

Personal Student Use of Social Networking Sites

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UW-L) Occupational Therapy Program recognizes that social networking websites and applications, including but not limited to Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and blogs, are an important and timely means of communication. Students, faculty and staff are reminded that they should have no expectation of privacy on social networking sites. Students, faculty and staff must also be aware that posting certain information is illegal. Violation may expose the offender to criminal and civil liability. Offenses may be considered non-academic misconduct and be subject to the appropriate policies and procedures.

The following actions are strictly forbidden:

- In your professional role as a student occupational therapist, you may not present the personal health information of any individuals. Removal of an individual's name does not constitute proper de-identification of protected health information. Inclusion of data such as age, gender, race, diagnosis, date of evaluation, or type of treatment or the use of a highly specific medical photograph (such as a before/after photograph of a patient having surgery or a photograph of a patient from one of the medical outreach trips) may still allow the reader to recognize the identity of a specific individual.
- You may not report private (protected) academic information of another student or trainee. Such information might include, but is not limited to: course or clerkship grades, narrative evaluations, examination scores, or adverse academic actions.
- In posting information on social networking sites, you may not present yourself as an official representative or spokesperson for the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Occupational Therapy Program or affiliate organizations.
- You may not represent yourself as another person, real or fictitious, or otherwise attempt to obscure your identity as a means to circumvent the prohibitions listed above and below.

In addition to the absolute prohibitions listed above, the actions listed below are strongly discouraged. Violations of these suggested guidelines may be considered unprofessional behavior and may be the basis for disciplinary action.

- Display of vulgar language.
- Display of language or photographs that imply disrespect for any individual or group because of age, race, gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation.
- Presentation of personal photographs or photographs of others that may reasonably be interpreted as condoning irresponsible use of alcohol, substance abuse or sexual promiscuity.
- Presentation of personal engagement in illegal activities including use of recreational drugs.
- Posting of potentially inflammatory or unflattering material on another individual's website, e.g. on the "wall" of that individual's Facebook site.

When using these social networking websites/applications, students are strongly encouraged to use a personal e-mail address, rather than their UW-L email address, as their primary means of identification. Individuals also should make every effort to present themselves in a mature, responsible, and professional manner. Discourse should always be civil and respectful.

Student Organization Use of Social Networking Sites

Registered student organizations that use social networking sites are required to include their advisor and/or the Director of Student Affairs for continuity purposes. Student organizations are not to represent themselves as official representatives or spokespersons for the University of Wisconsin La Crosse or affiliate organizations and are subject to the university's identity standards. Violation of this policy may be considered non-academic misconduct in addition to the student organization losing their official registration status with the university.