

College of Applied Health Sciences

Department/Unit Social Media Guidelines

AHS + Social Media

AHS' comprehensive (and evolving*) social media strategy serves as a communications and marketing function reflecting the excellence of AHS' educational, research, and engagement activities.

As in all communications and marketing, goals and objectives for our official social media accounts (Tier 1 accounts - see "Types of Accounts" below) are essential.

College of AHS' Strategic Social Media Goals

- ✓ Elevate the College of AHS brand
- ✓ Increase student recruitment efforts at every level
- ✓ Advance and amplify the work of our academic departments and service units
- ✓ Expand advancement efforts to increase college endowment

Objectives

- Tell the AHS story
- Build community amongst current students, faculty, staff, and alumni
- Share research news
- Highlight alumni news and accomplishments
- Celebrate outstanding student stories, achievements, and awards
- Promote alumni and donor support
- Facilitate student recruitment
- Connect with stories and news from campus units and the university

* As of this writing (May 2023), algorithms, freedom of speech, access to information, and overall usefulness of certain social media platforms are hotly debated topics. The AHS marketing & communications (marcom) team continues to follow the news and will work closely with the university's social media leadership if the need arises.

AHS Departments + Units Social Media

The College of Applied Health Sciences **department/unit** social media accounts (Tier 2 accounts - see “Types of Accounts” below) exist to support the goals of the department/unit—and, by extension, the college. These platforms are where strategic and meaningful messages can be shared simply and effectively with various audiences, including students, prospective students, alumni, researchers and faculty, the campus community, and others.

Who is responsible for these accounts?

Because the departments and units know their audiences best, their social media content creation and posting should be managed by someone on the inside (depending on the needs of the department, that could be a staff member, an undergraduate or graduate student in, for example), with AHS’ (marketing and communications (marcom team) providing guidance and other support when needed.

The AHS marcom team, in turn, will continually monitor departmental/unit accounts for content and information to be posted to the “Big AHS” accounts, in addition to generating their own content.

Types of Accounts

AHS marcom created a three-tiered classification system based on a model utilized by other UIUC colleges and units. This system serves to:

- a) organize all accounts affiliated with AHS, and
- b) identify how they can support the goals and objectives of the official AHS social media accounts.

Tier 1 Official Accounts: These are official College of AHS social media accounts. They are managed and moderated by the AHS marcom team. They have been registered as “verified” university accounts.

A full list of Tier 1 accounts can be found in the Appendix.

Tier 2 Official Support Accounts: These are AHS department/unit accounts. Their objective is to communicate more directly with their specific audiences, while also adding to the larger conversation about the college and aligning with the college’s social media goals.

While these accounts still officially represent AHS, they are not managed by the AHS marcom team; they are instead moderated by a faculty/staff member OR student intern from the respective department. These accounts should use official university [profile picture templates](#) and follow the social media guidelines put forth by the AHS marcom team and UIUC’s [Office of Public Affairs](#) (recently renamed Office of Strategic Communications and Marketing).

The AHS marcom team does not create content or post on behalf of these accounts. However, the marcom team will support these accounts and their content creators by occasionally providing content, guidance, and strategic support to enhance the goals and objectives of the college’s communications strategy. **A member of the marcom team should be an admin on, or have access to, these accounts.**

A full list of current Tier 2 accounts can be found in the Appendix.

Tier 3 Unofficial Accounts: These accounts do not officially represent AHS, but they serve as casual discussion and information and distribution spaces for specific audiences related to the college and its departments/units. These accounts aren’t branded as AHS and are not moderated by the AHS marcom team. They primarily

consist of student groups or research labs, and they have no requirement to share official AHS news or messaging.

Before creating a Tier 3 account, consider the following: Do you need an account? Who is your audience - can you reach them through this platform? Are you already reaching this audience in another, more effective way? Do you have time to maintain the content on this account? Do your research and consult with the AHS marcom team if you have questions.

Example of a Tier 3 account: [Illini Wheelchair and Scooter Clinic](#)

Best Practices: Account Management & Security

Per the [Social Media Best Practices for Account Access & Security](#) put forth by Public Affairs as a guideline for account management and security, we recommend the following for department/units:

1. Keep a record of every person who has access to each social media account. Remove people who should no longer have access to post to the account. This should be audited at least once a year. Make sure at least two people have access to the accounts at all times in case account management changes or if you become locked out.
2. Keep a secure record of all account passwords. Only people who are actively managing the accounts should have access to the current passwords. Passwords should also be updated as soon as someone who has access leaves the unit or no longer needs access to the account.
3. Ensure passwords are securely shared. No passwords should be shared via email.
4. Use department emails, rather than personal ones, for account purposes. This should be applied to all accounts used for social media content or digital advertising (e.g., Google Ad account, Canva account)
5. **The AHS marcom team should be aware of your social media account users, email addresses, and passwords in case of emergency or a need for other assistance.** Please [let AHS marcom know](#) when you have made changes.

Best Practices: General Social Media Strategy

AHS accounts refer to the [Social Media Best Practices](#) put forth by Public Affairs as a guideline for social media strategy. Below are general guidelines for social media strategy AHS marcom recommends departmental/unit accounts adhere to:

1. Develop an appropriate tone for the account. Each unit has a unique audience and voice.
2. Post several times a week, every week across all platforms. This could mean twice a week some weeks... or many more times per week. Create quality content that not only promotes your department and AHS' mission, values, and goals, but also resonates and connects with your intended audience.
3. Promote social accounts in other communication formats. Examples include emails, posters and digital signs in buildings, publications, and more. The goal is to create awareness and earn followers.
4. Identify your audiences and build your strategy around this audience. Each social media platform requires a unique strategy. Different audiences resonate with different tones, messages and interactions. Consider the tone of each platform and the audience. A tweet about an internship success story might sound and look different than a story about faculty research on Facebook.

Visual Identity

The words, tone, colors, images and fonts of every post create brand identity. Content shared on the AHS accounts should be visually identifiable as being associated with the [Illinois brand](#) and AHS. The priority is to create and post clean, accessible, and consistently branded content.

When creating graphics for social, consider the following:

1. *Does this message or information need to be a graphic?* Most of the time, the information on a graphic can be shared in the body copy of the post. Graphics can be good for visually unifying a recurring series (e.g., Alumni Spotlights, podcast episodes) but they should remain high quality and connected to the Illinois brand.
2. *Is this too much information for a graphic?* Text should be minimal and easy to read. Too much text can become inaccessible or hard to read, especially on mobile. QR codes or URLs designed on the graphic should

be avoided. Instead, link out to relevant content in the copy of a post, through a link in a bio, or embed the URL into the post.

3. *Do I have enough visual contrast?* [See the chart on the SMB website](#) that shows the accessible and non-accessible combinations of the university's primary and secondary color palettes.
4. *Did I design the size with each platform in mind?*
 1. Instagram 1080px by 1080px
 2. Twitter 1600px by 900px
 3. Facebook 940px by 788px
 4. If you want to make one square size for all platforms, it's best to use 1080px by 1080 px
 5. Stories (Facebook and Instagram) 1080px by 1920px
5. *Should I use stock photography or illustration?* Only when you have to. The [Image Database](#) provides consistent, quality images of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign that should be used whenever possible to reflect the excellence of Illinois on social and other communications pieces. When necessary, stock images and videos can be found through [Storyblocks](#).

The [guidelines put forth by the Office of Strategic Marketing and Branding](#) for university-wide design elements like color, graphics, typography, wordmarks, etc are extremely useful - bookmark their page!

Reminder: Use profile pictures consistent with the [social media brand standards](#). Profile pictures should include the Block I. Do not use profile pictures with the column I or a logo other than the Block I.

Platform Strategies

The following platform strategies specifically refer to the main college accounts. Department accounts should adhere to the same general guidelines with the exception of posting frequency.

Twitter

Strategy

With a large and diverse audience on Twitter, this is where you might share the largest variety of content of any of our platforms. Your primary audience on Twitter

includes current students, faculty, and staff, members of the Champaign-Urbana community, other units across campus, and beyond. We recommend sharing content that builds pride, shares news about our research and faculty, mentions the College in external media publications, and connects with units across campus. Prioritize content that uses high-quality images, media elements (e.g., links, videos, call-to-action), and stories published or shared by Illinois units.

Tone & Style

We recommend maintaining a clear, concise, and casual tone when it comes to all content shared on Twitter. Sometimes that content is light-hearted or aligns with social media trends. However, it pays to be strategic and sparing when using emojis, memes, and/or relatable language (or otherwise following social media trends) to avoid presenting as unprofessional or insincere.

Audience

General demographic: Prospective students, current students, alumni, faculty, staff, parents, media, campus unit. The most engaged audiences on these platforms include campus units, current students, faculty and staff.

Day-to-day management

We recommend posting 3-5 original tweets during the week. Retweets should happen as often as needed and should supplement content shared throughout the week. If your department is tagged in posts, engage as appropriate (replying, retweeting, or liking). We highly recommend tagging AHS and other relevant accounts to foster engagement and reach a wider audience.

Instagram

Strategy

Instagram has an extremely high amount of active and engaged students and alumni. Prioritize storytelling through images that are high-quality and purposeful. The body of Instagram **posts** should give deeper context and build pride and excitement. Instagram **stories** should be used to entertain or share informational content with links and resources.

Tone & Style

With a student-driven audience, the tone can be casual and light-hearted. In all instances, text or an initial sentence should be short enough for users to see in-feed without having to tap “see more.” When appropriate, a following paragraph can be longer to tell stories or include relevant information. Emojis and trending language should be used intentionally and strategically.

Audience

General demographic: Current students, prospective students, alumni, parents, faculty, staff, campus units. The most engaged audiences on these platforms include current students, prospective students, and alumni.

Day-to-day management

Try posting 2-3 times a week in your main feed. Stories should be created or shared as needed.

Facebook

Strategy

Departmental Facebook accounts are used primarily for building pride and connection, and for sharing departmental news/information about events, news. While audiences can be diverse, your most engaged users might be alumni and parents. Use Facebook to convey the excellence of your department to your audiences, instill a sense of pride through showcasing your impact, and to share information about events and other opportunities for engagement.

Tone & Style

Facebook's tone is warm, proud, and approachable without being overly casual. We recommend each post have a high-quality image, video, or link to external content. Illinois.edu links are preferred, as they allow the person posting to change the link preview.

Audience

General demographic: Current students, alumni, parents, faculty, staff, community. The most engaged audiences on these platforms include alumni, faculty, staff, and parents of students or prospective students.

Day-to-day management

We recommend posting 2-4 times a week. Share similar content to other social platforms: content that builds pride, shares news about research and faculty, mentions the department and its people in external media publications, or connects with units across campus.

LinkedIn*

Strategy

AHS' LinkedIn was created in July 2022 to connect with specific audiences we otherwise would not reach on our other platforms. It serves as a home for job

postings, research stories and allows us to build a stronger connection to our alumni audience. In similar fashion to our other platforms, we want to highlight the excellence and impact of our college by communicating the impact our students, faculty, staff, and alumni have in the professional industries we are connected to and how we promote health and wellness across the lifespan.

*If your department wishes to create a LinkedIn page (or already has), please link the page to AHS' for maximum visibility.

Tone & Style

Your tone on LinkedIn should be professional and proud. Since LinkedIn is a professional platform, we recommend refraining from using casual or informal language. Posts should always include a high-quality image, video, graphic, or link to external content, such as web or blog stories. Illinois.edu links are preferred.

Audience

Alumni, faculty, staff, and industry professionals.

Day-to-day management

Post as needed, but at least once per week. Focus on sharing content that highlights employment opportunities, research stories, donation or funding stories, alumni, staff or faculty spotlights, and moments or stories of pride for your department and our College.

YouTube, TikTok, and Other Platforms

The College of AHS has a [YouTube channel](#), though as of this writing (May 2023) we are not very active in that space. This is also the case with Snapchat.

AHS does not currently have a TikTok account, though we are exploring this option as of May 2023.

If departments/units are interested in creating their own accounts on these platforms, please [get in touch with AHS marcom](#). If you've already created accounts on these platforms, [please let us know](#).

Comment Policy

AHS accounts refer to the [Social Media Comment Policy](#) put forth by Public Affairs/Office of Strategic Communication as a guideline for comment policies and procedures, and we recommend departments do the same.

Accounts may sometimes receive negative comments or responses. Simply because a comment is negative is not a sufficient reason to delete it. Instead, only delete or hide comments that violate the comment policy.

If you have any questions at all or are dealing with a situation that you need help with, please do not hesitate to [contact AHS marcom](#).

Working with AHS Marcom

AHS marcom prioritizes creating and sharing content that tells stories, connects with our audiences, and contributes to a valuable overall AHS experience. Our shared content looks like, but it not exclusive to:

- Written news and feature stories, videos, and podcasts about students, faculty and staff that highlight their experience in AHS, their research, their opportunities and their successes
- Articles, videos and other media that mention us or our people in external media publications
- Images that give a glimpse into the lives of students, faculty, staff, or alumni, and a look into the campus environment
- Stories, videos, and other media that connect people to the developments of campus and its facilities
- Job postings (LinkedIn only, unless request)

We occasionally receive requests to post content that will not reach its target audience through our social channels. While each request is reviewed individually, these typically include research study participation* and events or fundraisers hosted by anyone other than the college or affiliated units, RSOs, or other groups.

This information will be more effectively shared via other means, including department, college or campus newsletters; the college's monthly internal newsletter, *The Dean's List*, [Eweek](#), or professional/lab social media accounts.

** Current research studies will be shared monthly on AHS social media*

AHS marcom strives to maintain clear and transparent communication between departments/units about social media, from changes to best practices to information about new platforms and successful strategies. [Get in touch with us!](#) We look forward to collaborating with you. .

APPENDIX

College of AHS Accounts (Tier 1)

[Facebook](#) (College of Applied Health Sciences at Illinois)

[Twitter](#) (@AHSIllinois)

[Instagram](#) (@ahsillinois)

[LinkedIn](#) (College of Applied Health Sciences at Illinois)

Department Accounts (Tier 2)

Recreation, Sport and Tourism (RST)

[Facebook](#) (Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism at Illinois)

[Twitter](#) (@RST_Illinois)

[Instagram](#) (@rst_illinois)

Kinesiology and Community Health (KCH)

[Facebook](#) (Department of Kinesiology & Community Health at Illinois)

[Twitter](#) (@KCHIllinois)

Instagram: TBD

Speech and Hearing Science (SHS)

[Facebook](#) (Department of Speech & Hearing Science at Illinois)

[Twitter](#) (@SHSIllinois)

Affiliated Unit Accounts (Tier 2)

Chez Veterans Center (CVC)

[Facebook](#) (Chez Veterans Center)

[Twitter](#) (@CVCatIllinois)

[Instagram](#) (@chezveteranscenter)

Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES)

[Facebook](#) (Disability Resources & Educational Services at Illinois)

[Twitter](#) (@DRESIllinois)

Instagram (@dres_illinois)