1001 CAMPUS LIFE AND RESPONSIBILITIES: M.S.W. HANDBOOK

1001.1 Smith College Social Events Accessibility Policy

Accessibility Policy Smith College is committed to compliance with both the spirit and the letter of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The goal of the college is to assure not only non-discrimination but to provide for full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of campus life.

The following private entities and activities are considered public accommodations under the ADA: establishments serving food or drink, theatres, lecture and concert halls, sports facilities and places of exhibition, entertainment, recreation, and private undergraduate or postgraduate schools.

Any activities planned and scheduled to take place on the Smith campus that are open, or advertised as open, to the Smith community, the Five College community, or the general public should be accessible to persons with all types of disabilities.

Accessibility of Campus Events

All-campus parties must be held in locations that are accessible to persons with mobility impairments. Any questions should be directed to the disability services director at ext. 2071.

For open house parties, the college has adopted a standard that a minimum of one house or Campus Center party on any particular night (except winter and spring weekends) will be in an accessible location.

For all organizations and for houses hosting private events, if the event location is not accessible and guests with mobility impairments will be attending, special arrangements should be made ahead of time to accommodate them or to reserve another location. If these arrangements have not been made, you will be unable to host the event. Any questions should be directed to the disability services director, at ext. 2071.

Responsibilities of the event planner include the following:

• Scheduling a location, which is accessible to persons with mobility impairments, including wheelchair users, and advertising the event as being accessible.
• Providing sign-language interpreters or assistive listening devices if requested at conferences, public lectures or concerts. (You may say in your publicity that these will be provided with two weeks notice.) Contact disability services, ext. 2071.
• Advertising events in various media (i.e., both oral and visual materials such as printed announcements, radio advertisements, phone mail listings of events, SGA Hotline, etc.). The Office of Student Engagement has symbols denoting accessibility available upon request.
• Making available large-print copies of programs or other printed materials that may be handed out at events.
• Sending an e-mail to the director of the Disability Services Office if you are holding an event that accommodates persons with disabilities.
• Asking invited guests and participants of conferences whether they will need special accommodations. This should be included in any invitations you send out.
• Consulting the accessibility information table in the appendix of the Guide to Student Organizations and Event Planning when determining potential locations for your events.

The Office of Disability Services is available to provide technical assistance on accessibility to student organizations. Organizations are responsible for making various arrangements for their events, including requesting and paying for sign-language interpreters during conferences, public performances and concerts. Requests for interpreters should be submitted two weeks in advance to the Office of Disability Services, ext. 2071, or College Hall 104.

1001.2 Using Social Media in Professional & Educational Endeavors

Social media includes many widely used forms of electronic communication (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, microblogs, websites, etc.) allowing users to create online communities and to share information, messages, and other content. It offers quick and effective ways to stay in touch with family, friends and colleagues. It is vibrant and immediate. It also offers many ways to make new connections and has been widely used to promote political advocacy and social justice. Social media can be a valuable part of professional and personal activities, but must be used thoughtfully and in accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics (2008), within the confines of agency policies, the policies of the Smith College School for Social Work, and all local, state and federal laws.

When used in relation to one’s professional activities, social media deserves some careful consideration. There are legal risks, ethical risks and pragmatic risks along with social media’s many merits. Be mindful that once information is posted on social media it may be impossible to delete. The technology for capturing online information is already well developed. You may not be able to retract or correct any information you post - forever. Recent newspaper reports indicate that employers are increasingly checking job applicant’s social media sites and using the data they find for formal and informal decision-making. Both your personal and professional information may be checked by employers and others.

Learning about, carefully setting and regularly reviewing the privacy settings and other features of any social media you use is wise for all professionals. A simple search will identify many sites to help guide you about using social media programs. However, bear in mind that many of these sites are business oriented and assume you mainly wish to build referral traffic. Social workers must carefully distinguish their personal and professional uses of social media. For social workers, one helpful starting point is the University of Texas at Austin’s “How to Manage Your Social Media Privacy Settings.” It is wise to review your online presence as a client or employer might do.

Several ethical obligations must be kept in mind. First, discussion or disclosure of client information without documented client consent is prohibited by law, institutional policies and social work ethics. Federal HIPPA regulations, state licensure and practice laws and agency policies all prohibit disclosure of client information to others not directly charged with the client’s care. Professional advice should never be offered outside
an agency or practice setting. Social workers should always practice in
their areas of competence in defined relationships to clients (NASW Code
of Ethics, Section 104).

Second, social work professional ethics also prohibit discussion of client
information outside of direct work activities. It is inappropriate to refer
to clients, client situations, supervisors or field agencies on social media
regardless of efforts to restrict or limit access to the information. The
NASW Code of Ethics, Section 1.07 (i) states that “Social workers should
not discuss confidential information in any setting unless privacy can be
ensured. Social workers should not discuss confidential information in
public or semipublic areas such as hallways, waiting rooms, elevators,
and restaurants.” Social media are effectively public or semipublic
locations. The Code also states that “(k) Social workers should protect
the confidentiality of clients when responding to requests from members
of the media.” Even restricted access social media sites may be viewed
as media outlets. If you are speaking for an agency or group, (and only
ever with explicit written permission and direction from that group) you
should use their name to be transparent to other users. Only use your
institutional affiliation when you are making professional postings, never
for personal ones.

Third, the NASW Code of Ethics, Section 2.01 states that “(a) Social
workers should treat colleagues with respect and should represent
accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of
colleagues, and (b) Social workers should avoid unwarranted negative
criticism of colleagues in communications with clients or with other
professionals.” Postings on social media about other professionals and
about professional matters should be respectful, fair, accurate, and
without undue criticism, including field agencies and their personnel.
Your colleagues deserve to be treated with the same dignity and respect
as social workers treat our clients. Hasty social media postings may
violate these standards, make the evidence of such an infraction widely
known, and may be difficult or impossible to undo.

Agencies and institutions have the authority to ask social media
organizations to refuse, or to terminate, social media groups that
use their institutional names. The reputation and social ‘face’ of an
institution may be enhanced or undermined by social media sites, and
thus these agencies and institutions have rights to limit how their names
and images are used. Many names and images are copyrighted or
trademarked. Using such names and images may violate the law. Always
ask for approval before using institutional or agency names in online
posts. If you need to make an institutional connection, ask permission
from the Director or Dean before making any post including institutional
names, content or images.

Finally, any academic process or information that is considered
confidential should not be shared publicly on social media. This includes,
but is not limited to professional review proceedings or information about
other students’ professional performance.

Failing to use professional judgment when using social media may
harm you, colleagues and clients. Professional conduct on social media
deserves appropriate care. Failing to meet the policies of Smith College
School for Social Work, laws, agency policies, NASW Code of Ethics
and can lead to consultation, review and potentially dismissal from
the program. It may also lead to external actions through professional
sanction or legal suit. Use social media wisely and with care when it has
any link to your professional activities.