**Channel Creation Guidelines**

**Purpose:** This document is intended to help University of Iowa communicators create productive social media channels that support the goals and strategic efforts of the university.

**Social media goals:** The following purposes should be considered as important criterion for creating social media channels:

* Raise awareness
* Protect brand
* Increase engagement
* Increase enrollment
* Provide valuable customer service
* Create other added value to users that they can’t get elsewhere

**How to build a productive channel:** A number of logistical and strategic details must also be assessed:

1. Consider the resources needed and available to run a new social channel in the long- term. Social media channels are time consuming. Channels created and left dormant, neglected, or unused are a poor reflection on the university, individual colleges and or other relevant areas. Identify the time required to run the new channel and the resources that will support it.
2. Consider the regularity and volume of content that comes along with creating a channel. To do it right, most channels require at least one post per day, and some channels like Twitter need multiple.
3. Demonstrate the ability to produce the content mentioned above. Create a calendar and fill out the first three weeks’ worth of content to post once the channel goes live. This will help you determine if there is enough content to warrant the creation of a new channel. If not, consider ways to collaborate and spread messages through other well established social channels at the university.
4. Consider the size of your audience. Is it big enough to warrant a standalone channel or would it be better to utilize already established channels? Consider what information will be truly valuable to the audience. Channels should not be comprised solely of inherently self-serving content.

**Other best practices and things to plan:**

* Create and document a social media strategy before going live.
* Plan a majority of content at least two weeks in advance on an ongoing basis. Create and fill out a content calendar, scheduling posts ahead of time. Looking ahead allows for a lot more creativity, collaboration, and strategic planning.
* Determine how and when you will respond to, ignore, or delete comments. Have established criteria for when to respond and when to delete. Determine who you should contact about offensive posts and who needs to give approval before responding.
* Determine how you will decide whether the channel is successful and worthwhile. Assess in three months, six months and one year whether the channel is fulfilling the goals and meeting the pre-determined measures of success. If not, adjustments need to be made or the channel should be deleted.