

## **Social Media Response Guidelines**

August 2013

People talk about Dalhousie all the time online, from high school students excitedly applying for admission, to current students discussing food, sports or campus life. The vast majority of these conversations do not require a Dalhousie contribution, but there are times when it's appropriate—and welcome—for the university's voice to be heard in the discussion.

### **Spokespeople**

Responding to an online discussion as an individual is very different than responding as someone responsible for the issue at-hand.

Only staff who are authorized by Communications and Marketing or the president to speak on behalf of the university administration may do so in an official capacity. Staff who respond on behalf of a department, faculty or office should have the authorization to address the subject matter at hand – and should clearly state their association with the university.

If you are ever unsure, please consult Communications and Marketing prior to responding.

### **When to consult Communications and Marketing**

Communications and Marketing monitors Dalhousie's online reputation, but no one system can find everything. Sometimes, members of our community—faculty, staff, students—are best positioned to discover emerging online issues. Let us know if an online issue:

- Is being discussed across multiple websites
- Has posts with a large or increasing number of comments or responses
- Has potential legal implications (such as defamation)
- Appears significantly threatening to the university's reputation
- Appears to warrant a response, but you are unsure how to proceed

We also appreciate a heads-up on positive mentions, especially if there is potential to share the conversation on our own communications platforms (Dal News, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

### **General response considerations**

Transparency—Disclose your Dalhousie connection if you are responding as a Dalhousie employee. Do not misrepresent yourself, as this can often cause greater harm if the Dalhousie connection is eventually uncovered.

Sourcing—Cite available sources when available using links, videos or other references (Dal News articles, online news postings, etc.)

Tone—Responses should be honest, considerate, and reflect positively on the

