SUNY Potsdam
College Communications

Social Media Style Guide
Style Guide Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline style guidelines for The State University of New York at Potsdam’s central social media accounts. This document is updated frequently.

Active Accounts

- Facebook.com/SUNYPotsdam
- Twitter.com/sunypotsdam1816
- Instagram.com/sunypotsdam
- LinkedIn.com/company/suny-potsdam
- Youtube.com/TheSUNYPotsdam

Social Media Voice

Who we are: Friendly. Inclusive. Proud. We are a creative campus built on our liberal arts and sciences core. We are lovers of the outdoors and of our community.

Ownership of Posts

All messages on all central media platforms are posted in the character voice described above. We DO NOT attach names or initials to posts.

Positivity and Transparency

We present our messages with a positive attitude, but are honest and transparent about the information we share.
General Style Guidelines

Account Management

- The usernames, passwords, and other relevant login information for SUNY Potsdam social media platforms and management software must be recorded and shared with the Office of College Communications.
  - This will prevent confusion and potential loss of access when the role of account administrator is changed or passed on to a different person or group of people.

Tagging Other Social Media Accounts

- We do our best to reference another account (when it is appropriate or available) in any message we share.

- When possible, reference the account mid-message as opposed to at the end:
  - Do: Peace Corps is coming to campus tomorrow, Thurs 12/8! Follow @PotsdamCareer for updates! #sunypotsdam #potsdamproud
  - Don’t: Peace Corps is coming to campus tomorrow, Thurs 12/8! Follow Potsdam Career for updates! #sunypotsdam #potsdamproud @PotsdamCareer

Using Media

- Any music, video, or other multi-media content intended for use by SUNY Potsdam should be owned by the College and/or have the proper permissions for use.
- Information on licensing and public domain:

Hyperlinks

- To eliminate awkward or lengthy URLs, be sure to utilize bitly.com:
  - Copy and paste the long URL into the site.
  - Click “Shorten.”
  - Copy and paste the new, short bitly link.

- Delete the URL in the caption if a preview image with a hyperlink is being used.
  - Conversely, use the bitly link in the caption if the displayed image is a photo with no hyperlink embedded.
Dates and Times

- For times, use am and pm (lowercase, no periods).
  - 3 pm, 10 am

- Use “to” between times (2 pm to 4 pm) unless space is needed. Then use a dash (2-4 pm).

- Write out full words for days of the week (Monday, Tuesday) unless space is needed.

- Use AP Style for dates whenever possible on all platforms. Abbreviate month names that are six letters or longer, and spell out months that are five letters or fewer: Jan., Feb., March, April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. The dates should just be a number, with no “st” or “th” added. *Ex.: March 5, Sept. 29*

- On Twitter, you can use the abbreviated format for dates to save space, if necessary. *Ex.: 3/5, 9/29*

Words We Do Not Use

- Dorms (instead, use “residence halls”)

- Any expletives or derogatory terms.

- Slang (unless it is in within a quote)

Notes on Punctuation

- Use a colon and a space before a link.

  - Support student scholarships. Every dollar makes a difference. Give now: [https://secure.potsdam.edu/giving](https://secure.potsdam.edu/giving) #potsdamcares #givingtuesday

- An exclamation point or question mark (followed by a single space) can also introduce a link:

  - Get your poetry on with SUNY Potsdam alum Ethan Shantie '10 this Saturday, Dec. 3 at 7:30 pm in Hurley’s Nightclub! [http://bit.ly/2g6XWDe](http://bit.ly/2g6XWDe) #sunypotsdam #potsdamproud
• Use a single exclamation point to signal excitement.
  o In VERY RARE circumstances (major celebrity appearances, top awards, international recognition, etc.) multiple exclamation points may be used. But think judiciously about whether the situation warrants more than one.

• Use an ellipsis (three periods, no spaces) to show where something has been omitted (as in a quote that has been shortened) OR (in rare circumstances) to signal suspense.

  "I had no idea ... what impact he would have on my life." —Ethan Shantie ’10, on mentor Maurice Kenny, in @MP_Courier: http://bit.ly/2gPEHSo

• Em dashes can be used to set off various parts of a sentence.
  o How To: To make an em dash (—) on a Mac, hold down SHIFT+OPTION+hyphen. NEVER use a hyphen (-) instead of an em dash. No spaces before or after the em dash.
    ▪ "I had no idea what impact he would have on my life." —Ethan Shantie ’10, on mentor Maurice Kenny, in @MP_Courier: http://bit.ly/2gPEHSo

### Capitalization

**Faculty titles**

• Follow AP style for titles. Capitalize titles when they come before a person’s name, and lowercase them when they come afterward. Ex.: *Associate Professor Blair Madore* OR *Blair Madore, associate professor of mathematics*

• For social media, be careful not to refer to someone as a Professor unless they are a full professor (as listed in the directory). You can say “faculty member” as a generic title if needed.

• Only use Dr. on first reference to refer to someone with a doctorate if you must... and make sure that they definitely have a doctorate first!

**College**

• The official names we use are:
  o The State University of New York at Potsdam (with capital ‘T’ on the no matter where it is used in a sentence), or SUNY Potsdam on second reference, and Potsdam colloquially. We refer to the College with a capital ‘C’ when referring to SUNY Potsdam in particular.
    *Note: Potsdam State and Potsdam College are discouraged.*
  o The Crane School of Music (again, with capital ‘T’) can also be referred to as SUNY Potsdam’s Crane School of Music, and simply Crane on second reference. We refer to the School with a capital ‘S’ when referring to Crane in particular.
○ The School of Arts and Sciences, or the School on second reference.
○ The School of Education and Professional Studies, or the School on second reference.
○ The Art Museum at SUNY Potsdam, or the Museum on second reference. Refer to the Roland Gibson Gallery only as an exhibition space, not the name for the entity curating and caring for all College art collections.
○ The Potsdam College Foundation, Inc., or simply the Potsdam College Foundation.
○ Take the Lead: The Campaign for Potsdam: Or Take the Lead Campaign on second reference, campaign (lowercase) on third reference.

### Network-Specific Guidelines

#### Twitter
- Replace “and” with ampersand (&), NOT plus (+) to save characters when necessary.
- Include any relevant mentions, as long as the account is active.
- Avoid using more than 3 mentions in a single post.
- Try to include at least one hashtag per post. Avoid using 3+ hashtags in a single post.

#### Facebook
- Use line breaks
- Include any relevant mentions, as long as the account is ACTIVE and the names of the mentioned accounts aren’t so long as to be cumbersome.
- Delete the text URL from your post if displaying the link preview.
  - For a post where you don’t want the preview to show, use a shortened bit.ly link in the message itself.
Instagram
- Edit photos and apply filters to craft the most visually appealing images.
- Images should be artsy but not unnatural—effects should never compromise image quality (i.e. avoid effects that create intense sharpening, contrast, strange color casts, or overexposure.)
- Avoid using similar effects or color palettes consecutively. (The appearance of the main Instagram profile should have rows of thumbnails that have a similar aesthetic but are not too uniform.)
- Shoot photos on a DSLR or other high-resolution producing camera whenever possible (as opposed to using an iPhone.)
- When posting videos or using Instagram Live, make sure that quality, lighting, audio, and stability are all visually-appealing.

YouTube
- Give videos descriptive names
- Include relevant hyperlinks after description

Regularly Used Hashtags
- Hashtags used across all accounts:
  - #sunypotsdam, #potsdamproud, #potsdambears, #craneschoolofmusic, #makeitcrane, #pdam1816, #potsdamcares, #sunypotsdamgrad, #sunypotsdamalum, #PdamLife, #PotsdamPotential, #PeopleOfPotsdam

Negative Comments and Spam
- Facebook:
  - If comments are off-topic, contain hateful rhetoric, or are especially nasty, use the Hide function; Block function is RARELY used and should only be used after consulting the Office of College Communications.
- Twitter:
  - Use the Mute function if comments/tagged content is overly egregious
  - Block function is RARELY used and should only be used after consulting the Office of College Communications.
• Instagram:
  o Most likely spam (which can be reported).
  o Block function is RARELY used and should only be used after consulting the Office of College Communications.

• When in doubt: ASK the Office of College Communications BEFORE acting on negative comments and/or spam.

Cadence

Facebook
• 1 to 2 posts daily

Twitter
• 3 to 6 posts daily
  o Includes original posts, retweets, and replies

Instagram
• 1 to 2 posts daily
  o 5 to 10 posts daily during takeovers/special events

YouTube
• Varies

LinkedIn
• 1 to 2 posts weekly
Engagement Style

Types of Voice

- “Your Friendly Neighborhood Service Rep”
  - The most professional, prestigious representation of the College
  - Text is developed, informative, yet succinct

- “The Bee Hive”
  - The most frequently-updated hub of information and news for the College
  - Text is short but to the point

- “The Friend”
  - The most colloquial, down-to-earth representation of the College
  - Text length can vary

Twitter

- “The Bee Hive” + “The Friend”

- Favorite tweets from followers and hashtagged/@mentioned tweets

Facebook

- “Your Friendly Neighborhood Service Rep” and “The Bee Hive”

- Like comments from users

- Use inline comments to reply to users when there is an opportunity to respond

Instagram

- “The Friend”

- Like pictures that are #sunypotsdam related

- Follow back users who comment frequently or tag #sunypotsdam in their photos