

V-1.20-POLICY ON STUDENT SOCIAL MEDIA PRIVACY

I. PURPOSE

This policy recognizes the importance of privacy in a student's personal activities involving the use of social media. It also recognizes that the use of Social Media by Bowie State University (BSU) employees plays a valuable and appropriate role in academic and career-based activities to the benefit of students. The purpose of this policy is to set forth appropriate rules to protect student privacy interests while permitting the use of Social Media for academic and career-based activities. This policy is not intended to limit communications or action required by state or federal law.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Non-Public Access Information" refers to the security information required to access a Social Media Account. Examples include: passwords, log-in information or other private and confidential information required to gain access to a Social Media Account.
- B. "Personal Social Media Account" refers to a Social Media Account that allows social interaction 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 include:
 - 1. an account on a social media platform owned or provided by an educational institution; or
 - 2. an account on a social media platform created by a student, prospective student, or applicant specifically for academic or University-assisted career-based activities.
- C. "Social Media" are internet-based applications that enable users to participate in social networking by exchanging content with other users. Examples of Social Media include but are not limited to LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, Tumblr, Snapchat and Vine.
- D. "Applicant" means an individual applying for admission to Bowie State University.

III. STUDENT PRIVACY PROVISIONS

- A. Bowie State University is subject to and shall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- B. Bowie State University shall not require, suggest, or cause a student, prospective student or applicant to:

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1. disclose, grant access to, or allow observation of Non-Public Access Information pertaining to any Social Media Account.
 2. change the privacy settings on a Personal Social Media Account.
 3. designate a BSU employee or agent of the University as a "friend" a "follower" or any other designation that would afford the employee or agent access to a Personal Social Media Account.
 4. log onto any Social Media Account in the presence of a BSU employee or agent of the institution.
 5. provide names of the Social Media platforms that he/she employs.
- C. Bowie State University employees shall not suspend, expel, discipline, penalize, or threaten to take any of the aforementioned actions against any student, prospective student or applicant for his/her refusal to provide information in response to a request that is prohibited under Section III of this Policy.

IV. PERMISSABLE ACTIONS

- A. This policy does not prohibit Bowie State University 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 the assignment or activity by using an existing Personal Social Media Account or by creating a generic Social Media Account;
 2. access is limited to the academic or career-based activity;
 3. the student is not required to provide Non-Public Access Information;
 4. the academic or career-based activity is designed and administered in a manner that is consistent with the institution's FERPA obligations.
- B. Bowie State University employees may access Personal Social Media Account information that has been voluntarily provided to them by a student, prospective student, applicant, or third party.
- C. Bowie State University employees may access publicly accessible information relating to a student, prospective student, or applicant's Personal Social Media Account.
- D. Bowie State University employees are encouraged to obtain unit-level approval before instituting academic or career-based activities involving access to such accounts. In addition, BSU employees are encouraged to provide notice to students, in syllabi or other relevant written publications, when use of such accounts is required.

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V. RELATED POLICIES

- USM Policy V-1.20, Policy on Student Social Media Privacy
<http://www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionV/>
- BSU Social Media Guidelines for Student Athletes