or engage with fraudulent messages. Including but not limited to:

- Paying for followers
- Account alerts or reviews
- Spam group chats
- Phishing attempts
- Suspicious login notifications
- Offers that seem too good to be true



Meta (Instagram/Facebook) will ALWAYS directly notify account users through its internal system, NEVER through a message. Clicking on suspicious links can cause the account to get hacked.

SECURITY BEST PRACTICES

- **Enable two-factor authentication** connected to your sponsor's university email or a designated Communications staff member
- Use strong, unique passwords
- Never share account passwords except with approved administrators and the Communications Office
- Log out of accounts on shared devices
- Regularly review who has access to your account
- Be wary of unsolicited messages asking for account information

IMMEDIATE REPORTING

Report anything questionable to your faculty/staff admin immediately.

- Suspicious login attempts
- Unexpected password reset emails
- Account compromise or hacking
- Phishing attempts
- Spam or bot activity
- Unusual account behavior



Protecting Student Privacy

FERPA COMPLIANCE

Adhere to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) at all times.

- **Do not share personal student information** such as grades, schedules, or contact details (including meeting times and locations)
- When identifying an individual, consider using the CSU student, staff, coach, or faculty **first or last name only**
- Do not disclose confidential or private information of the university or third parties

Treat every post as permanent, even if it is later deleted.



Legal and Ethical Use

LOGO AND BRAND STANDARDS



CSU logos may not be redrawn, reconfigured, or altered in any way.

All logo use must be approved by the Office of Marketing and Communication to respect the integrity of CSU's branding at all times.

- Do not create custom variations of university logos or marks
- Do not use the university logo on personal accounts
- Do not use the university logo or name to promote or endorse any product, cause, political party, or candidate

PLATFORM LIMITATIONS

- Be mindful of copyrighted music in videos and Stories
- Use royalty-free music or platform-provided audio libraries when possible

Policy Compliance

UNIVERSITY POLICY ADHERENCE

Communication on social media accounts for university purposes must comply with applicable university policies:

- Student Handbook
- Student-Athlete Handbook
- Employee Handbook
- Faculty Handbook
- Any additional program/department handbooks



Offensive or inappropriate material posted by CSU staff/faculty/students to social media sites, which discredits CSU, will not be tolerated and will lead to disciplinary action.

WHAT CONSTITUTES INAPPROPRIATE MATERIAL

Offensive and/or inappropriate material includes, but is not limited to:

- Photographs, audio, or video that violates university policies
- Abusive, profane, or threatening language
- Content that violates the Code of Conduct in the Student, Faculty, or Employee Handbooks
- Discriminatory or harassing content
- Content that discredit the university

CONSEQUENCES OF POLICY VIOLATIONS

Material that violates the Code of Conduct constitutes a disciplinary offense and will lead to:

- Account probation
- Training requirements
- Loss of administrative access
- Account closure
- Disciplinary action as outlined in applicable handbooks

Media Interaction Protocol

Social media may generate interest from the press (print, television, radio, online).



If you are questioned in any way by a member of the media about a university-related posting, and you are not authorized by a senior officer to respond, you are **required to immediately contact the Office of Marketing and Communication** before responding.

- Do not provide comments to media without authorization
- Do not speak on behalf of the university unless authorized
- Forward media requests promptly to allow for timely response

Employee Personal Pages

Employees are encouraged to share university news and events that are a matter of public record with their family and friends.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

- Link straight to the information source as the most effective way to pass along news and avoid copyright infringement issues
- **Do not use the university logo** as a profile picture or cover photo on your personal account
- Do not use the university logo or name to promote or endorse any product, cause, political party, or candidate
- Make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the university

DISCLAIMER LANGUAGE

A disclaimer listed in the "About" section of personal profiles may be appropriate:

- Facebook: *"Thoughts and opinions on this page are my own and do not represent those of my employer"*
- Twitter/X: *"Opinions are my own"*

Remember: Permanence, Personal Responsibility, and Public Forum

Before using social media on behalf of Charleston Southern University, consider these three things:

PERMANENCE

- Everything you post is permanent, even if deleted
- Screenshots and archives exist forever
- Your digital footprint represents CSU indefinitely

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

- The administrator who completed the application is held responsible for all actions related to the account
- This includes photographs, graphics, text, hashtags, and comments
- Your decisions reflect on your program and the university

PUBLIC FORUM

- Social media is a public space visible to current and prospective students, families, donors, media, and the broader community
- Everything you post contributes to Charleston Southern University's brand and reputation
- Conduct yourself in a manner consistent with CSU's biblical values



Housekeeping Best Practices

Transition and Offboarding



When admins graduate or step down, their access must be removed, and the password must be reset.

END-OF-YEAR ADMINISTRATOR REVIEWS

At the end of each academic year, all programs and organizations should:

- Review current moderators and confirm who will continue in the next academic year
- Confirm account access with the Office of Marketing and Communication
- Remove access for graduating or departing students immediately. It is vital that permissions are shared to a successor before the previous admin is removed
- Reset passwords when administrator changes occur

SPONSOR TRANSITIONS

If a sponsor steps down, the Office of Marketing and Communication must be alerted immediately and the account placed on pause until a new sponsor is identified.

- Accounts cannot operate without an approved faculty or staff sponsor
- The new sponsor must complete required training and documentation
- Account access and two-factor authentication must be updated
- Password reset is required with admin changes

SUMMER AND BREAK PERIODS

- Maintain the minimum posting frequency (at least twice a week)
- Continue monitoring comments and messages
- Keep content current and aligned with university values
- Notify Communications if the account will be inactive during break periods



Remember: If a primary and/or secondary administrator privileges change after approval at any point, contact information must be updated with the Office of Marketing and Communication.

Training and Support

ONBOARDING FOR NEW ADMINISTRATORS

New moderators and sponsors are encouraged to meet with the Office of Marketing and Communication for a quick walkthrough of:

- Account tools and platform features
- Accessibility tips and best practices
- Posting strategies and content planning
- Brand guidelines and logo usage
- Engagement protocols and response strategies
- Analytics and reporting tools

This ensures everyone is confident in managing the account and understands Charleston Southern's expectations.

ONGOING SUPPORT IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE

If you have questions, run into challenges, or just want advice on making your posts stronger, the Office of Marketing and Communication is here to help!



Remember: When in doubt, reach out! It's always better to ask before posting than to deal with issues after the fact.





QUESTIONS

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