

FOR INTERNAL USE – UPDATED 07.01.17

USER GUIDELINES FOR RESPONDING TO POSTS (POSITIVE & NEGATIVE)

Social media is about an exchange of ideas. SIU SOM respects one's right to freedom of expression and the diverse set of customs, values and points of view individuals hold, even if they conflict with the views of SIU SOM. Credibility and transparency are critical when evaluating negative postings. We must balance engagement and freedom of expression with institutional responsibility and risk. Contact Public Relations, pr@siumed.edu or 217-545-2155, if you need assistance.

TYPES OF COMMENTS

- Positive comments: acknowledge or reaffirm so you can build relationships
- Neutral comments: Leave it alone or engage and ask for follow up
- Negative comments/Legitimate complaints:
 - Respond as soon as possible! According to Search Engine Watch, 70% of Twitter users expect a response from brands they reach out to, and 53% want a response in less than an hour. That number jumps to 72% when they're issuing a complaint.
 - Do not challenge the commentator. If further conversation will not lead to a peaceful resolution, disengage or offer the user an opportunity to receive further help or explanation via a phone number or email address.
 - Always respond publicly to an initial comment, but attempt to take further conversation offline or to private messages.
 - Apologize if needed. Rectify if you can. Explain your position or reason if possible
 - Acknowledge the user's feelings and apologize without admitting fault until you know more about the situation. For example, if a patient felt an SIU physician was rude or dismissive, consider responding, "[Insert name], we're sorry to hear that your experience with [insert department name] was less than exceptional. We at SIU School of Medicine and SIU HealthCare strive to deliver the best experience to our patients and would like to hear how we could improve your visit. Please private message us with the best number to reach you, and I will have a patient representative get in touch with you as soon as possible."
- Substantive criticism: Acknowledge. Explain process or reasoning if possible
- Comment based on erroneous fact? Correct them with cited sources

ABCS OF NEGATIVE POSTS

Acknowledge the comment ("Thank you for your feedback." "We understand that there are mixed feelings concerning X.")

- B**e transparent (Don't sound defensive.)
- C**ontact the appropriate department(s) to learn/confirm how to respond
- D**o not delete negative comments
- E**ngage in constructive conversations, disengage from combative conversations
- F**ind help, if needed
- G**ive contact information for additional assistance
- H**elp and move on, don't dwell or draw attention

REMOVEABLE POSTS

In general, do not remove, delete or hide posts.

Removing posts will only escalate the situation and heighten anger/frustration/resentment and does not reflect best social media practices. Users may infer that the institution only retains positive posts. To maintain credibility and transparency, negative posts should remain unless it meets one of the following:

1. Uses profanity or abusive language
2. Negatively targets a specific group or ethnicity
3. Threatens an individual or group
4. Violates HIPAA (patient confidentiality)
5. Social media user is found to have made threats/use abusive language through other communication methods (phone, email, in person)
6. Concerns arise regarding the safety of an employee or his/her family
7. Content contains a **legal** charge against a physician or employee (e.g., "Dr. Smith killed my mother. Dr. Smith sexually assaulted me.")

Department Procedures

1. "Screen grab" copies of the posts and responses – save files
2. Do not engage or challenge the commentator in a negative manner
 - Sympathize, but you might not always want to apologize
3. Message ASAP and try to take conversation offline: "Thank you for contacting us. We will contact the appropriate administrator to look into the matter and be in touch with you."
4. Contact PR: social@siumed.edu and department administrator/physician to follow up with patient. (Patient complaints – Dena Knoles – 545-7603)
 - a. If the post/review contains sensitive patient information, even if it's public, and you are emailing about the post, remember to include "Encrypt" on your subject headline.
5. Follow up with SIU personnel to ensure they did resolve the issue with patient

6. Post a public reply to indicate that action has been taken: "We have alerted our patient representative and she will contact you today."

PR Internal Procedures

1. Alert director
2. Director and PR staff will discuss and decide whether or not to remove post.
3. Director will, or will appoint a person, to do 4-10:
4. Alert doctor/chairman/administrator in question
5. Alert Security if post meets criteria listed above.
6. Alert legal if deemed necessary
7. Patient complaints: contact Dena Knoles – 545-7603
8. "Screen grab" copies of the posts and responses – save files
9. Document actions: dates/times/who contacted/responses
10. File in archives