

February 2020

Notes from Beneath the Blue Awning

Hello UWF Researchers!

If you've been looking at the news recently, you may have seen some important information about higher education amongst all of the recent sports stories and national political intrigue. The issue of disclosure of financial conflicts of interest and conflicts of commitment have been getting front page treatment in Florida and beyond. At the heart of cases at **UF, Moffitt Cancer Center**, and **Harvard** was the failure of faculty to disclose associations with foreign universities or talent programs, thus creating a conflict (or the appearance of a conflict) related to the security of university intellectual property.



The **UWF Employee Code of Conduct** requires all UWF employees involved in any outside activity related to their University expertise, whether domestic or foreign, be disclosed and approved via the UWF **conflict of interest/outside activity disclosure process** for any activity coinciding with the term of their UWF appointment.

Please note, however, that **federal sponsors require broader disclosure**. All federally sponsored investigators and key personnel must report any activity that supports their research endeavors, regardless of: (1) whether it is an activity conducted within the scope of their UWF job (i.e., an “inside activity”) or conducted in their private capacity (i.e., an “outside activity”); and (2) whether it takes place within or outside the term of their UWF appointment (i.e., nine-month or summer term).

Over the past six months, I have attended meetings with the State University System of Florida Vice Presidents of Research, who have shared lessons learned and challenges faced on this process. I've been heartened to see how Florida's university leadership has been working to find ways to ensure the safety and security of Florida's faculty, while also protecting the state and federal investment in the creation of new faculty intellectual property.

RAE is taking some of those lessons learned and putting them into service for the UWF community starting with the creation of a new UWF RAE compliance web page, **Disclosing International Activities**.

I encourage each of you to review the material on that web page, contact me with remaining questions, and plan to update your conflict of interest disclosures via UWF human resources' dedicated [conflict of interest](#) and [outside activity](#) pages. Regards and best wishes for a productive 2020,

Matthew Schwartz
Assistant VP of Research Administration

Social Media Expert Offers Tips for Researchers

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Social media can be an incredible tool to help researchers connect with colleagues, exchange ideas and promote their work.



Dr. Heather Riddell, assistant professor in the [Department of Communication](#), is an expert in social media strategy and writing for media. In January, she offered a few quick tips to help researchers maximize their social media presence.

Make sure you've read your employer's social media guidelines

Most employers, including the [University of West Florida](#), maintain guidelines that govern the establishment and use of official social media accounts. These include [guidelines for accessibility](#).

Only authorized representatives of UWF can create accounts for the University. If you are interested in creating an account for your department, college, division, unit or organization, contact Institutional Communications at brand@uwf.edu.

It's critical that University employees, including researchers, familiarize themselves with UWF's social media policies, Riddell said. Violating policy could harm the researcher's or the institution's reputation.

"You really need to review the guidelines," Riddell said. "UWF has an extensive [branding portal page](#), where they keep this information."

Further, Riddell suggested that researchers with personal social media accounts add, "My views are my own," or something similar, to their online bios. Doing so lets readers know the researchers are speaking on their own behalf and not that of the University.

Look into hashtags

The University's brand portal contains a list of approved brand hashtags.

Riddell said to be careful when selecting or developing hashtags on your own. Search the hashtag before you include it in a post to see if and, more importantly, how it is

being used. Also, it's important to follow accessibility guidelines when using hashtags with official UWF accounts. The first letter in each word of the hashtag must be capitalized (for example, [#ArgoNation](#) or [#GoArgos](#)).

Consider creating separate personal and professional accounts

Platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, are great for networking and seeking professional advice. But you might sometimes have sensitive or embarrassing questions that you don't necessarily want your name attached to.

If you have professional social media accounts (those that aren't University accounts), Riddell said it often makes sense to set up a separate personal – even anonymous – profile to ask questions without fear of judgment. This works for many social media platforms, but it is especially useful for Twitter, given how open and easily searchable the platform is, Riddell said.

“If you try to mesh professional and personal, it can be a nightmare,” she said.

Seek out useful groups or use hashtags to find other researchers in your field

Some social media networks support groups where users with similar interests can meet and have discussions. Facebook does this. While Twitter doesn't have a proper group feature, researchers can discover hashtags and user accounts to find other experts in their field, Riddell said.

“[#AcademicTwitter](#) is a useful hashtag,” Riddell said. “And [@AcademicChatter](#) is an account that looks at what kinds of conversations are going on and retweets what they find interesting. You'll see everyone from new grad students to tenured professors on the brink of retirement.”

Keep platform and audience in mind

Researchers should know what each social media network offers, and they should understand the audience each platform attracts, Riddell said.

Facebook, for instance, is useful for groups and discussions, and its audience is composed largely of older millennials, Gen Xers and baby boomers. Instagram is good for reaching a younger crowd with visually driven content. Twitter is a great place to ask questions and share news about your work. LinkedIn is handy for developing thought leadership and building a professional network. YouTube provides a platform for robust visual storytelling.

Be sure to keep your target audience in mind when you prepare content for social media. This goes for personal, professional and institutional accounts.

When drafting content, focus on the purpose of the platform you're using. A paragraph-long post about your latest project might work for Facebook, but it may be inappropriate for photo-forward Instagram or Twitter, which favors brevity.

Riddell also recommended keeping tabs on emerging platforms. This will help you evaluate how these platforms might help you and when you should take the plunge and create an account.



Good News About a Research Project?

*We'd love to share your accomplishments!
Please feel free to [contact us](#).*

In the NEWS!

UWF Researcher Earns Grant to Study Retina Regeneration in Fish



Dr. Scott Taylor, assistant professor in the University of West Florida Department of Biology, has secured a \$400,000 grant from the National Eye Institute to study how zebrafish regenerate photoreceptor cells in their eyes after they've been...

[Read more](#)
news.uwf.edu

Funding Opportunities

Watch this space! RAE is currently re-working how we share funding opportunities to our faculty and staff.

In the meantime, feel free to access [GrantForward](#)—UWF faculty and staff can sign

up with their UWF account to create a free profile with this funding search tool! For a step-by-step guide, please refer to our [GrantForward Handout](#).

Grant Forward Quick Tip



Subscribe to the [CASSH](#) and [CEPS](#) newsletters.



[GrantForward](#): Sign up with your UWF account to search funding opportunities and receive personalized recommendations.



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