

**Policy Number:** 200  
**Policy Name:** Student Social Media Policy (SSMP) for CNPD Students  
**Reviewed by:** College Faculty  
**Last Review Date:** 03/26/2018

### POLICY STATEMENT

This policy describes expected student behaviors when using social media sites.

### REASON for POLICY

The College of Nursing and Professional Disciplines (CNPD) faculty recognize the role social media plays in today's society. As professionals in our respective disciplines (Nursing, Social Work, and Nutrition) that are in training, CNPD students are held to a high standard when it comes to the presentation of themselves in the community and on social media sites. As students enter their professional careers, it is important that they carefully consider what they are posting on social media sites, who they are asking to network with them, and how they respond to others on social media sites. Information placed on social media sites must not violate the University's Code of Student Life, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), or the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

### SCOPE of POLICY

All Undergraduate and Graduate Students in the College of Nursing and Professional Disciplines (Departments of Nursing, Nutrition and Dietetics, and Social Work)

### RESPONSIBILITIES

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|----------------|--|
| Student        | Responsible to monitor their professional behavior on social media sites and report violations of HIPAA or FERPA to the appropriate authority.   |
| Department     | Provide a copy of the Social Media Policy to all students  |
| Administration | 1) Violations of the Social Media Policy should be reported utilizing the following chain of command: Department Chair → CNPD Associate Dean → CNPD Dean → UND Assistant Dean of Students, Director of Student Rights & Responsibilities<br>2) Investigate reports of violations of this policy and determine discipline as appropriate (CNPD Procedure 200a). |

### PRINCIPLES

**OVERVIEW** – This policy establishes professional behavior regarding student use of social media sites.

Students should not have the expectation that social network sites are private. Students should assume that what they post on a social media site is permanent. Archival systems may save information even if someone deletes a post, and search engines can retrieve posts years after the publication date. When using social networks, the lines between public and private, personal, and professional are indistinct. Mixing social, academic and professional networking may create problems. Because comments can be forwarded or copied, a person authorized to post on a student's social media page can pass it on to others. Friends may post something

to a student's site regarding their social life, which may prove to be embarrassing to the student's academic or professional life. Posting media that portrays students or their peers participating in what could be perceived as unprofessional behavior such as inappropriate sexualized behaviors, drinking, drug use and illegal activity is not advised. Students are encouraged to check their privacy settings on social media sites to limit who can and cannot read and post to their sites. Students should also consider conducting an Internet search of their name to discover what is in cyberspace that others can see about them. If students have any social media posts that are questionable, they should remove them from their site immediately.

Employers, faculty, clinical preceptors, field educators, patients, and clients may access information on student's social media sites that may negatively influence them regarding the student's professionalism. Many potential employers go to these sites to see what students have posted and often determine if they are interested in having that student as an employee. Students have been reprimanded by clinical rotation site supervisors for social networking practices such as becoming electronic "friends" with site co-workers, interns, volunteers, patients, or clients. To promote respectful discussion, students should be courteous and respectful. With due regard for lawfully protected speech and forms of expression, students should strive to avoid comments that are profane, obscene, defamatory, offensive, harassing, disruptive, sexually explicit, inappropriate, inflammatory or otherwise objectionable. Harassing speech that is severe, persistent, or pervasive, and is objectively offensive, is never permitted.

Students are required to use their official UND email address for all professional correspondence and academic issues related to their role as a professional UND student. Student must recognize that they are a representative of their professional program and are expected to act professionally in all correspondence. Students are reminded that North Dakota has an open records law, which means that all UND e-mail is potentially subject to open records. As such, students may want to consider setting up a private email account with a different provider than the UND for personal correspondence.

#### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PROFESSIONALISM:**

Discussing or posting information regarding content of examinations, tests, quizzes, or assignments could be considered a violation of a department's policy on Academic Integrity. It is the student's responsibility to read their student handbook regarding academic integrity and professionalism as defined by their department. The use of social media or personal devices to threaten, intimidate, ridicule, humiliate, insult, or harass someone may constitute cyber-bullying. Students experiencing this type of behavior as well as those who witness it are required to report utilizing the following chain of command: Department Chair → CNPD Associate Dean → CNPD Dean → UND Assistant Dean of Students, Director of Student Rights & Responsibilities.

CNPD students have a responsibility to help maintain public trust and confidence in their professions. Students should refrain from posts that use institutional intellectual property, copyrights, trademarks or logos without explicit written permission. Such care should also extend to the unauthorized dissemination of copyrighted material, such as lecture notes and recordings. Students should not represent themselves as official representatives of the University or clinical facility in public forums. Consent obtained for educational purposes does not extend to consent for public dissemination. Even when appropriate consent is obtained for public posting and the media-containing posts are sufficiently anonymized, public perception remains an important consideration. An individual viewing a sensitive picture posted online by a CNPD student might not assume consent has been obtained and may therefore come to think less of the student, their profession and the institution. The separation between personal and professional online profiles should be made explicit. Faculty and Administrators reserve the right to monitor student's publicly viewable social media sites.

**CLINICAL EXPERIENCES AND FIELD PLACEMENTS:**

Students participating in practice experiences (clinical experiences, field placements, or supervised practice) must consult with the hospital/clinic or agency policies or an appropriate leader within the organization for guidance regarding work related social media postings. Clinical and field experiences are also frequently governed by a legally binding agreement between the host facility and the University. Unless authorized, students are not allowed to post or speak on behalf of the clinic, hospital, or agency. Students must be aware of and comply with clinical affiliation policies regarding use of computers, cameras, and other electronic devices and the use of personal devices at the clinical site. Students are advised not to ask their faculty, preceptors, instructors, or field supervisors to “friend” and/or “follow” them via social media during their time in the educational program. This puts the student, their faculty, and their supervisors in an awkward situation by sharing personal information. If students and supervisors mutually decide to do this after the student graduates, that is their personal choice. Students are strongly advised to refrain from posting remarks about faculty or clinical site employees and from making comments that are or may be perceived to be profane, obscene, defamatory, offensive, harassing, disruptive, sexually explicit, inappropriate, inflammatory or otherwise objectionable. Harassing speech that is severe, persistent, or pervasive, and is objectively offensive, is never permitted.

**HIPAA & FERPA**

Students violating HIPAA, FERPA, or other university/hospital/clinic/agency policies may be subject to disciplinary action including dismissal from their professional program, criminal and/or civil charges and fines. Students must not present themselves as licensed practitioners, and are advised to refrain from offering medical advice in any non-educational setting, including on social media.

CNPD students must recognize that they have an ethical and legal obligation to maintain patient privacy and confidentiality at all times. Releasing confidential health information is unethical, unlawful, and could result in irreparable harm and suffering to the patient as well as fines or imprisonment for the healthcare practitioner. CNPD students must not identify patients by name or post or publish information that may lead to the identification of a patient. Students must not refer to patients in a disparaging manner, even if the patient is not identified.

CNPD students are strictly prohibited from transmitting by way of any electronic media any patient related information or images that may be reasonably anticipated to violate a patient’s rights to confidentiality or privacy. This includes references to family, employment, relatives, conditions, locations of treatment or any circumstances surrounding the patient’s situation. Posting information about, or images of, a research subject is strictly prohibited.

CNPD students must follow CNPD clinical affiliation and UND policies for taking photographs or video of patients for treatment or other legitimate purposes using employer-provided devices. CNPD students must not share, post, or otherwise disseminate any information, including images, about a patient or information gained in the student-patient relationship with anyone unless there is a patient care related need to disclose the information or other legal obligation to do so unless appropriate permissions are obtained. Online social contact with patients is discouraged, and students must use caution when having online social contact with former patients. The fact that a patient may initiate contact with the student does not permit the student to engage in a personal relationship with the patient. It is unprofessional and inadvisable to form or accept a social media connection with patients or individuals with whom there is an active therapeutic, supervisory or evaluative relationship.

## PROCEDURES

**DISCIPLINARY ACTION:**

Violation of the social media policy may result in disciplinary action by the student's department, the CNPD, UND, the field agency, and/or the clinical facility. Suspected violations should be reported within 5 business days as outlined in the Student Social Media Policy Suspected Violation Procedure (200a).

## WEB SITE REFERENCES

UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences Policy Office. <http://www.med.und.edu/administration/deans-office/index.cfm>

Professionalism Considerations for Online Social Networking Usage. Creighton University School of Pharmacy and Health Professions. <https://spahp.creighton.edu/sites/spahp.creighton.edu/files/Social%20Networking.pdf>

Canadian Federation of Medical Students Guide to Medical Professionalism: Recommendations for Social Media. <https://www.cfms.org/files/internal-policy-bylaws/CFMS%20Guide%20to%20Social%20Media%20Professionalism.pdf>

Social Networking Policy. Duke University. <https://medschool.duke.edu/sites/default/files/field/attachments/Social%20Media%20Policy.pdf>

National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics. <https://socialwork.utexas.edu/dl/files/academic-programs/other/nasw-code-of-ethics.pdf>

A Nurse's Guide to the Use of Social Media. National Council of State Boards of Nursing. [https://www.ncsbn.org/Social\\_Media.pdf](https://www.ncsbn.org/Social_Media.pdf)

Social Media Policy. Department of Physical Therapy. University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Note: This policy was adapted with permission from the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences *Social Media Policy for all SMHS Students*.

Approved by College Faculty 03/26/2018