TCU Division of Marketing & Communication
Updated: October 2025

DIGITAL & SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT GUIDE FOR FACULTY & STAFF

Roles, Precautions, Actions, Resources

TCU

INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed to assist individuals or groups when unwanted attention is directed toward them based on the content of their scholarship, teaching, clinical care, job function, or service. It outlines proactive measures and immediate and long-term resources to assist faculty, staff, and other administrators before, during, and after such incidents. Online content, including bios, classroom content, research, and campus events have become targets for outside interests to misrepresent information and use it to drive traffic to their sites, attract subscribers, and solicit funds to advance their causes. This can result in online harassment and harmful or destructive behavior aimed at faculty, staff, and students. While TCU cannot control these forces, the university utilizes strategies to minimize exposure, reduce reputational harm, and provide resources for support.

FOR TCU FACULTY: This guide is not intended to limit academic freedom as outlined in the Faculty Handbook, American Association of University Professors (AAUP) 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure. This guide focuses on protecting privacy and safety by minimizing the length and severity of any incident that targets a TCU community member for ridicule or harassment.

TCU'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In situations where online harassment or, in the very rare case, threats, have been identified, TCU's immediate goals include the following:

- **CONTAIN:** Limit engagement. Address and de-escalate potential threats to reduce personal risk and protect institutional and individual reputations.
- **SECURE:** Ensure the privacy and safety of the TCU community regarding digital footprint, online identity, and personal safety.
- **PRESERVE:** A safe and effective learning environment.

PLANNING AND PRECAUTION

Below are options to help avoid potential online harassment.

MANAGE ONLINE REPUTATIONAL RISK (DIGITAL FOOTPRINT/ONLINE IDENTITY)
Be mindful of the impact on you and, if you are a faculty member, your students' digital footprint or online identity, which is a lasting digital history of a person's interests, actions, and opinions. Suggestions include:
- Refraining from posting on social media the name, image, likeness, or other personally identifiable information about faculty, staff, or students participating in classroom, co-curricular, or extra-curricular activities or discussions, or TCU campus events, that could result in harassment.
- Avoiding engagement in inflammatory exchanges aimed at generating negative responses or tagging or engaging with controversial groups or individuals.
- **FOR TCU FACULTY:** Do not post syllabi, class information, or assignments online outside of the TCU Learning Management System (LMS). When syllabi are posted beyond TCU's LMS, the information is available to the general public - potentially in perpetuity on external drives long after the expiration of the material - and therefore open to misuse by outside entities.

MANAGE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION RISK
The immediacy and informality of email, text messages, TCU's LMS, social networks, blogs, etc., can lead to content abuse. Here are some actions you can take to mitigate that risk:
- Refrain from emailing or posting on social media any content containing personal information and images that could pose a risk to the safety or privacy of yourself, TCU students, or other TCU employees.
- **FOR TCU FACULTY:** Utilize TCU's LMS for classroom communications as much as possible. Do not share sensitive or personal information via social media, tcu.edu websites, email, or text messages.
- Maintain professional etiquette and civility in all communications, regardless of platform.
- Assume that any email, text, or social media message you send will be shared, potentially widely and to unintended recipients, and could be misused.
- Do not use your TCU email to send personal messages or other emails with information that is not relevant to your position or the recipients.
- The university's platforms are not to be used for personal gain, disseminating political opinions, or in ways that could harm the university; this includes email, university-managed social media channels, TCU websites, and other content systems. See complete policy here.

SUGGESTED STEPS FOR TCU FACULTY & STAFF
- Use this guide to consult with your supervisor, dean, or department chair about managing and mitigating risks.

FOR TCU FACULTY:
MANAGE RISKS TO THE CLASSROOM LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
In the classroom, students engage with and consider complex historical and contemporary issues and viewpoints. Faculty and students expect a reasonable level of privacy to ensure open and robust discussions without fear that statements will be misused or used outside of the classroom context.

Manage your learning environment to preserve the intended academic purpose of your content. Be mindful when dealing with materials or assignments that might elicit disclosure of personal information, have the potential for misuse, or expose you or your students to harassment or reputational harm.
- Limit availability and exposure to course content and discussions to inside the classroom or LMS. For example, you may prohibit students from capturing or recording course content, materials, or discussions without the permission of the instructor and/or other classroom participants. For virtual classrooms, prevent screenshots. This should be outlined in your syllabus.
- Ensure that coursework and assignments do not lead to undue risks to students or compromise learning outcomes.
- Review resources (included at the end of this guide) available to faculty and students experiencing distress.

SUGGESTED STEPS FOR SUPERVISORS, DEANS, AND DEPARTMENT CHAIRS
- Use this guide to support your employees in developing and implementing risk management strategies, such as:
  - Ensuring that any risks are addressed by regular campus, classroom, or laboratory policies and safety protocols.
  - Engaging with appropriate university resources and offices (listed at the end of this guide) in support of the university's mission.
  - Contacting the Office of Communication if you think they should be aware of an issue.

IMMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM ACTIONS

ONLINE HARASSMENT AND THREATS

If you, your employees or any TCU student experience online harassment or threats:

- Alert your supervisor, department chair, and dean.
- Make your personal social media profiles private, either permanently or temporarily.
- Be cautious of reading harassing posts, emails, or feedback. Consider entrusting someone to review incoming communications with or for you.
- Do not engage. This may seem counterintuitive when your first instinct is to respond or defend, but the most effective response to most ideological or controversial issues is to practice restraint and carefully consider whether a response is necessary. (See Kalven Report recommendations.)
- Do not delete the information; instead, preserve content by taking screenshots.
- If you receive threatening messages, screenshot the content and contact TCU Police for immediate assessment.
  - Download the FrogShield app to your mobile phone. FrogShield allows you to contact TCU Police quickly and directly in emergency situations, and to report safety concerns while attaching photos and videos.
  - On campus: For an immediate risk, contact TCU Police 24-hour Emergency at 817-257-7777. For a non-immediate risk, contact TCU Police non-emergency at 817-257-8400.
  - For an immediate risk, contact 911.
- Contact the Office of Communication to ensure that digital and social media is monitored. They will work in tandem with TCU Police to determine the risk and threat level. The Office of Communication monitors social media for mentions of the university. When an issue is noted, the Office of Communication will:
  - Hide or remove harmful/threatening posts from TCU social media platforms
  - Suggest that you turn your personal social media platforms to private
  - Offer to temporarily remove your bio and contact information from the TCU website (with your permission only)
  - File an offensive content report with the social media platform
  - notify TCU leadership, dean, department chair, and TCU main telephone operators
  - Partner with you to create a communications plan to mitigate harm
  - Continue to monitor digital and social media content throughout the incident and beyond

- Consider engaging with the university's Employee Assistance Program. TCU offers a variety of physical, emotional, and mental health support services that all members of the TCU community can access. You can discuss additional support with your supervisor if needed.
- Guide students to contact the Counseling and Mental Health Center to ensure that they access the care they need for their mental health. The center offers in-person sessions, remote sessions, and a 24-hour counseling helpline at 1-866-335-4914.

NOTE: All campus resources, with contact information, are outlined at the end of this guide in the Appendix, including TCU emergency numbers.

MEDIA COVERAGE OR REQUESTS

If you, your employees, or students are contacted by media:

TCU's media relations policy requires that employees notify TCU's Office of Communication. Email news@tcu.edu if you are contacted by media for any reason. A member of the Office of Communication will help you manage potential issues and develop a response strategy to help minimize ongoing risk and mitigate a resurgence of the issue. It is the sole responsibility of the university administration to determine the response. Media training is available to help guide thoughtful responses. Contact news@tcu.edu for more information.

APPENDIX

TCU EMERGENCY NUMBERS

TCU Campus Police
24-hour Emergency
817-257-7777

Physical Plant
(24-hour Emergency)
817-257-7954

TCU Campus Police
(Non-Emergency)
817-257-8400

24-hour Counseling Line
(students only)
817-257-7233

RELEVANT TCU POLICIES

TCU Digital and Social Media Guidelines for Official TCU Platforms
- Official university platforms - including university, college, department, and program social media; email; blogs; and websites - are not to be used for personal gain, for disseminating political opinions, or in ways that could harm the university. Vulgar, threatening, or abusive language and personal attacks are prohibited. Login information should be saved in LastPass with access provided to the Office of Communication.

TCU's Media Relations Policy
- TCU employees must notify the Office of Communication when contacted by media for any reason. TCU Communication will guide and monitor the request to ensure accuracy.

Academic Conduct Policy Code of Conduct Policy

Code of Conduct Policy

Firearms and Weapons Policy

Network and Computer Usage Policy

Conflict Resolution Policy for Faculty

Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Retaliation

Responding to Reports of Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Retaliation

Notice of Nondiscrimination

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Center for Connection Culture

Employee Assistance Program
866-335-4914

General Counsel
817-257-6188

Human Resources
817-257-7790

Information Technology
817-257-6855

Office of Communication
817-257-5060

Public Safety/Emergency
Management
817-257-8400

Provost and Vice Chancellor
for Academic Affairs
817-257-7101