

Frequently Asked Questions

Policy on the Privacy of Student Social Media Accounts

1. What is the purpose of the policy?

The policy has been adopted to ensure that Goucher is in compliance with Maryland legislation that addresses privacy in a student's use of social media. Many departments use social media to connect with students, including in academic, athletic, career-based and other college activities. The purpose of this policy is to protect student privacy interests while permitting the use of social media for these purposes.

2. What kinds of social media activity does this policy apply to?

The policy applies to any social media that enables users to participate in social networking by exchanging content with other users, such as but not limited to LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, Tumblr, and Vine.

3. What kinds of actions does the policy prohibit?

The policy prohibits faculty and staff from requiring a student or prospective student to grant the college employee access to the student's social media accounts. Specifically, a Goucher employee may not ask a student:

- to change privacy settings on their account so that the employee access the account;
- to "friend" the employee on their social media account;
- to give the employee the password to their account;
- to log into the account in the employee's presence;
- to identify the social media accounts that the student uses.

In addition, the policy prohibits a Goucher employee from taking any adverse action against a student or prospective student for refusing to grant them access to their account.

4. How can social media accounts be properly used when working with students?

Employees may require a student to provide access to a social media account if:

- The student has the option, at their own election, to complete the assignment or activity by using an existing personal account, by creating a generic social media account, or by using a social media account that the college sets up for the student;
- The employee restricts access to the account to others involved in the academic, athletic, career-based or other college activity;
- The student is not required to provide any log in information for their personal social media account.

5. Can a Facebook page be created for athletic teams, classes, clubs or admitted students?

Yes, provided that the employee establishes the account and restricts it to others in the team, class or club, and follows the guidance above by allowing the student to create a generic Facebook account to log in to that account.

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Questions about this policy should be directed to the [Office of the Vice President and Dean of Students](#).