

SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENTS PROCEDURE

The Comments Section

NOVA aims to foster a respectful and educational space for communication, conversation, and engagement through its social media platforms to the extent it aligns with and or furthers the College's mission. Comments will, however, be hidden and/or removed when they cross the line to intentional malice or disrespect towards a specific person, class of persons or the institution. This inappropriate conduct may include the following:

- Harassment, including bullying, hate speech, obscenity, or speech that directly targets groups based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability status, age, and other legally protected identity statuses
- Content that promotes or is considered to incite imminent illegal activity
- Content that promotes violence against others, including fighting words (words indicating a willingness to fight) and threats
- Defamation, including misinformation about the College, College employees or events hosted by the College
- Nudity
- External Links
- Unrelated topics to the college or conversation
- Content that promotes illegal activity or violence against others
- Advertisements or solicitations
- Spam

Comments will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Social Media Manager and Director of Communications, with support from other departments (including legal counsel) if necessary. The guidelines below outline the practices and rules for comments on social media.

Tags and Spam

NOVA reserves the right to remove any comments or tags and take actions to block accounts that associate NOVA with a false partnership or activity.

Online Negativity

Please contact:

- the social media team (socialmedia@nvcc.edu)
- the Social Media Manager

if a social media post (either posted directly by the College or a post in which the College is referenced) receiving negative/critical comments so the post can be monitored as needed by the communications team.

Steps to De-Escalate and Address Inappropriate Conduct

1. Step 1: Monitor. Once the social media team has been notified, the post will be evaluated and monitored to determine the severity of the responses.
2. Step 2: Response and Warning. If a user/s have created a culture of negativity on a post, the College may deploy a response to redirect the conversation and warn the violating parties. Ex. ***“Please be respectful in your discussion. Comments will not be tolerated that violate the College’s policy and are not representative of the NOVA community.”*** The College may also choose to not engage a comment if the engagement itself would be detrimental or irrelevant.
 - a. Situations when deploying a response is recommended:
 - i. To maintain a fair and respectful discussion space
 - ii. To answer a question
 - iii. To correct misinformation
 - iv. To clarify on behalf of the College
3. Step 3: Mitigation. As a general policy, the comments section across all platforms will remain accessible unless there is an unmanageable amount of inappropriate/false information culminating at a viral pace. In these situations, the comments section will be turned off and hidden (Instagram) or the ability to comment will be discontinued (Facebook and YouTube). Twitter does not provide an option for mitigating comments beyond hiding a reply. Using the parameters listed above, NOVA reserves the right to hide, delete, block, and/or report users who engage in threatening or inappropriate ways with the accounts. Otherwise, comments should be addressed individually with an approved response.
 - a. **Filing a Report:**
 - i. **If a NOVA employee, student, or member of the community observes conduct that may be considered threatening to the safety of the NOVA community, this incident should be reported immediately to the NOVA Police at (703) 764-5000.**
4. Step 4: Monitor. The post, comments section, DMs (direct messages) and platform at large should be closely monitored after the crisis to determine if the College’s response should be escalated.

Possible Actions for Each Platform [February 2022]:

- **Facebook:**
 - **Hiding Comments** – the user will not be notified. The comment will still be visible to the user and their friends.
 - **Deleting Comments** – should be considered a last resort. Permanently removes content from the platform. User will not be notified but will know if they check to view their comment.
 - **Turning Off Comments for a Post** – all existing comments will remain visible but none will be able to be added.
 - **Blocking User** - user will be blocked
 - **Reporting Users** – this notifies Facebook of a user’s actions.
- **Instagram:**
 - **Turn Off Comments** – comments section will be hidden and no further comments can be added
 - **Restrict Comment** – user’s comment can only be seen by the user, “hiding” it from others.
 - **Delete Comment** - should be considered a last resort. Permanently removes content from the platform. User will not be notified but will know if they check to view their comment.
 - **Report User** – the user will be reported to Instagram
 - **Block User** – the user will be blocked
- **LinkedIn:**
 - **Report User** – the user will be reported to LinkedIn
 - **Delete Comment** - should be considered a last resort. Permanently removes content from the platform. User will not be notified but will know if they check to view their comment.
- **Twitter:**
 - **Hide Reply** – the comment will no longer be immediately visible, but viewers can choose to see hidden comments with an extra click.
 - **Block User** – the user will be blocked.
- **YouTube:**
 - **Delete Comment** – should be considered a last resort. Permanently removes content from the platform. User will not be notified but will know if they check to view their comment.
 - **Report User** – the user will be reported to YouTube
 - **Turn Off Comments** - comments section will be hidden and no further comments can be added