



HANOVER COLLEGE SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES & BEST PRACTICES

<https://www.hanover.edu/about/social>

Hanover College's social media presence creates a common thread across the stages of the student lifecycle, and connects with external influences, such as alumni, families, friends, donors, and the public.

We focus on creating an online community that highlights the Panther experience and illustrates the value of belonging and higher education.

The Office of Communications and Marketing (OCM) is charged with supporting and coordinating the College's social media efforts and strategy. Employees who manage social media channels on behalf of the College must adhere to the standards and best practices presented in this document. The goal is to increase the effectiveness of social media tools, protect personal and professional reputations, protect the institutional brand, and enhance the digital communications efforts of Hanover College.

This document covers the following topics as they pertain to Hanover College's social media presence, including: Account Management, Brand Management, Content Creation and Management, and Tips for Operating a Successful Social Media Account.

Account Management

Creating an account for your department or program is a long-term commitment.

Before creating an account, you must consult with the Office of Communications and Marketing (OCM) to discuss the responsibilities of being a campus social media manager.

OCM approves the creation of all official Hanover College social media accounts, and approval must be received before any accounts are established. All social media accounts need to have a clear strategy and maintenance plan, including an assigned account manager and one or two backup managers.

We will ask the account manager:

- Do you have experience managing social media on behalf of a business?
- Who will contribute to and operate the account?
- Will you need assistance creating content / editing copy for your audience? (e.g., photos, graphics, videos, etc.)
- Do you have at least five hours a week to work on and manage your social media account(s)? Tasks include: content creation, scheduling/posting content, responding to comments and messages, etc.

Department accounts can be created on Facebook (including Groups), Instagram, and/or Twitter. At this time, any other social media platforms restricted by the institution.

Once cleared through OCM, accounts will have approval to get started and then will be listed on Hanover's online [social media directory](#). Official pages receive support from OCM when it comes to collaboration, digital marketing, and content creation.

Account Maintenance

Hanover College social media managers are responsible for managing and monitoring the content of their social media account(s), identifying problems that emerge, and taking any appropriate action when necessary.

It is recommended that departmental social media accounts be created and maintained by full-time employees who are familiar with the vision and strategic plan of Hanover College. At least one back-up manager with access to the account is required (should be an OCM representative or the Sports Information Director for Athletics-related accounts), but two are recommended (OCM/SID and another department employee).

All employees and student workers who are responsible for social media accounts are subject to the guidelines set forth in this document and will be contacted by OCM if their accounts violate the document guidelines.

Keep in mind that student workers are good collaborators for a fresh voice and assistance with content creation, but they should not have final approval nor sole responsibility for any department's social media presence.

Campus social media managers are also included in a [SharePoint group](#), led by OCM, that posts timely information related to social media management, as well as a resource for content and questions.

Following Students on Social Media

As a department account, Hanover College recommends against following students on social media. Why? Because we cannot police their social media accounts and they may post something distasteful or offensive that can alter the relationship with them or the College. Best case scenario is to ask the student before following their account. Contact Ashley Cunningham for more guidance on this issue, if necessary.

Regulations

Campus accounts must adhere to all applicable College privacy and confidentiality policies and follow the applicable federal requirements such as FERPA and HIPAA, as well as NCAA regulations. Employees who share confidential information on social media accounts do so at the risk of disciplinary action.

If you are posting about Hanover College, but not speaking on behalf of the College, use a disclaimer in your post or profile such as, "The views expressed here are mine and do not reflect the views of Hanover College."

Do not use Hanover College's name to promote a product, cause, or political party or candidate on social media.

Account Misuse or Inactivity

An employee's access to Hanover College social media accounts may be withdrawn in case of misuse. Violations will be addressed through Human Resources (employees) and/or the Student Life Office (students) and could result in disciplinary action, including education or removal of social media responsibilities.

Dormant social media accounts bearing the Hanover College name will be removed and/or closed. If a social media account bearing the College name or marks is not updated regularly in direct support of department/college objectives, the account should be removed.

Brand Management

The Hanover College Brand Guidelines (found at <https://www.hanover.edu/brandguidelines>) are intended to be a roadmap, providing guidance on how best to represent the College, its people, and its programs consistently and effectively, across all channels, in word and image. These guidelines are intended to make Hanover communications clearer, easier to create, more impactful, and above all, clearly recognizable as Hanover College.

Everyone who creates printed or digital materials for an external audience should follow these guidelines. As a result, we unify our communications, reinforce our brand, and positively influence the way people think about Hanover.

Voice

The social media content Hanover College and its subsequent entities publishes to its network of students, alumni, employees, and community members will be defined by a voice that is:

- Welcoming, inclusive, helpful, authentic
- Familiar, casual, but respectful
- Knowledgeable, educational, but not arrogant
- Proud, excited, but not boastful or demeaning

Naming

When creating an official social media account for a department or organization, it is important to brand it as a Hanover College entity. Please adhere to these branding styles when identifying official college social media accounts:

- **Page Name:** Hanover College [Insert Department, Group, or Team Name]
- **Handle/URL:** @Hanover[Insert Department, Group, or Team Name]
 - **Examples:** @HanoverCollege, @HanoverCOMdept, @Hanover_XCTnF, @HanoverSpanish

If space constraints exist on a social media site, like Twitter or Instagram, use “HC” as the first letters in the page name instead, for **example:** “@HC_Admission” or @StudentLifeHC.” Do your best to keep the same handle on Facebook, Instagram, and/or Twitter.

In the biography of the account, mention the words “Hanover College” and describe the purpose of the account. Include a hashtag, if necessary.

Examples:

- The Hanover College Office of Admission. Ready to answer your Qs! Now accepting apps for fall 2022! 🐾
- The official page for Hanover College Athletic news. Go Panthers! #ProtectTheH
- Est. 1827 | Indiana | Liberal Arts & Experiential Learning | 3 bends in the Ohio River | Transformation found here | #APlaceToBelong #APersonToBecome

Profile Avatars and Banners

Official Hanover College accounts will be supplied with an appropriate avatar / profile picture that is branded for their department.

The athletic logo is to be used for athletic department and team social media accounts only. The Panther head spirit mark is not to be used to represent Hanover College.

Banners on Facebook and Twitter are used to highlight the beauty of Hanover’s campus, the building in which your department is located, or a picture of your team/organization.

Rotate this image with the seasons if you prefer. High-resolution photos of campus and campus buildings are available through OCM, and OCM can assist with the creation of a banner for your account.

Hashtags

Hanover College social media uses hashtags strategically. Our adopted hashtags are used to provide unity and context in our posts. When used appropriately, hashtags can be an effective way to group social media activity, add reference to a story, and make content searchable.

We ask that you do not create your own hashtags related to Hanover College. They are ineffective when created at random. Here are hashtags we recommend:

- **#HanoverCollege** – General usage for identifying Hanover content, or if the tweet or post needs more Hanover identifiable branding.
- **#APlaceToBelong #APersonToBecome** – Our new tagline in two hashtags. Use together when a post leans into this tagline and the mission of the College. Do not separate these tags from each other or reorder them.
- **#Hanover20XX** – The X's depict the class year; used to identify classes when recruiting, welcoming classes to campus or events, posting content about a member of that class, and for commencement.
- **#InAtHanover** and **#HeadedToHanover** – used by Admissions for recruiting.
- **#HanoverAlumni** – Used to promote alumni events and highlight alumni successes; used by Hanover alumni to identify themselves on social media.
- **#ProtectTheH** – used by Athletics to fire up fans and athletes before games.
- **#HCXXXX** – Used by Athletics to identify various teams; the X's represent the abbreviated team name.
- **#WeAreHanoverCollege** – Used by Student Senate and Student Life to identify a strong and unified student body.

Tips for using hashtags effectively:

- **Limit use of event-specific hashtags.** As tempting as it may be to create a new hashtag for every event, using a hashtag that works over a long period of time will result in more activity and sharing.
- **Capitalize your words.** Using title case / camel case in a hashtag makes it accessible for all, including members of our community who may be visually impaired and/or use screen readers.
- **Avoid using too many hashtags in a post.** The use of too many hashtags dilutes your message. Try to limit it to three hashtags per Tweet and five to an Instagram post; or fewer when possible.

Content Creation and Management

Content is the most important aspect of social media, but also the most difficult and time-consuming. No matter what channel is being used, the core of social media is posting, sharing, and engaging with content that provides a benefit to your community. Without quality content, social media initiatives will not reach the targeted audiences or foster engagement. All platforms have a different way of communicating and that must be taken into consideration when posting on social media.

Hanover College posts content related to current students and their activities on campus, alumni news and achievements, faculty and staff achievements, on-campus events, campus news, and messages targeted toward prospective students that highlight the benefits of joining our educational community. We strive for a balance of content that is:

- 1/3 promotion (events, community, partners)
- 1/3 engagement (responding to comments, retweets, and shares)
- 1/3 original brand content (for others to consume and share)

It is recommended that social media accounts link back to the Hanover College website and original social media content as much as possible. If a link isn't available for a social media post, please include a Hanover-related photo or video that relates to the post. Please use photos and videos that capture the beauty of Hanover and the overall Hanover experience. If you need a graphic for your account or a post, please reach out to OCM for assistance.

Paid social media advertisements placed by college departments **must** be approved by OCM **prior** to their creation to ensure consistent content and branding within College guidelines.

All content shared to a social media site must be owned by the College or the administrator(s) sharing the content or protected by fair use. Other content may only be posted with the express permission of the copyright/trademark holder.

Photography Usage

There are four different types of photos you can post to your social media account.

1. Photos you create yourself.
2. Photos taken by the OCM team.
 - a. Give credit to Hanover College photographers.
 - b. If you don't know who took the photo, please ask Ashley Cunningham or try to find a more recent photo / use one you have created.
3. Photos from the Duggan Library archives.
 - a. Used with permission from the library staff.
4. Supplied photos (a provided headshot, for example).
 - a. When used, note that the photo was supplied by that person.

Always use high-resolution photos. You can crop the photos in the native platform or through a scheduling system, like Hootsuite.

Handling Negative Comments

When you've developed a vibrant social media community, it's inevitable that some posts will generate negative comments. Most of these comments, handled well, create an opportunity to strengthen your community by solving a problem or generating a meaningful discussion. Some may require a team response.

Here's an overview of what to do.

- Take a deep breath.
- Try and move the conversation offline (email or phone).
- Sympathize or apologize.
- Make sure you know the facts and current College policies and procedures related to the post.
 - Contact a supervisor in the affected area. They may have handled similar issues before and can help you craft a response.
 - In some cases, you may want to send an email to the person who wrote the post to get additional facts.
- If you are unsure how to proceed, contact OCM for assistance.

Cease Activity During a Crisis

In case of a crisis or emergency, immediately cease all activity on Hanover-affiliated social media platforms, including unscheduling posts through Hootsuite. OCM will identify the messaging and distribution strategy for social media sites and inform account managers when and how to resume social media communications.

Takeovers and Giveaways

These requests are handled on a case-by-case basis. Please reach out to Ashley Cunningham at cunninghama@hanover.edu.

Tips for Operating a Successful Social Media Account

Managing social media can be an exciting, but overwhelming, responsibility. Here are some quick tips to help you make the best of your new social media account.

Do these things...

- **Remember that you are representing Hanover College.** Posts, comments, and actions on social media platforms will affect the reputation of the College.
- Share Hanover College posts as the official news source, including links to the website and news articles; do not copy and paste the content to your page or group.

- Be thoughtful and discerning when engaging on social networking services. Write for your audiences but know that posts can reach anyone and may be misinterpreted or may show up outside of their original context.
- Tailor your messages for each social media platform.
 - Not all messages belong on all platforms and each platform has different image-size requirements.
- Encourage your audience to engage with your content; ask questions, encourage shares, etc.
- Include as much information as you can in your post.
 - Especially important when you are posting graphics. All information on the graphic should be included in the copy of the post.
 - Include alt-text for photos as often as you can.

Do not do these things...

- Create your own hashtags related to Hanover College.
- Share internal emails or communications on a public facing forum or group.
 - If these statements are meant to be made public, they will be shared by the Hanover College social media pages.
- Post event flyers verbatim.
 - They are not designed for social media and typically include information that is not accessible to the public or community members with disabilities.
- Post unlisted YouTube videos to a public facing forum or group.
- Post memes or post graphics that you did not produce.
 - Those items are copyrighted and do not fit the branding and vision of Hanover College.

Questions?

If you have any questions or are ready to get started on your social media journey, reach out to Ashley Cunningham, Associate Director of Digital Communications Strategy, at cunninghama@hanover.edu.

Need further assistance? We can meet with you bi-weekly or monthly. Social media training sessions for you, your staff, your student workers, and/or your department are available.

Please note that due to the flexible nature of social media, these guidelines are subject to change.

Finalized and shared with the Hanover College community on August 30, 2021.