GOUCHER | college

Policy on Privacy of Student Social Media Accounts

I. PURPOSE

This policy recognizes the importance of privacy in a student's personal activities involving access to and use of social media. It also recognizes that college employees use of social media plays a valuable and appropriate role in academic, athletic, career-based and other college activities to benefit students. This policy sets forth appropriate rules to protect student privacy interests while permitting the use of social media for academic, athletic, career-based and other college activities.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to graduate and undergraduate students, prospective students and applicants.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. **Non-public access information**: The security information required to access a Social Media account. Examples include usernames, passwords, two-factor authentication, or any other types of log-in activities or information, or other private and confidential information required to gain access to a personal social media account.

B. **Personal social media account**: An individual student's social media account that allows online social interaction with and dissemination of information to others, created and maintained by a student, prospective student, or applicant in whole or in part for private use. It does not refer to an account on a social media platform owned or provided by the college, or a social media account created by a student, prospective student, or applicant specifically for college academic, athletic, career-based activities.

C. **Social media**: Internet-based applications that enable users to participate in social networking by sharing, or exchanging content with other users. Examples of social media platforms include, but are not limited to, TikTok, LinkedIn, Facebook, Threads, X, Discord, Reddit, Snapchat, YouTube, Instagram, Tumblr, and Yik Yak, .

IV. SOCIAL MEDIA PRIVACY POLICY

D. College employees shall not require, request, suggest, or cause a student, prospective student, or applicant to disclose, grant access to, or allow observation of Non-Public Access Information pertaining to a student's personal social media account.

E. College employees shall not require that a student, prospective student, or applicant change the privacy settings on a personal social media account.

F. College employees shall not require a student, prospective student, or applicant to designate a College employee or agent of the College as a "friend" a "follower" or any other designation that would afford the employee or agent access to a personal social media account.

G. College employees shall not require a student, prospective student, or applicant to log onto any personal social media account in the presence of a college employee or agent of the college.

H. College employees shall not require that a student, prospective student, or applicant provide names of the social media platforms they use.

I. College employees shall not suspend, expel, discipline, penalize, or threaten to take any of the aforementioned actions against any student, prospective student, or applicant for refusing to provide information in response to a request that is prohibited under Section III of this Policy.

V. PERMITTED ACTIONS

J. This policy does not prohibit college employees from requiring a student to provide access to a social media account provided that:

1. The student has the option, at his or her own election, to complete an official college assignment or activity through the use of an existing personal social media account, by creating a generic social media account, or by using a social media account provided by the college;
2. access is limited to individuals involved in the same academic, athletic, career-based or other college activity;
3. the student is not required to provide Non-Public Access Information;
4. the academic, athletic, career-based or other college activity is designed and administered in line with the college's FERPA obligations.

K. College employees may access personal social media account information voluntarily provided by a student, prospective student, applicant, or third party.

L. College employees may access publicly accessible information relating to a student, prospective student, or applicant's Personal Social Media Account.

VI. RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL

The office responsible for administering this policy is the Office of Communications.