Guidelines for Using Social Media at UCSF

UC San Francisco recognizes the important and benefits of communicating through social media. Social media is a powerful vehicle through which UCSF may connect with our audiences, listen to voices and perceptions about UCSF, and disseminate relevant news to the community.

Navigating the world of social media can be confusing with constant changes in platforms, technologies, and communities. While we want UCSF faculty, staff and students to actively engage through social media, each of us need to understand the risks involved in using social media, and follow best practices to ensure proper use.

Please note that as a member of the UCSF community, you must abide by UCSF policies and guidelines, including, Campus Administrative Policies, the Campus Code of Conduct, Local and Campus Policies, and UCSF Identity Guidelines.

Definitions
UCSF-Sponsored Site: Official University-sponsored blogs and social media sites operated by UCSF departments or schools, approved by the deans, chairs and administration, and coordinated by University Relations or Medical Center Marketing.
Non-UCSF-Sponsored Site: Any site not operating under the guidance of UCSF University Relations or Medical Center Marketing, or under the oversight of UCSF deans, chairs or administration.

1. Official University-Sponsored Blogs and Social Media
These guidelines cover all types of University-sponsored blogs and social media, including those that educate on disease states and those that promote a program or provide school information.

If you are participating in a UCSF-sponsored blog or other social media representing the University, it is important that you follow certain guidelines and obtain specific approvals. Official University-sponsored blogs and social media must be approved and coordinated by University Relations. You may submit your new account proposal here. Medical Center Marketing must approve social media involving UCSF Medical Center and its clinical services.

Email University Relations for details on approvals, legal responsibility, privacy policies and logo usage. Note that all UC, UCSF, school and department policies and guidelines related to privacy, logos, intellectual property, etc. apply to these communications media.
For inquiries regarding UCSF Medical Center and UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital, email Medical Center Marketing.

For faculty or other UCSF-sponsored blogs or other social media sites, please contact University Relations and observe the following guidelines:

1a. Approvals
Your department chair or dean must approve a University-sponsored blog or participation in social media. The sponsoring department or school is responsible for ensuring that if the website contains any personally identifiable or protected health information, it is compliant with all privacy laws. The sponsoring department or school is responsible for ensuring that the content of the website is appropriate and does not damage UCSF’s reputation.

1b. Consent
If you plan to post photos or videos, or patient information in any format, including written, you are responsible for obtaining appropriate authorization and consent forms from all such persons in the photos or videos, including patients, employees, faculty, staff, students and visitors.

- If you have any questions about authorization or consent related to news media, please contact UCSF News Media (476-2557).
- If you have any questions about privacy laws, authorization, consent or any unusual circumstances, please contact Medical Center Risk Management (353-1842), the Privacy Office (353-2750) or the Office of Legal Affairs (476-5003).
- All consent forms must be maintained in the department or the patient’s medical record for six years after the last day the site is active.

Your site must include the following disclaimer language:

“We hope that the information obtained on this site will help you to be better able to participate with your health care providers in making informed decisions about your care. It is not a substitute for appropriate professional medical treatment or diagnosis. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read on this site. Except where explicitly stated otherwise, it is not intended as specific medical advice. Neither the Board of Regents nor its officers, agents or employees assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product or medical procedure described.”

Remember, even if you refrain from mentioning a patient by name on a social media site, if there is a reasonable basis to believe that the person could still be identified from the information you have shared, then its use or disclosure could constitute a HIPAA/Privacy violation, resulting in personal and UCSF liability, penalties and fines.
1c. Comments on social media sites
If you plan to include the ability of the public to comment, please contact the Office of Legal Affairs. You should be aware that because of UCSF’s status as a public entity, creation of any public discussion forum might invoke free-speech issues, thereby limiting your ability to edit the content of comments made by the public.

1d. Advertising
Selling of advertising by departments or programs is prohibited on UCSF-sponsored blogs or social media sites. Departments and programs using blogs and social media should be sure that any site-sponsored advertising does not create any impression that UCSF is endorsing a particular product or service.

1e. Abiding by the UCSF Campus Code of Conduct
The UCSF Campus Code of Conduct articulates the values and ethical practices collectively embraced by the UCSF campus community. It is the expectation that all members of the campus community will exercise integrity and highly ethical conduct when using social media. Included in the Code of Conduct, and particularly important in social media, is respect for copyright laws. The complete Code of Conduct can be found here. The Code of Conduct, along with school and department-level Code of Conduct standards, applies equally to content and use of UCSF-sponsored blogs and social media.

1f. Content suspension
The University reserves the right to suspend the use of or modify content on UCSF-sponsored blogs and social media sites within University policy and applicable law.

1g. Monitoring and Updating
The owner of the site (assigned by the department chair) is responsible for monitoring, maintaining and updating web content to ensure accuracy and for addressing comments as they arise.

2. Representing UCSF in social media
There are times when UCSF representatives speaking for UCSF will want to post comments on others’ blogs in order to correct misstatements of facts about UCSF or its programs, or comment on issues that are being reported in the press. All postings of this type should clearly identify the poster as an employee of UCSF who is speaking on behalf of UCSF. These types of posts should be made only by or in consultation with the University Relations team or other key University communicators to ensure that UCSF is speaking with one voice on issues of public concern.

3. Personal participation in blogs and social media
If you participate in blogs and social media as an individual separate from any UCSF-sponsored communication, you are personally responsible for anything that you communicate. The University is not responsible for any individual activities or statements you make as a member of the public. Personal blogs and personal web
content should not be hosted by UCSF or on UCSF systems, pursuant to the University of California Electronics Communications Policy. Faculty or staff who participate in non-UCSF-sponsored social media may disclose their affiliation with UCSF; but if they do so, they should disclaim their opinions’ connection to UCSF:

“The participant is ______ [a faculty member, staff or student] at UCSF. However, the views and opinions of the participant expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the Regents of the University of California, UCSF, UCSF Medical Center, or any entities or units thereof.”

3a. Logos, branding, University affiliation
Personal blogs and social media may not use UCSF in the name of the blog or social media page and may not use the UCSF logo or branding. When engaging in such personal activities, you may not use your University title in any way that would imply that you are speaking for the University. You may want or need to include a disclaimer, such as “The postings on my site are my own and do not reflect UCSF’s position,” or simply refrain from using your UCSF title in that setting.

3b. Patient information
You must never share any patient information or share details of a patient situation that you may have acquired from your work at UCSF on your personal blog or in social media, or in comments on others' blogs or others' social media.

3c. Proprietary information
You must not share any information that is proprietary to the University. If you have any questions about what information is considered proprietary, you should consult the Office of Technology Management (353-4462) or the Office of Legal Affairs (476-8005).

Departments may have more detailed policies or procedures regarding usage of social media.

If you have any questions about these UCSF guidelines, please contact University Relations or the Office of Legal Affairs (476-8005).

References:
Patient Privacy Policy Medical Center 5.02.01
Electronic Communications Policy
Identity Guidelines
UCOP Naming Policy
UCOP Graphic Identity Guide and Resources
Medical Center Marketing Intranet (Branding and Logo Guidelines)