



Founders: Frank Coleman, Oscar J. Cooper, Ernest E. Just, Edgar A. Love

## Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS  
3951 Snapfinger Parkway Decatur, GA 30035  
Telephone: (404) 284-5533 Fax: (404) 284-0333  
[www.oppf.org](http://www.oppf.org)

**D. Michael Lyles, Esq.**  
**Grand Counselor**

[grandcounselor@oppf.org](mailto:grandcounselor@oppf.org)

Licensed: Maryland & District of Columbia

Social Media Policy (Office of the Grand Counselor)  
Approved by the Supreme Council on March 12, 2015

### MEMORANDUM

To: All Fraternity Members

From: The Supreme Council

Date: March 2015

Re: Social Media Policy

---

Beginning in 2010, Omega Psi Phi began attempting to use social media and social computing as a tool for training and we noticed that we had no control over some of the more problematic aspects of social media. Social Media for purposes of this memorandum and any policies that follow is defined as: forms of electronic communication, including but not limited to Web sites for social networking and microblogging, through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content, such videos, photos and personally identifiable data.

We recognized quickly that a fraternal organization steeped in tradition and sacred, ritualistic, confidential and proprietary data and information, like ours needed to adapt and get stronger through the appropriate use of new technology and ways of communicating our message of Manhood, Scholarship, Perseverance and Uplift, to take ownership of all that means to our communities and to not allow dilution of our principles by those that mean to do us

and reward our members and Fraternity with the greatness in all of us. We have returned to members and leadership around the world in Omega to establish guidelines in light of ever-evolving technologies and online social tools, including texting and email, to ensure they are current and relevant to the needs of members and the Fraternity.

Below are the current and official "OMEGA PSI PHI Social Computing and Social Media Guidelines," which we will review periodically so that they may evolve to reflect emerging technologies and online social tools.

---

## Introduction

---

### Responsible engagement in innovation and dialogue

Computerized, electronic and online collaboration platforms are fundamentally changing the way members of OMEGA PSI PHI® work and engage with each other, the Community and partners.

OMEGA PSI PHI® is increasingly exploring how online discourse through social computing can empower Brothers as friends, students, professionals, and citizens. These individual interactions represent a new model: not mass communications, but masses of communicators. Through these interactions, OMEGA PSI PHI's® greatest asset—the brotherhood and expertise of its Members—can be shared with the wider Community and the campuses where we reside.

Therefore, it is very much in OMEGA PSI PHI's® interest—and, we believe, in each brother's own—to be aware of and participate in this sphere of information, interaction and idea exchange:

- **To learn:** As an organization founded on the principle of scholarship, we believe in the importance of open exchange—between OMEGA PSI PHI and its Community, and among its many constituents -- for learning. Social computing is an important arena for organizational and individual development.
- **To contribute:** OMEGA PSI PHI®—as a member driven organization, as an innovator of Fraternal interaction and as a corporate citizen even—makes important contributions to the world, and to public dialogue on a broad range of societal issues. Because our activities provide transformational insight and uplift to communities throughout the world, it is important for OMEGA PSI PHI® and its members to share with the world the exciting things we are learning and doing.

We continue to advocate Brothers' responsible involvement today in this rapidly growing environment of friendship, scholarship, relationship, learning and collaboration.

## **OMEGA PSI PHI® Fraternity Social Computing and Social Media Guidelines**

1. Know and follow OMEGA PSI PHI®'s Member Code of Conduct.
2. Brothers of OMEGA PSI PHI® are personally responsible for the content they record, publish or post using electronic media or on-line, whether in a blog, social computing site or any other form of user-generated media. Be mindful that what you record, capture and publish (post, text, email, etc.) has the potential to be made public and once public, will be public for a long time, so protect your and the Fraternity's privacy and take care to understand a site's terms of service.
3. Identify yourself by name and, when relevant, role in OMEGA PSI PHI® when you discuss OMEGA PSI PHI®-related matters such as OMEGA PSI PHI® activities, programs, services or products. You must make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of OMEGA PSI PHI®.
4. If you publish content online relevant to OMEGA PSI PHI® in your personal capacity it is best to use a disclaimer such as this: "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent OMEGA PSI PHI®'s positions, strategies or opinions."
5. Respect copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws.
6. Do not provide OMEGA PSI PHI®'s or a University's, a constituent's, a partner's or a supplier's confidential or other proprietary information and never discuss or publish OMEGA PSI PHI® own sacred, secret, confidential, trademarked or proprietary information, contracts, business processes, or other sensitive matters about internal policy or plans publicly.
7. Do not cite or reference members, partners, patrons, sponsors, suppliers on fraternity-related matters without their approval. When you do make a reference, link back to the source and do not publish content that might allow inferences to be drawn which could damage a member or a third party's relationship with OMEGA PSI PHI®.
8. Respect your audience. Don't use ethnic slurs, discriminatory remarks, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any similar conduct that would not be appropriate or acceptable in your classroom or workplace. You should also show proper consideration for others' privacy.
9. Be aware of your association with OMEGA PSI PHI® in online social networks. If you identify yourself as member of OMEGA PSI PHI®, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with colleagues and the community.
10. Spirited and passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should be respectful of others and their opinions. Be the first to correct your own mistakes.
11. Try to add value. Provide worthwhile information and perspective. OMEGA PSI PHI's® brand is best represented by its active members and what you publish may reflect on OMEGA PSI PHI's® brand.

12. Don't misuse OMEGA PSI PHI® logos or trademarks, see the published OMEGA PSI PHI® Trademark and Logo Use Policy, and only use them if you have the authority to do so. For example, you may not use OMEGA PSI PHI®, QUES® or any variation of those, in your screen name or other social media ID.

## Detailed discussion

The OMEGA PSI PHI® Member Code of Conduct and Constitution and By-laws provide the foundation for OMEGA PSI PHI's® policies and guidelines for social computing and social media.

The same principles and guidelines that apply to Brothers' activities in general, as found in the OMEGA PSI PHI® Member Code of Conduct and Constitution and By-laws, apply to Brothers' activities online. This includes forms of online publishing and discussion, including blogs, wikis, file-sharing, user-generated video and audio, virtual worlds and social networks now known or in the future may be developed.

As outlined in the Constitution and By-laws and the Member Code of Conduct, OMEGA PSI PHI® fully respects the rights of our Members in all countries in which we reside. In general, what you do on your own time is your affair. However, activities in or outside of Fraternity obligations and activities that adversely affect your OMEGA PSI PHI member responsibilities, the performance of others, or OMEGA PSI PHI's® legitimate business interests are a proper focus for Fraternity policy.

OMEGA PSI PHI® supports open dialogue and the exchange of ideas.

OMEGA PSI PHI® regards blogs and other forms of online discourse as primarily a form of communication and relationship among individuals. When the Fraternity wishes to communicate publicly as a Fraternity-whether to the marketplace or to the general public-it has well established means to do so. Only those officially designated by OMEGA PSI PHI® have the authorization to speak on behalf of the Fraternity. Chapters and Districts will have similar official designations.

However, OMEGA PSI PHI® believes in dialogue among Brothers and with our partners, members of the many communities and campuses in and on which we are located, and the general public. Such dialogue is inherent in our fraternal model of friendship, and in our

commitment to the development of positive and open standards. We believe that Brothers can both derive and provide important benefits from exchanges of perspective.

One of OMEGA PSI PHI's® core values is "Friendship is Essential to the Soul" As a fraternity, OMEGA PSI PHI® trusts-and expects-Brothers to exercise personal responsibility as a means of furthering friendship and brotherhood whenever they participate in social media. This includes not violating the trust of those with whom they are engaging. Brothers of OMEGA PSI PHI® should not use these media for public relations on behalf of OMEGA PSI PHI®. If and when members of OMEGA PSI PHI's® staff or delegates engage in advocacy or publicity for the Fraternity and they have authorization to participate in social media, they shall identify themselves as such.

Know the OMEGA PSI PHI® Laws, Rules and Regulations. If you have any confusion about whether you ought to publish something online, chances are the published rules will resolve it. Pay particular attention to what the Trademark and Logo Use Policy has to say about proprietary information, and about avoiding misrepresentation. If, after checking the rules, you are still unclear as to the propriety of a post, it is best to refrain and seek the advice of the Executive Director of the Fraternity, Grand Counselor or appropriate District Counselor.

Be who you are. We believe in transparency and honesty. When discussing topics relevant to OMEGA PSI PHI® and its activities, you must use your real name, be clear who you are, and identify that you are a member of OMEGA PSI PHI®. If you are not financial, or your dues are not fully paid current, you are not allowed to identify yourself in social media as a member of Omega Psi Phi®. Violations of this provision may subject you to fraternal sanctions, fines and other assessments. But also be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and also be judicious in disclosing personal details.

Be thoughtful about how you present yourself in online social networks. The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in online social networks. By virtue of identifying yourself as an active member of OMEGA PSI PHI® within a social network, you are now connected to your Brothers, colleagues, employers, family and even the Community. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your membership in OMEGA PSI PHI®. If you have joined OMEGA PSI PHI® recently, be sure to update your social profiles to reflect OMEGA PSI PHI's® guidelines.

**Speak in the first person.** Use your own voice; bring your own personality to the forefront.

**Use a disclaimer.** Whenever you publish content to any form of digital media, make it clear that what you say there is representative of personal views and opinions and not necessarily the views and opinions of OMEGA PSI PHI®. For instance, in your own blog, the following standard disclaimer should be prominently displayed: "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent OMEGA PSI PHI's® positions, strategies or opinions." If a site does not afford you enough space to include this full disclaimer, you should use your best judgment to position your comments appropriately.

**Officers and staff take note:** This standard disclaimer does not by itself exempt OMEGA PSI PHI® officers at all levels, committee members and staff from a special responsibility when participating in online environments. By virtue of their position, they must consider whether personal thoughts they publish may be misunderstood as expressing OMEGA PSI PHI® positions. And a chapter, district or international officer, committee member or staff member should assume that members of their team will read what is written. Public forums are not the place to communicate OMEGA PSI PHI® policies to OMEGA PSI PHI® Members.

**Respect copyright and fair use laws.** For OMEGA PSI PHI's® protection and well as your own, it is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others, including OMEGA PSI PHI's® own copyrights, trademarks and other intellectual property. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's copyrighted work. And it is good general practice to link to others' work. Keep in mind that laws will be different depending on where you live and work.

**Protecting confidential and proprietary information.** Social computing blurs many of the traditional boundaries between internal and external communications. Be thoughtful about what you publish-particularly on external platforms. You must make sure you do not disclose or use OMEGA PSI PHI® confidential or proprietary information in any online social computing platform. OMEGA PSI PHI® confidential and proprietary information may include information regarding internal reports, policies, procedures or other internal business-related confidential communications should not be posted, texted, copied, tweeted, blogged or otherwise available for third parties. Even the most seemingly secure communication and social media platform is generally open to unintended viewers or readers.

Also, don't post information about a person or another organization unless you have the right to do so, taking into account intellectual property and privacy concerns. For example, ask

permission before posting someone's picture in a social network or publishing in a blog a conversation that was meant to be private.

**OMEGA PSI PHI's® sensitive "sacred information."** Some topics relating to OMEGA PSI PHI® are sacred and sensitive and should never be recorded or discussed publicly, even if you're expressing your own opinion and using a disclaimer. For example, you must not comment on, or speculate about things like OMEGA PSI PHI® ritualistic material, tradesecrets, membership selection, policies or fraternal affairs, OMEGA PSI PHI's® business plans, unannounced strategies or prospects (including information about alliances), or potential partnerships. This applies to anyone including conversations with candidates, suppliers, or contractors, the press or other third parties (including friends). If you're unsure of the sensitivity of a particular subject, seek advice from IHQ before talking about it or simply refrain from the conversation. OMEGA PSI PHI® policy is not to comment on rumors in any way about these issues. You should merely say, "no comment" to rumors. Do not deny or affirm them (or suggest the same in subtle ways), speculate about them or propagate them by participating in "what if" type conversations.

**Protect OMEGA PSI PHI's® members, partners and suppliers.** Members, partners or suppliers should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval. Externally, never identify a patron, partner or supplier by name without permission and never discuss confidential details of activities with candidates, patrons or suppliers. Internal social computing platforms permit suppliers and business partners to participate so be sensitive to who will see your content. If a patron or community constituent hasn't given explicit permission for their name to be used, think carefully about the content you're going to publish on any internal social media and get the appropriate permission where necessary.

It is acceptable to discuss general details about kinds of projects and to use non-identifying pseudonyms for a patron or member of the community so long as the information provided does not make it easy for someone to identify the patron or supplier or violate any non-disclosure or intellectual property agreements that may be in place with them. Be thoughtful about the types of information that you share, which may inadvertently lead others to deduce which members, patrons, partners and suppliers that you are working with. This might include travel plans or publishing details about your current location or where you are working on a given day.

Furthermore, your blog or online social network is not the place to conduct confidential business with a member of the Fraternity, the community, school, patron, partner, sponsor or supplier.



**Add value.** OMEGA PSI PHI®'s brand is best represented by its people and everything you publish online reflects upon it. Blogs and social networks that are hosted on OMEGA PSI PHI®-owned domains should be used in a way that adds value to OMEGA PSI PHI®'s business. If it helps you, your Brothers, our Community or our schools and other partners to do their jobs and solve problems; if it helps to improve knowledge or skills; if it contributes directly or indirectly to the improvement of OMEGA PSI PHI®'s activities, services, processes and policies; if it builds a sense of community; or if it helps to promote OMEGA PSI PHI®'s Values of Manhood Scholarship, Perseverance and Uplift, then it is adding value:

When you see misrepresentations made about OMEGA PSI PHI® by media, analysts or by other bloggers or social media posters, you may certainly use your posts and blogs-or add comments on the original discussion-to point that out. Always do so with respect, stick to the facts and identify your appropriate affiliation to OMEGA PSI PHI®. Avoid unnecessary or unproductive arguments. Brawls may earn traffic, but nobody wins in the end and you may negatively affect your own, and OMEGA PSI PHI®'s, reputation in the process. Here and in other areas of public discussion, make sure that what you are saying is factually correct.

**Be the first to respond to your own mistakes.** If you make an error, be upfront about your mistake and correct it quickly, as this can help to restore trust. If you choose to modify content that was previously posted, such as editing a blog post, make it clear that you have done so.

**Use your best judgment.** Remember to always use good judgment and common sense in deciding what you publish. If you're about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, review the suggestions above and think about why that is. If you're still unsure, and it is related to OMEGA PSI PHI® business, feel free to discuss it with your District Counselor. Ultimately, however, you have sole responsibility for what you post to your blog, or publish in any form of online social media.

**Don't forget your day job.** You should make sure that your online activities do not interfere with your academic or professional reputation or commitments to the campus or communities you serve.