



UTRGV Social Media Handbook:

**A Comprehensive Guide to Effective, Responsible
Digital Communication**

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Introduction

Social media plays a vital role in student engagement and communication at UTRGV. With most students online daily, departments have a great opportunity to build community and strengthen our university's brand. However, representing UTRGV online comes with responsibilities—content must follow university policies and laws like FERPA and HIPAA.

This guide provides clear, practical strategies to help departments engage students, grow their presence, and stay compliant. It covers **student engagement, platform-specific guidance, content planning, audience interaction & growth, performance tracking** and **policy adherence**.

Student Engagement & Brand Awareness

Creating Conversations, Not Just Posts

Social media is more than just posting announcements—it's about connection, conversations, and community. Engage your audience by asking questions, encouraging comments, and responding quickly to messages. Celebrate achievements and address concerns to make your online presence feel personal and relatable. **Authenticity is key – 91% of consumers (including students) are more likely to support brands they perceive as authentic.** Showcase student voices through testimonials or quotes and invite them to share experiences using dedicated hashtags or page mentions. Engaging with student-generated content fosters community and boosts visibility.

Stay True to Our Brand

Every post should reflect UTRGV's brand and values. Highlight student, faculty, and alumni achievements, showcase our diverse culture, and promote community involvement. Use official logos and colors, following UTRGV branding guidelines to maintain consistency and trust.



Branding & Consistency

Make sure to use UTRGV's official logos and colors per the [UTRGV Graphic Identity Guide](#). Consistent branding builds trust and recognition.



Tone & Messaging

Maintain a positive, inclusive, and professional tone that aligns with UTRGV's values—excellence, student-centricity, and innovation.



Hashtags & Engagement

Boost visibility by using official university hashtags (e.g., #UTRGV) and consider creating department- or campaign-specific hashtags to encourage student participation.



Representing UTRGV Responsibly

Official pages speak for the university. Avoid personal opinions or content that contradicts UTRGV's values and policies. Keep it professional, positive, and aligned with the university's mission.

Overview of Approved Social Media Platforms

UTRGV supports using several major platforms for official departmental communications, including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and X. TikTok is not allowed on university-managed accounts or devices, in compliance with Texas state regulations. **Each platform has its own audience, strengths, and best practices, so content should be tailored accordingly.**

While new platforms may emerge, it's best to focus on platforms where your audience is already most active rather than joining every new trend.

Below is an updated overview of the approved platforms and tips for using them effectively.

All official UTRGV departmental social media accounts – existing or new – must be approved and registered with the University Social Media Manager per university policy.

Facebook

Audience & Content

Facebook remains one of the most widely used platforms, reaching students, parents, alumni, and the community. Its tone should be informative, community-driven, and professional yet approachable—perfect for sharing news, event updates, photo albums, and success stories in a slightly longer format.

Best Practices

- **Use Photos & Videos:** Posts with visuals tend to receive higher engagement. Share behind-the-scenes campus moments, student testimonials, and faculty spotlights.
- **Leverage Facebook Events:** Invite people to departmental events or initiatives to boost attendance. Post reminders, updates, and photos in the event page to keep interest high.
- **Keep Captions Clear:** Include a clear call-to-action (e.g., "Join us this Friday at..."). Don't hesitate to use a slightly longer format when sharing meaningful stories, event recaps, or detailed announcements—just keep the content engaging, well-formatted, and visually supported.
- **Engage in Comments & Messages Daily:** A quick reply, acknowledgment, or a simple "Thank you" can boost interaction — 79% of users expect a brand to respond within 24 hours.
- **Consider Creating Facebook Groups:** Groups for academic programs, student organizations, or alumni networks can foster community discussions in a more private and meaningful forum.
- **Use Facebook Live:** Stream Q&A sessions, campus updates, or event highlights to engage audiences in real-time.

Instagram

Audience & Content

Instagram is a highly visual platform favored by current students and young alumni. It's perfect for showcasing campus life, student takeovers, behind-the-scenes looks at events, and telling stories through imagery. Departments might share photos of daily activities, short videos (Reels), or use Stories for more spontaneous updates and interactive content. Instagram's tone should be engaging, authentic, and student-focused—blending fun, informative, and inspiring content to showcase campus life.

Best Practices

- **Post High-Quality Images and Videos:** Quality visuals are key – use high-resolution photos or well-designed graphics. Ensure content aligns with UTRGV's branding, including color schemes and fonts.
- **Use Stories Daily:** Engage followers with polls, Q&A stickers, and countdowns for events. Story features like question stickers, polls, and quizzes can drive student interaction (e.g., "Which spring event are you most excited for?").
- **Keep Captions Short & Engaging:** Ask questions or encourage actions like "Tag a friend!" Maintain a professional yet approachable tone—emojis, hashtags, and a bit of personality are fine but should align with the university brand
- **Engage with Comments & DMs:** Respond to messages promptly to foster community. Comment on posts you're tagged in (e.g., if a student tags @UTRGVdepartment in a graduation photo, leave a congratulatory comment).
- **Create Reels (short-form vertical videos):** Reels are a powerful way to boost reach and showcase fun, authentic content – highlight student testimonials, campus moments, fun experiments, or sports highlights in quick, engaging formats.
- **Leverage Student Takeovers:** Let students share their daily life and experiences.

LinkedIn

Audience & Content

LinkedIn connects alumni, faculty, staff, industry partners, and career-focused students. Departments can showcase academic achievements, research, notable faculty/alumni, internships, and professional events. Content should maintain a formal, informative tone.

Best Practices

- **Share Professional Content:** Highlight research, student successes, and career resources.
- **Craft Professional Captions:** Keep posts well-structured and polished.
- **Engage with Interactions:** Respond to comments to boost visibility.
- **Leverage Faculty & Student Networks:** Encourage sharing to expand reach.
- **Publish Articles:** Have faculty share expert insights on industry trends.
- **Participate in Groups:** Build thought leadership in relevant communities.
- **Post Opportunities:** Share relevant jobs and assistantships for students/alumni.

YouTube

Audience & Content

YouTube serves as a video library and is the second-largest search engine. It's suitable for longer-form video content: event recordings, interviews, how-to guides, virtual campus tours, or an ongoing department vlog. The audience can include current students, prospective students, and the general public searching for topics related to the university or your field.

Best Practices

- **Organize Videos into Playlists:** Helps users navigate content easily.
- **Use Clear Titles & Descriptions:** Optimize for searchability.
- **Engage with Viewers:** Respond to comments to foster community.
- **Upload YouTube Shorts:** Short, engaging videos to highlight key messages.
- **Add Captions for Accessibility:** Review auto-generated captions for accuracy.
- **Cross-Promote on Other Platforms:** Share links to videos on Instagram Stories, LinkedIn, and Facebook.

Twitter (X)

Audience & Content

Twitter (rebranded as "X") is a microblogging platform suited for real-time updates and brief communications. It's popular for news flashes, reminders, live event coverage, and interacting with niche communities via hashtags. UTRGV departments can use Twitter (X) to share quick announcements, deadline reminders, or to live-tweet during events like orientations, games, or Q&A sessions.

Best Practices

- **Post Timely Updates:** Ideal for event reminders, deadline alerts, and last-minute changes.
- **Monitor & Respond Quickly:** Users often expect rapid replies on this platform.
- **Keep Posts Short & Conversational:** Stick to concise messaging within the 280-character limit; brevity and clarity are essential.
- **Use Threads for More Information:** Connect multiple tweets to expand on a topic.
- **Retweet & Reply Often:** Engage with faculty, students, and partner organizations. Tagging and replying can increase visibility – congratulate partner organizations or students by @mention, and retweet positive mentions of UTRGV or your department.
- **Be Mindful of Tone:** Twitter can amplify missteps quickly, so ensure tweets are professional and positive.

Other Platforms and Considerations

Blogs/Websites

If your department creates long-form content (articles, research summaries, student journals), use a blog platform (e.g., WordPress) or the UTRGV news section. Share blog posts on social media to drive traffic. Keep content updated and aligned with UTRGV's voice and branding. Blogs can also provide great social media content, like a "Student of the Month" series shared on LinkedIn and Facebook.

New Social Platforms

Platforms like Instagram's Threads or other emerging networks may gain popularity. Before creating an account, consult the Social Media Manager. Any new UTRGV-affiliated account must go through the approval process. Focus on platforms where students are most active rather than jumping on every trend.

TikTok

Not allowed. As of 2023, TikTok is banned on Texas state networks and devices, including UTRGV. Departments must not create or use TikTok accounts. Instead, use Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts for short-form videos. Although students still mention UTRGV on TikTok, official participation has ended. Stay updated on university policies in case of changes.

Content Strategy — Mixing Content Types

A strong content strategy keeps your social media dynamic, engaging, and relevant. Mixing videos, images, and written posts—while using storytelling to make content relatable—helps capture attention and spark interaction. **The key is variety: balancing different formats ensures your audience stays interested, whether they prefer to watch, read, or quickly scroll.**



Videos

Videos are the most engaging format. Use them for lab experiments, event recaps, student testimonials, or "day in the life" clips. Keep them short—between 30 seconds and 2 minutes. Live videos (on Facebook or Instagram) encourage real-time interaction. Always add captions for accessibility.



Written Posts

Written Posts (Blogs/Articles) work best for in-depth content. If you're sharing faculty research or student experiences, link to a blog or news article with a short, engaging caption. Avoid long paragraphs—use subheadings or bullet points for easy reading.



Images & Infographics

Images & Infographics grab attention. Post high-quality photos of events, campus scenery, and student projects. Use infographics for quick facts, stats, or step-by-step guides (like scholarship application tips). Stick to UTRGV branding and add alt-text for accessibility.



Stories & Temporary Content

Stories & Temporary Content (Instagram/Facebook Stories) are great for quick updates, student takeovers, or behind-the-scenes moments. Keep them fun and casual. Save important Stories as highlights (e.g., "Tour the Campus").

Strive for a content calendar that rotates these formats to keep things fresh. For example, in a given week you might plan –

- **Monday:** Share a motivational quote or an interesting stat graphic
- **Tuesday:** Post a student spotlight photo
- **Wednesday:** Link to a news story or departmental blog post
- **Thursday:** Share a throwback photo or a behind-the-scenes moment via Stories
- **Friday:** Post a short video recap of the week's events

Storytelling Techniques for Reach and Engagement

Tell a story whenever possible, rather than just sharing information. Storytelling creates an emotional connection and makes content more shareable. In practice, this means framing your posts around people and narratives:



Feature Student & Alumni Stories

Share real experiences that highlight UTRGV's impact. Instead of saying, "Our program offers research opportunities," tell a student's journey—how their research led to real-world success. Example: A short video interview or a spotlight photo on an alumnus landing their dream job.



Show a "Day in the Life"

Let students, faculty, or staff take over social media for a day to share their routine. Instagram Stories takeovers—from morning classes to campus events—offer an authentic glimpse into life at UTRGV. Always supervise to ensure content stays on brand.



Create Thematic Series

Develop recurring content themes that tell a broader story over time: Student Success Tuesday – Weekly student achievement highlights; Faculty Friday – Fun Q&As and research spotlights; Throwback Thursday – Campus history and nostalgic moments.



Use Emotion & Strong Visuals

Posts with pride, inspiration, humor, or nostalgia perform well. A story about a first-gen student's journey is more powerful with a cap-and-gown photo of them celebrating with family. Always get permission when featuring individuals.

Write captions with a narrative: Instead of generic captions, set the scene or include a quote: "I never thought I'd make it this far," says Maria, a senior biology major who arrived in the U.S. at 10 not knowing English. Next week, she'll walk the stage as valedictorian." Engaging captions encourage comments and shares, boosting reach. **Be authentic: Not every story has to be perfect—show challenges too!** If an event faced bad weather but students made the best of it, share that moment. **Real stories build trust and make a bigger impact.**

Engagement Strategies — Student Takeovers

What It Is

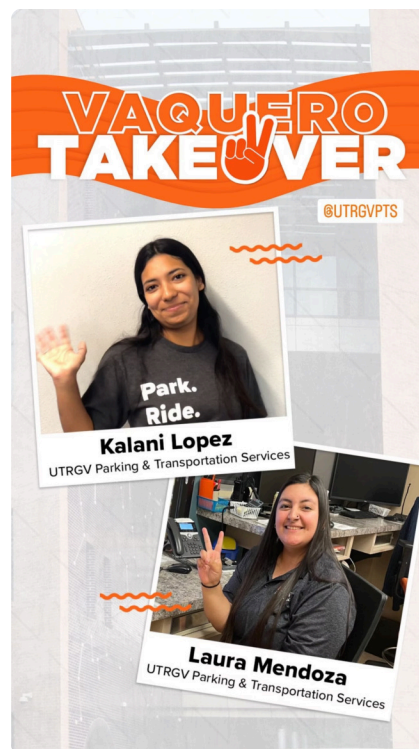
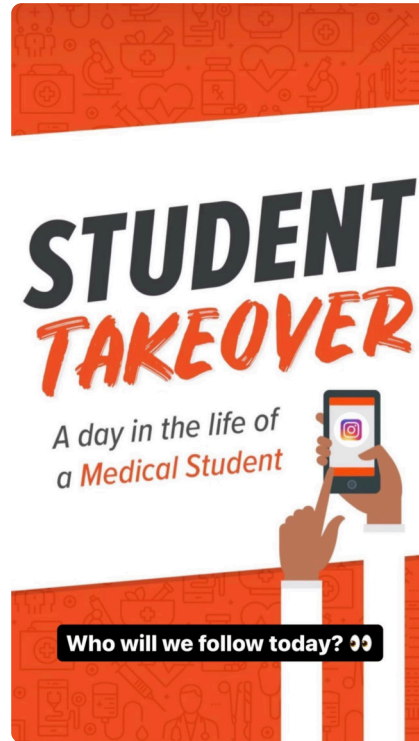
Let a current student (or group) "take over" the department's social media account for a day. They can share their daily experiences via Instagram Stories (e.g., a conference, workshop, event).

How to Use It

Choose reliable, enthusiastic students and provide clear instructions beforehand (no controversial content; adhere to all policies). A staff member should monitor the takeover and change the password after takeover is complete.

Benefits

Authentic voices boost engagement and show other students what they can expect, while adding variety without relying solely on staff posts.



Engagement Strategies — Live Q&A Sessions

What It Is

Host live question-and-answer sessions where students can ask questions in real-time.

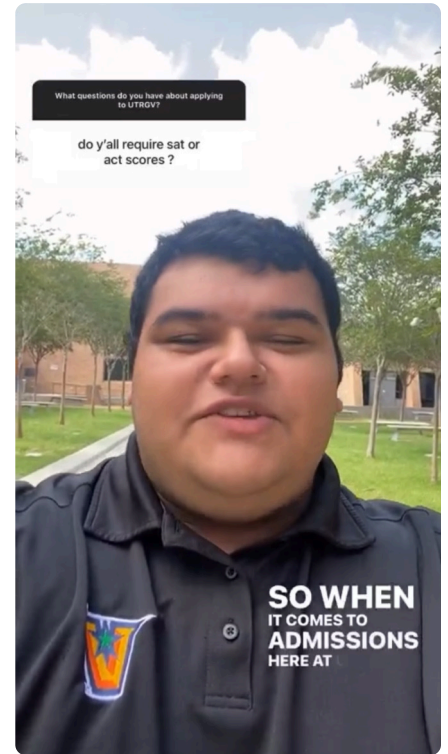
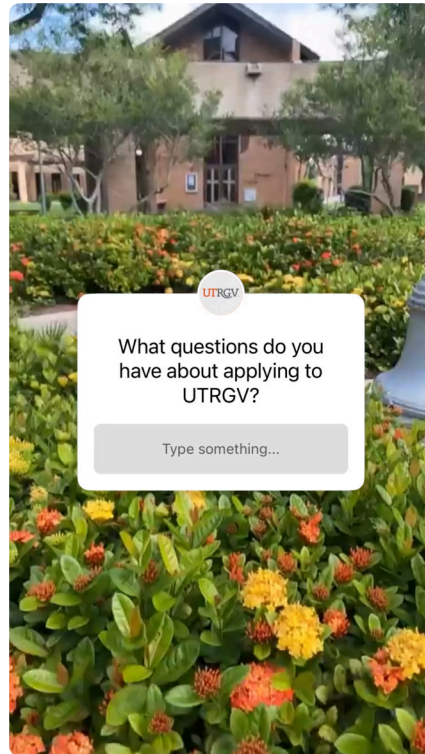
How to Use It

Utilize Instagram Stories' question feature for interactive responses, or host live video streams on Instagram or Facebook to answer questions in real time.

Promote the session in advance, and have a moderator to manage questions and language.

Benefits

Live sessions create real-time interaction and help your audience feel heard. Follow up with a recap or FAQ for those who miss it.



Engagement Strategies — Interactive Instagram Stories

What It Is

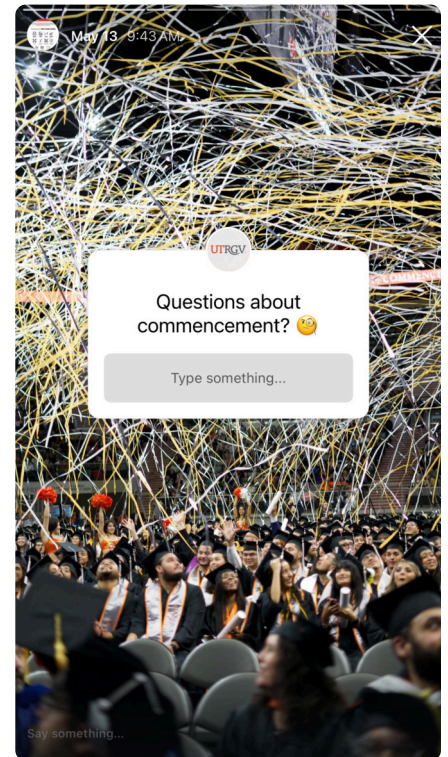
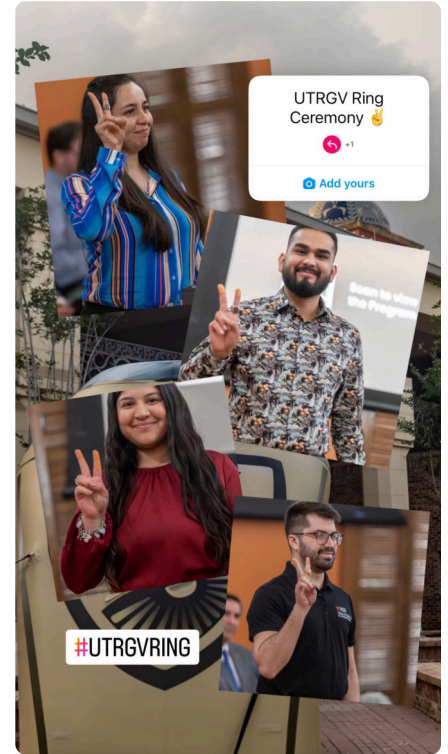
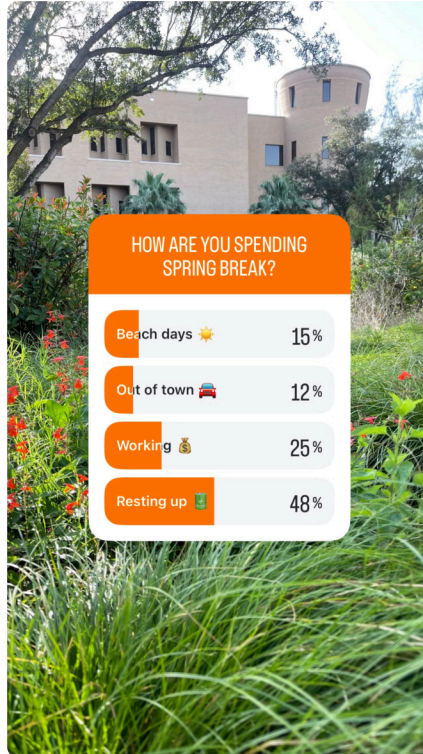
Use Instagram's built-in interactive tools—such as polls, quizzes, question boxes, countdown stickers, and the "Add Yours" sticker—to spark conversations and boost engagement.

Examples

Ask "What workshop topic do you want next month?" or run a trivia quiz like "How many libraries does UTRGV have? A)2 B)3 C)5."

Benefits

These features invite participation, gather feedback, entertain, and create a sense of community. They also help surface ideas from your audience while boosting your reach through shares and replies.



Engagement Strategies — User-Generated Content

What It Is

Encourage students to share their own content about campus life.

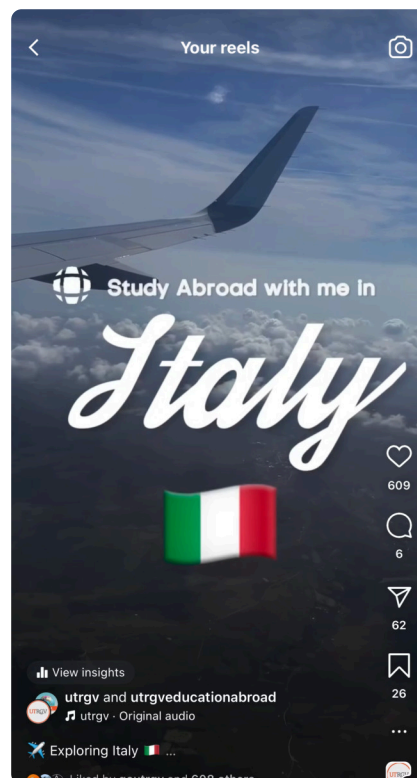
How to Use It

Establish a dedicated hashtag (e.g., #UTRGVGrad) and/or ask for direct message submissions and participation.

Monitor hashtags, tags and mentions to reshare the best posts on your official account, ensuring you obtain permission when re-posting. Identify students that would be suitable to help create videos from their unique perspective.

Benefits

UGC is 61% more effective at engaging Gen Z because it feels authentic and relatable, making students feel connected and represented. By leveraging UGC, you not only get fresh content without always creating it yourself, but you also make students feel more connected and represented.



Engagement Strategies — Highlighting Community and Campus Life

What It Is

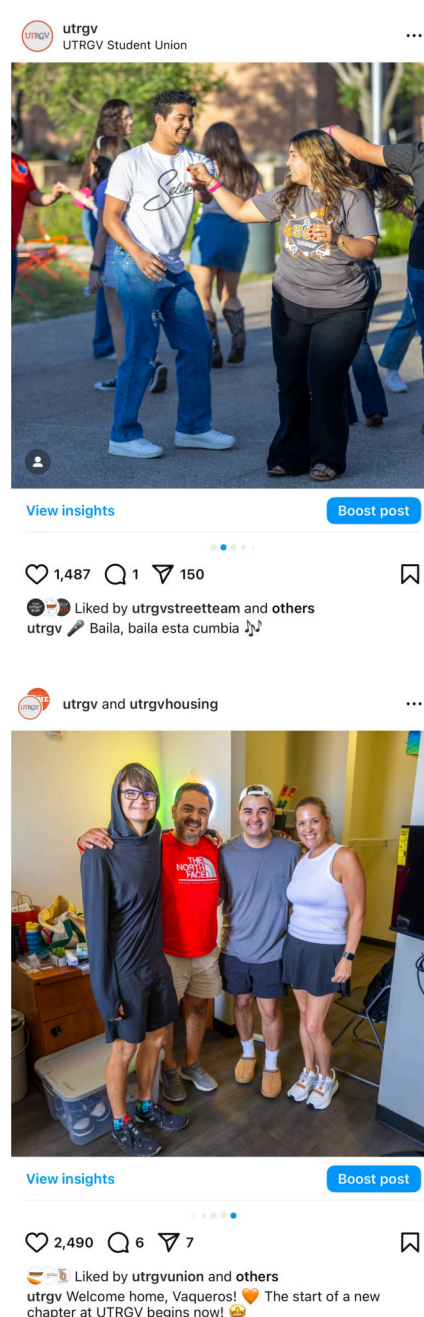
Highlight the people, places, and moments that make your area of campus special. These stories bring campus life to your audience in a personal and meaningful way.

How to Use It

Feature students, staff, events, or spaces using photos, videos, or quotes to show what makes your community unique. Focus on diversity, everyday moments, and real experiences.

Benefits

Personal connections and a sense of belonging boost engagement, build pride, and help others connect with your part of campus. It's a great way to show what life at UTRGV is really like.



Engagement Strategies — Collaboration with Other UTRGV Accounts

What It Is

Collaboration posts are a feature that allows two accounts to co-author a single post or Reel, making it visible on *both profiles simultaneously* and sharing likes, comments, and reach.

How to Use it

If you're working with another department, you can collaborate on an event recap on Instagram so it shows up on both pages. You can also co-host a Facebook Events to reach more people.

Before posting, plan together. Decide who's doing what—like creating the post, uploading it, and replying to comments.

Benefits

Cross-promotion not only unifies messaging and reinforces brand identity but also attracts followers from different accounts, amplifying your overall reach and engagement.



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Liked by utrgvmarchingband and others

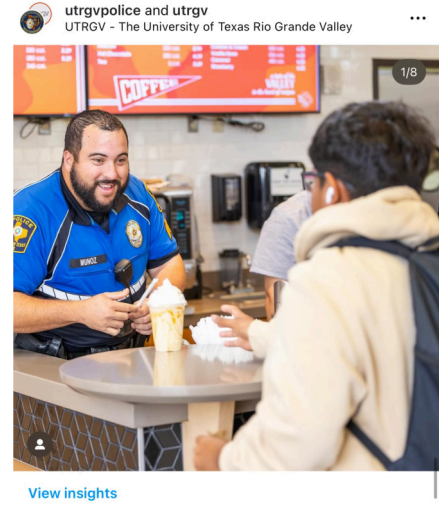
utrgv 🎉🔥 This past weekend, the @utrgvmarchingband and @utrgvdrillteam took part in the 93rd Annual Texas Citrus Fiesta Parade of Oranges in @cityofmissiontx... more



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Liked by jessgzzcm__ and others

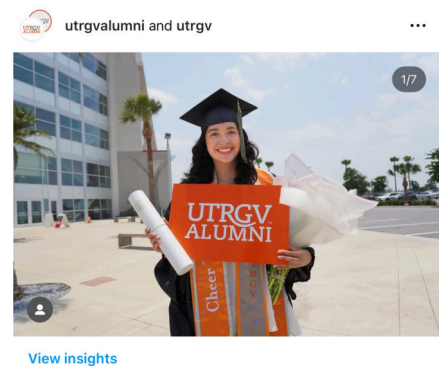
utrgvsom They dreamed it. They earned it. 🎉🔥



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Liked by utrgvstreetteam and others

utrgvpolice Happy Campus Safety Awareness Week! 🙌



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Liked by utrgvopc and others

utrgvalumni The tassels have turned, and the Class of 2025 has officially crossed the stage! 🎓🔥 Congratulations on earning your degree—this moment reflects your commitment and all the effort it took to get here. We're so proud to welcome you into the UTRGV Alumni family.

Growing Your Audience — Post with Purpose and Consistency

Simply having a social media page isn't enough—departments must actively grow and nurture their audience to ensure people see their content. **A strong social media presence requires consistent engagement, strategic content, and community-building efforts.** Rather than relying on paid ads, departments should focus on organic growth, which builds a loyal and engaged audience over time.

Maintain a Consistent Posting Schedule

Consistency is key to keeping your audience engaged and ensuring your content gets seen. **Create a realistic posting schedule and stick to it.** Regular posting signals to social media algorithms that your account is active, increasing the likelihood that your posts appear in users' feeds. Use native scheduling tools to plan content in advance and avoid gaps in activity.

Prioritize Quality Over Quantity

While posting consistently is important, avoid posting just for the sake of it. **Each post should provide value—whether it's helpful information, an exciting update, or something that sparks an emotional connection.** Irrelevant posts can lead to audience disengagement or unfollows. Instead, focus on strategic content that resonates with your audience.

Engage with Your Community

Growing your social media presence isn't just about pushing out content—it's about creating conversations. **Respond to comments and messages quickly, like and comment on posts where your department or UTRGV is tagged, and engage with relevant accounts such as student organizations and faculty.** Social media algorithms prioritize content with high engagement, so encouraging interaction (e.g., asking questions, acknowledging user contributions) will organically expand your reach.

Growing Your Audience — Cross-Promotion and Integration

Cross-Promote with Other Campus Accounts

Maximize reach by collaborating with other UTRGV departments, student organizations, and university-affiliated pages:

- **Shoutouts & Shared Content:** Partner with other university accounts to share each other's posts and stories.
- **Faculty & Staff Mentions:** Encourage professors to share department social media pages in class or through online course materials.

Integrate Social Media into Existing Communications

Don't rely solely on platform algorithms—use your existing communication channels to drive traffic to your social pages:

- **Email Signatures:** Add social media links to department-wide email footers.
- **Newsletters & Announcements:** Include social media highlights with a call to action (e.g., "Follow us on Instagram @UTRGV____ for more updates!").
- **Website:** Display social media links on department websites.

Leverage Campus Events and Physical Spaces

Take advantage of real-world opportunities to drive traffic to your social media:

- **QR Codes on Flyers & Posters:** Display QR codes linking to your pages in high-traffic areas, at tabling events, and on department brochures.
- **Tabling at Events:** When attending or hosting an event, encourage attendees to follow your social media by offering small incentives like stickers or giveaways.
- **New Student Orientations & Workshops:** Introduce your pages to students early and show them how following your department can benefit them.
- **Branded Giveaways:** Distribute swag with your social media handles (e.g., pens, notebooks, shirts) to increase visibility.

Analytics & Performance Tracking — Key Metrics

Tracking social media performance is essential for refining strategy and improving results. UTRGV departments should regularly monitor key metrics to understand growth, engagement, and overall impact. Here's what to focus on and which tools to use.



Follower Growth

Monitor how many new followers (or page likes/subscribers) you gain over time. Steady growth means increased reach, while spikes or drops may be tied to campaigns or issues.



Engagement

Interactions such as likes, comments, shares, saves, clicks, and views. Don't just look at totals—check engagement rates (engagements divided by followers or impressions) to see how well your content resonates. A small account with high engagement can be more effective than a large account with low engagement.



Reach & Impressions

Reach is the number of unique users who see your content, while impressions count total views (even if the same user sees it multiple times). Identify what increases reach, such as hashtags or shares, and replicate those strategies.



Click-Throughs & Website Traffic

Track how many users click links in your posts, such as event sign-ups or blog articles. Use UTM parameters in URLs to measure traffic in Google Analytics and see which posts drive the most visitors.



Video Metrics

For platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, monitor views, watch time, and audience retention. If most viewers drop off within 10 seconds, the intro might need improvement. Also, track subscriber growth and traffic sources to optimize content discovery.



Top-Performing Content

Identify which posts receive the highest engagement or reach each month. Recognizing trends (e.g., student success stories perform well) helps guide future content.

Analytics & Performance Tracking — Recommended Tools

Built-in Platform Insights

Almost every social media platform provides free analytics:

- Facebook Insights – Reach, engagement, follower demographics
- Instagram Insights – Post/Story/Reel performance, follower activity
- LinkedIn Analytics – Visitor demographics, post performance
- YouTube Studio – Views, watch time, traffic sources

Third-Party Analytics Tools

For deeper insights and easier reporting, consider tools like:

- Hootsuite / Buffer – Manage multiple accounts and track engagement
- Sprout Social / HubSpot – Advanced analytics and reporting options

Social Listening Tools

To monitor brand mentions and sentiment, premium tools like Brandwatch or Mention can track conversations about UTRGV. Contact University Marketing for available resources.

URL Shorteners with Analytics

Use Bitly or Rebrandly to track link clicks. If a long event link is shortened (e.g., bit.ly/event), you can later see how many people clicked it and where they came from.

Analytics & Performance Tracking — Implementation

How to Implement a Tracking Routine

Monthly or Quarterly Review

Export data or note key numbers:

- Follower count
- Posts published
- Engagement rate
- Top 3 performing posts
- Notable feedback or comments

Adjust Strategy Based on Insights

If videos outperform other content, create more. If Instagram is thriving but Twitter isn't, shift focus accordingly.

Set Benchmarks & Goals

Example:

- Increase Instagram followers by 10% this semester
- Maintain a 5% engagement rate on Facebook

Track progress and adjust strategies as needed.

Stay Updated

Social media algorithms change frequently. Follow sources like Sprout Social's or Metricool's blog to stay informed and adapt strategies accordingly.

Consistent tracking helps identify successes, learn from challenges, and continuously improve social media performance.

UTRGV Social Media Guidelines — Account Management

All UTRGV departmental social media managers must follow university policies and legal regulations to protect both the institution and its community. The following guidelines must be adhered to when managing official social media accounts:

Account Approval and Oversight

- **Prior Approval Required:** Do not create any social media accounts representing UTRGV without obtaining prior approval from the University Marketing and Communications (UMC) Social Media Manager. All departmental social media accounts are considered university property and must be registered accordingly.
- **Administrative Access:** Once an account is approved, the UMC Social Media Manager must be given administrative access for oversight and emergency purposes. This can be done by adding them as an admin or sharing account credentials. Existing accounts created before these guidelines must also add the UMC Social Media Manager as a co-admin.

Platform Restrictions

- **Platform Restrictions:** Comply with state directives, such as the Texas ban on TikTok for official use. Do not create accounts or post content on prohibited platforms. Stick to approved platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube) unless explicitly permitted to use a new platform.
- **Platform Suitability:** UMC has the authority to determine if a platform or account is unsuitable, unkempt, or poses a security risk, and can require changes or removal of the account.

Account Maintenance & Security

- **Active Management:** "Set and forget" is not acceptable. Regularly update and respond promptly on your department's social media accounts. Neglected accounts reflect poorly on the university. The UMC Social Media Manager may flag unmaintained accounts and after attempts to contact you, may disable or remove them. If you can no longer maintain the account, either formally close it or seek support for strategy adjustment.
- **Password Management:** Use strong, unique passwords and create accounts with departmental emails—not personal contacts. Limit admin roles to essential staff, regularly review access, and remove anyone no longer managing the accounts. Change passwords immediately when staff leave or change roles.

UTRGV Social Media Guidelines — Compliance with FERPA and HIPAA

Protecting Privacy: FERPA & HIPAA Compliance

As university representatives, it's essential to protect private student information in compliance with federal laws:

- **FERPA** (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act): Protects student education records and personally identifiable information.
- **HIPAA** (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act): Protects individuals' medical records and personal health information.

What You *Should Not* Post:

Avoid sharing or responding to any private or sensitive student information, including:

- Student ID numbers, grades, or class schedules
- Academic records, transcripts, or financial aid info
- Disciplinary or immigration status
- Medical or health details
- Any personally identifiable information

If a Student Shares Private Info Publicly:

- **Don't reply with specifics**
- **Redirect them to official communication channels**, such as a university email or phone number.

Example:

"Hi [Name], for your privacy, please contact us at [official email] or call us at [phone number] so we can assist you directly."

Learn more:

- FERPA: ed.gov/ferpa
- HIPAA: hhs.gov/ocr/privacy

UTRGV Social Media Guidelines — Compliance and Conduct

Respectful and Professional Conduct

Maintain Professionalism: Use a respectful tone in all interactions. Avoid engaging in arguments or responding defensively to negative comments. You may hide or delete comments only if they containing profanity, hate speech, or spam. However, complaints and general negative comments may not be deleted, as doing so can infringe on individuals' rights to freedom of speech. Employees are held to the same standards online as in person; offensive or inappropriate comments/posts can result in disciplinary action.

No External Influencers/Endorsements

Internal Promotion: Departments should not engage external social media influencers or pay individuals to promote UTRGV programs on their personal channels. Instead, leverage the internal community (students, faculty, staff, and alumni) as brand ambassadors. Do not endorse or appear to endorse commercial products or political candidates/causes on official accounts, as this can imply university endorsement, which is prohibited.

Use of Copyrighted Material

Proper Licensing: Only post images, videos, or music that you have rights to use. Do not use random images from the internet without proper licensing, as this can violate copyright laws. Utilize UTRGV's own photos/videos, obtain permission from the owner, or use royalty-free resources. Ensure all custom graphics align with UTRGV brand guidelines, including correct use of logos, colors, and fonts.

Employee Personal Social Media Conduct

Personal vs. Professional: These guidelines primarily govern official accounts. However, staff or faculty who mention their UTRGV role on personal social media should avoid blurring personal views with the university's stance. Including a "Posts are my own" disclaimer is advisable if they often discuss work topics. Direct any media inquiries received personally to official channels (e.g., UMC at umc@utrgv.edu) instead of handling them yourself.

UTRGV Social Media Guidelines — Crisis Communication

In the event of a crisis or sensitive situation on social media, promptly notify the Social Media Manager or UMC officials and avoid responding without guidance. For less urgent concerns, acknowledge the issue professionally and offer to continue the conversation privately. Use automated messages when immediate replies aren't possible, and always maintain professionalism and empathy.

UTRGV Social Media Guidelines — Crisis Communication

- **Immediately notify** the Social Media Manager (socialmedia@utrgv.edu) or UMC officials about crises or sensitive issues (e.g., threats, tragic events, viral negative publicity).
- **Do not respond without guidance.** Official representatives handle all university messaging to ensure consistency.
- For less urgent concerns, acknowledge professionally and invite private follow-up.
- Set up automated replies when immediate responses aren't possible, providing expected reply times and alternative contacts.
- Always maintain professionalism and empathy.

Sample Templates

Student Complaint (e.g., parking, financial aid):

"Thank you for your feedback. Please email us at [department@utrgv.edu] so we can assist you directly."

Campus Emergency (e.g., active threat, severe weather):

"We're aware of the situation and encourage everyone to stay informed through official UTRGV sources. For updates, monitor UTRGV social media, check your UTRGV email, and visit utrgv.edu/alerts."

IT Disruption or System Downtime:

"We're aware of the issue affecting [system/service] and are working to resolve it promptly. Updates will be shared on [official platform/link]. Thank you for your patience."

Death of a Student, Faculty, or Staff Member:

"We are deeply saddened by the loss in our UTRGV community. Our thoughts are with those affected. For support resources, visit [link to Counseling Center, etc.]."

UTRGV Social Media Guidelines — Student Workers

Any student worker, intern, or part-time employee with access to a UTRGV departmental social media account must review and acknowledge the university's Social Media Guidelines before posting on its behalf. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring students understand compliance requirements, brand standards, and security protocols. It is recommended that students sign a formal [acknowledgment form](#) confirming they have read and agreed to follow the UTRGV Social Media Guidelines. While fresh ideas from students bring valuable energy and perspective, they should always receive clear guidance and collaborative support from supervisors to ensure all social media aligns with university standards.

Best Practices: Student Social Media Management

1. Start with Training and Clear Expectations

- Review UTRGV's branding, social media guidelines, and tone.
- Show examples of strong, on-brand content
- Clarify responsibilities, approval processes, and posting schedules.

2. Use a Content Calendar

- Plan posts in advance and review them together regularly.
- Include important dates, campaigns, and ideas.

3. Offer Feedback and Monitor Performance

- Provide constructive feedback before posts go live.
- Review analytics (likes, shares, reach) and talk about how to adjust future posts.

4. Encourage Collaboration and Idea-Sharing

- Make space for brainstorming sessions and idea pitches.
- Let students contribute campaign ideas, reels, or trends that align with the department's goals.
- Give them credit when their content performs well.

5. Have a Backup Plan

- Make sure someone can take over posting if the student is unavailable.
- Update passwords and admin access when roles change.

Additional Resources and Conclusion

Continuous Updates and Training

Social media trends and features change often. UTRGV's guidelines will be reviewed regularly, and departments should check for updates from UMC. Attend trainings or meet-ups to learn new best practices and policies. When in doubt, ask for input or approval. Staying informed keeps your social media effective and compliant.

Additional Resources for UTRGV Social Media Admins

- **Social Media Request Form:** Need to create a new social media account for your department or organization? Complete the [Social Media Request Form](#) to get started.
- **UTRGV Social Media Directory:** Looking for inspiration or wanting to connect with other UTRGV social media pages? Check out the [UTRGV Social Media Directory](#). This directory is a great resource to discover and follow other UTRGV-affiliated accounts, stay updated on university-wide content and trends, and find collaboration opportunities within the UTRGV community.
- **UTRGV Social Media Admin Network:** Stay in the loop with the latest social media trends, best practices, and university-wide updates by joining the [UTRGV Social Media Admins Community](#) on Microsoft Viva Engage. Connect with other admins across campus to ask questions, share ideas, and get feedback on your strategies.
- **UTRGV Students Official Facebook Group:** Connect directly with over 17,000 UTRGV students by sharing departmental content in our [Official Student Facebook Group](#). It's a highly engaged space where your posts can reach the student community.
- **Compliance and University Guidelines** - All UTRGV-affiliated social media accounts must follow university policies. Review the [UTRGV Handbook of Operating Procedures](#) to ensure compliance with branding, privacy, and ethical standards.
- **Social Media Dimensions** - Always use the [recommended dimensions](#) for each platform to ensure your posts look their best and are fully optimized.
- **QR Codes and Link Shorteners** - Need to create branded QR codes or Link Shorteners? Complete the [Social Media Request Form](#) to get started.

Conclusion and Contact

Managing a UTRGV social media account is both exciting and important. This guide will help departments connect with students and the community, promote the UTRGV brand, and build a strong online presence — all while following university values and policies. Remember, social media is an extension of campus, so treat every interaction with the same care as you would in person.

For questions or help with your department's social media, contact the University Social Media Manager at socialmedia@utrgv.edu.